

LETTER FROM TRINIDAD.

BY MRS. DR. MORTON.

Tunapuna, May 27th, 1897.

Dear Record,—The other day I asked in one of our schools, just to brighten up the children, "Why is a ship spoken of as 'she,'" intending to tell them that it was because she was so pretty.

"Because she is commanded by a man," said one of the most thoughtful boys in the school, with a confidence that seemingly feared no contradiction.

It was such a good answer (woman's rights to the contrary) that I was curious to know where it had originated. The boys had heard it from their schoolmaster, who was under the impression that he had it from Dr. Morton. That missionary, when questioned, firmly maintained his innocence of such a suggestion (there was no room for fear of consequences in the case), so the authorship remains as yet undiscovered.

That the tables are occasionally turned on our lords and masters is evident even among the Hindoos. For instance, a case occurred not long ago, in which a "weaker vessel" not content with turning hers out-of-doors, nailed up a notice on said door forbidding him to come back.

We are toiling on in the work with far too little leisure to write as much about it as we should like to do. Last week we went to Couva, taking with us a Tunapuna contingent, to assist Mr. and Mrs. Thomson and Miss Fisher with their programme for an evening's entertainment. Mr. and Mrs. Macrae also assisted.

We spent two days very pleasantly, and had a nice evening in Miss Fisher's school-house, which dropped a few dollars into the missionary (not missionary's) pocket for helping on the work.

My daily Bible class is going on well; the boys continue to be much interested, and complain only of the time being too short.

One day a Hindoo boy said to me in class, "Madame, what is the difference between original and actual sin?" Being a little surprised at the sudden interruption to a lesson about Moses, I was perhaps a little slow in answering. At any rate, the boy sitting next, who belongs to a Mohammedan family, anticipated me by saying, "Original sin is the sin you were born with; actual sin is what you do." I was as much surprised by the prompt answer, as I had been by the thoughtful question.

One day that we were talking about the tree "in the middle of the garden," the same Hindoo boy asked if it was a real fruit. To see the Higher Criticism thus unblushingly rear its head in the north-west corner of the Tunapuna church was another surprise—perhaps as great as hearing the youngster tackling theology a few days before. Remembering my own ignorance, and the inconvenience of heresy, I at once

decided that it would be well to temporize; "Khedaroo," I said, in an unusually firm, but still kind manner, "it does not really matter if it was a real fruit or not if we only learn the lesson that is there for us. That sin came to us not from God but from Satan, and that it came through disobedience to God's commands." This is a necessary lesson for Hindoos, who, when spoken to about their sinfulness, often answer, "I am as God made me."

A young East Indian said to me the other day, "Madame, I find that God said to the serpent, 'On thy belly shalt thou go,' now I want to know on what did he go before?" A companion had offered the suggestion that "perhaps he went on his tail," but this was not found altogether satisfactory. I pointed out that the words were probably used in a continuative sense, "thou shalt continue to go;" the Hindoo version actually employs the continuative tense—so-called in Hindoo grammar—the sentence reading thus, "on thy belly shalt thou go and dust shalt thou continue to eat all the days of thy life."

The thorough-going evolutionist would probably insist that the punishment lay in denying forever to the snake tribe the gentle ministries of evolution. There were to be no aspirations after legs and molars, no hope whatever that the lapse of ages might find the viper-tribe developed into horses.

The work of christianizing the East Indians in Trinidad is progressing surely, and not slowly. To those who think it ought to be nearly accomplished I would propose one single question: Do you know what it is to turn one soul, in any land, who has his back on heaven? If you have done it once you will know it, and remember it forever after. What then must be the magnitude of the task allotted to the little staff of missionaries in Trinidad, viz., to bring to Christ 80,000 Hindoos and Mohammedans; where the environment is a mixed population called Christians, among whom late statistics show a percentage of over fifty-eight of the births to be illegitimate!

A QUAIN'T DIALOGUE.

For the RECORD.

Rev. Dr. Morton of Trinidad has translated from the Hindi, the following account, by one of his catechists, of a visit to a Pundit, a learned heathen.

On the 12th of May, John Talam and I went to St. James, near Port of Spain.

At that place there had been a controversy with a Pundit concerning some matters connected with religion. The Pundit and several of his friends had said, "We Brahmans never eat the flesh of the cow, but the followers of Jesus are flesh eaters. In our Ramayan it is nowhere written that flesh should be eaten. All Christians in