

along in due time with a huge iron bucket to supply the needs of his thirsty co-religionists. Fortunately the trains are in no hurry, and make long stops at the stations, or most of the passengers would never succeed in getting any water at all.

It must be explained that a well in India is generally public property, each one supplying a pretty large neighborhood. Some of these are exclusively Hindoo wells and some Mohammedan, but many are *sirkari*, or Government wells, from which Hindoos and Mohammedans both draw freely, but Christians, sweepers and other outcasts are prohibited by public sentiment.

So far as the Christians are concerned the prohibition is not legal, and we have fought the matter out on their behalf, so that they now have the privilege accorded to them in some places, but the prejudice remains and in most places is strong enough to be prohibitory. The following incidents illustrate the force of this ridiculous prejudice.

On one occasion we stopped at a *serai* at Ferozepore which, like all others, had a public well in the inclosure. A great well of a *bunnia*, of the Khatri caste, next to the Brahman, sat in his shop in the *serai*, selling salt, flour, sugar, and such other things as travellers require. I went up to this individual, and asked him whether there was a *bhishti* about the place who could supply me with water. He hardly deigned to notice me, but finally replied gruffly that there was not. "O, well," I replied, "*kuch parno nahin* (no matter), I am quite able to draw the water for myself," and off I went to the well, where I was just about to let down the bucket I found ready, when the *bunnia* fairly flew to the rescue and said with what breath he had left that he could not possibly allow such a great person as myself to perform such a menial task, and as he was my slave he would draw the water for me.

Another incident at Lahore, shows the imprudence of this caste pride. We had a mission well near our house, to which a number of Hindoos and Mohammedans resorted for their water supply. But the native Christians drew water from this well too. One day a deputation of Hindoos came with the request that I should prohibit the Christians from using this well. I told them that that well was a Christian well, and if they did not think it good enough for them they could go elsewhere, but I certainly would not comply with so unreasonable a request.

One more illustration of this foolish prejudice must suffice. At Lodianna, three or four years ago a public well was opened near our city chapel. One evening when we went there to preach we sent the Christian janitor out for a pitcher of water. He got the water and started back, but a mob surrounded him, knocked the pitcher out of his hand and dashed it to pieces. Shortly after the municipal committee met and passed resolutions ordering the well to be cleansed and send-

ing up a complaint to the English magistrate of the district. The well was cleansed by having three hundred *mashaks* of water drawn out and thrown away, but the committee did not fare so well with the complaint. The magistrate gave them a reprimand, and told them the Christians had as good a right to use the well as Hindoos or Mohammedans. This occurred in Lodianna, where the gospel had been preached for a number of years, and where a number of the members of that same municipal committee had been educated in the mission school. The committee were so ashamed of their conduct that they rescinded the obnoxious resolutions at their next meeting, and Christians have used the well ever since, without let or hindrance.

The foregoing shows how great the power of the caste system is still; nevertheless there are indications that it is waning. Seventy or eighty years ago it was almost impossible for a man who had lost his caste to regain it. A wealthy Brahman of Calcutta, of that period had his caste destroyed by the mere fact that a European forced food into his mouth. He was finally restored after several years of effort, but not until he had spent \$140,000 in fees and bribes. Fifty years ago a somewhat similar case occurred in the same city, but this time the privilege of reinstatement was purchased for \$25,000.

A few years ago a friend of mine in the Punjab obtained restoration of caste by feeing and feeding the Brahmans to the extent of \$300.

Formerly a low-caste man on meeting a Brahman was required to step aside out of the road or prostrate himself in the dust. The merest touch of a sweeper was contamination to a Brahman, and the latter could not eat in the presence of the former. Now this is all changed. The Brahman and the sweeper sit side by side in the crowded railway train, and there they both eat their lunch in close proximity. The railway has done much to modify rules of caste; Government and mission schools have done much to teach the people the principles of enlightenment and common sense, which are necessarily opposed to so absurd a system, but most of all the Christian faith and newness of life in Christ have broken the fetters in cases unnumbered.

I will close with an incident of recent occurrence, to show how effectually the gospel can remove the bitterest prejudices.

A few years ago there lived at one of our stations a learned pundit of the straightest sect of Brahman Pharisees, who one day bathed himself because the shadow of a missionary who happened to pass by on the sunny side fell upon him. He was subsequently converted by reading the New Testament, and is now a valued preacher of the word in our mission; but the most surprising feature in his case is that he is married to a Christian girl whose parents were outcasts before