

(Fort Black Tank,) in which there were a few traces of the existence of a fort at some former time, a farmer with whom I entered into conversation expressed himself in very doleful terms, but with amusing simplicity, about the ruin into which the place had fallen.

A Chola king, he said, had lived there long ago, but for generations back the people, though of the highest caste of cultivators, had been sinking into poverty. "Every thing is against us," he said; "we have no money to carry on the temple services, and the gods are angry at being deprived of the right necessary things, and oppress us; no boys are born to us now, but girls only, and the rain has failed for the last three years." He then took us to the place where the lane leading to the village joined the high road, a road which leads from Travancore to the great temple at Trichendoor, and there showed us a sort of pillar on which these words were engraved: "Help! Lord of Trichendoor! This has been erected in the hope that pilgrims will inform the Court of Travancore, which forgets not the sacred feet of Padma-naba, that the heroic lion god is destitute of the right necessities." I asked our friend what "the right necessities" were. He answered that he did not know exactly—it was the Brahmans' business,—but he knew that one of the rights was gunpowder for fireworks! After I had commented on all he had told me, and given him my ideas of things, he replied, "Alas! it is bad enough with us now, but we should be ruined outright if we went over to a foreign religion." Last of all, he said "If you would establish a school amongst us, there might be some chance of our understanding things better."

In one village the headman said to me, with shocking oriental slattery, "Now that you have come into our village, we have seen God; all our sin is gone;"—whilst in another, a Pariar village, in which our itinerants had fancied that they had produced an impression, the people all ran away on seeing me, and called out, angrily, to the itinerant who was with me, "So, so, because you have given you a hearing several times, you have brought the gentleman upon us! is this fair? when our masters hear of this, they are sure to give us a beating."

An answer I received several times was, "God has made four religions, and we belong to one of the four." This popular enumeration of four religions, owes its origin to the four Vedas of the Brahmans.

The word "Veda" has come in Tamil to have the meaning of "a religion," and hence "the four Vedas" are supposed to be "four religions." People who speak of the four divinely instituted or authorised religions, do not always agree as to which they are, but the enumeration which I have most commonly met with is Heathenism, Mahomedanism, Romanism, and Christianity. By "Christianity" they mean the religion which Protestant Missionaries teach, and which they suppose to be a totally different religion from "Romanism." It has obtained an advantage over the others in that it is commonly called "religion," or "the religion," without any distinguishing epithet. Thus Veda-kovit, "a church of the religion," is the most common name for a Protestant Church. The name "Protestant" is totally unknown.

The most unsatisfactory people I met with in the course of my tour were the busybodies of their respective villages, who used sometimes to buzz about me like bees, interrupting me with all manner of trivial questions—in the midst of a serious address, asking me "what I paid for my bullocks?"—and sidgiting about those who were listening, and calling off their attention.

Many were the requests made that I would establish schools amongst them, "that their children," as they expressed it, "might learn arithmetic;" and this gave me an opportunity of explaining to them that there are many things of more importance even than arithmetic, of which they and their children were still more ignorant. "True," said a man, "we are living in great ignorance; open a school amongst us, and our children will learn your religion at once, and we shall learn it by and by."

I conclude with the most interesting reply I received, which was from a thoughtful-looking young Vellaler in Hoombikullam.

I had reminded him of the ancient favourite Hindoo stanza: "Our only companions into eternity will be our sin and righteousness." "True," he replied, "of all that a man has in this life, it is only his sin and his righteousness that will accompany him into the next. Few or no men are altogether free from sin. There is a great mixture of good and evil in most people. If there were any way, now, in which people could get rid of sin in this life, so that righteousness alone should accompany them into the other state, it would certainly be an excellent thing. If you can tell us of any way in which this could be brought about, we shall be glad to learn it." Before I could utter a word in reply, I was interrupted by a black, eager little man, with a book in his hand, of which he was evidently taking great care. "Here it is all explained," said he, "in this book. It is the Keivalya navanitan, and was printed in Madras. It is a dialogue between a spiritual teacher and his disciple, and it shows most clearly that we are freed from sin when we learn to believe that there is no such thing as sin." The interruption gave me an opportunity of pointing out, first, the reality of sin, and secondly, the necessity that deliverance from sin should also be a reality. I then explained that God, in compassion to man, took a human body, in which he bore the sins of the world, and took them away by his voluntary death, and that they who believe this will be enabled to conquer sin.

To go from village to village in this way, scattering around the seeds of moral and religious truth, is a work which is full of interest, and which, when steadily persevered in, must produce an impression on the Hindoo mind. I must add, however, that it did not seem to me to be the only species of work which is required, or likely to be very successful when solely relied upon.

The easy, polished secularism of the high-caste Hindoos, their indifference to truth, and their moral torpor, require to be assailed on many sides at once—by christian education, as well as by itineration; superior Anglo-vernacular schools might be established in the more important villages, as well as in towns, with the prospect of great advantage. I have just got a tent, which will enable me in future to itinerate, whatever the weather may be, whenever my other duties will permit, and I am happy also to say that two superior English schools will be established at the beginning of the year, in this portion of my field of labour, through the help of the Society's new India Missions Extension Fund. "Help us now, O Lord; O Lord, send us now prosperity."—*Church Journal, N.Y.*

CHINA.

WILL EVERY PARISH CONTRIBUTE?

A GOOD EXAMPLE—AN INFANT PARISH.
The following letter speaks for itself. Here is an infant parish, only a few months old, strugg-

ling with its own early wants, and enjoying, as yet, only the benefits of lay reading, sends its contribution for our cause. Is there any one of all the non-contributing parishes which has greater difficulties in the way, and might better prefer them, than this young, but willing parish.

But for the letter, which we give without place or name:

—, Dec. 12th, 1859.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Enclosed please find— in answer to the Advent Appeal of the Domestic Committee, from — Parish, —. The amount is small, but, like the widow's mite, it comes from willing hearts, may it receive, like hers, the Master's commendation.

The mission was established this summer, the first service ever held in the village being on the last Sunday of the month of August just passed.

We would like to have given more, but, as yet, it is somewhat difficult to raise enough among ourselves to support the incidental expenses of the chapel. Trusting that the smallness of the amount may be overlooked in the spirit with which it is given, I am, Rev. and dear Dr.,

Respectfully and affectionately yours,

LAY READER IN CHARGE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED TO FEB. 1.

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