

"Thro' the lives of men and nations God is working out His will,
 Tho' His hand is often hidden, it is somewhere moving still.
 Does He open Heaven's windows? Nay, but He goes in before,
 Ready, when His sons are ready, to unlock another door."

FIELD STUDY FOR JULY.

India; All Mohammedan Countries.

India is a country of vast extent and abundant resources. It has an area of 1,474,606 square miles, equal in size to all Europe, except Russia, and is 1,900 miles long at its greatest length and 1500 miles wide at its greatest width. Its population is 282,000,000, or four times as great as the population of the United States. India is a country hoary with age, dating back to the time when Ninevah flourished and Babylon was in all its glory. It is mentioned in Esther as one of the provinces over which Ahasuerus reigned. In those days, as now, it yielded cotton, silk, spices, rice, indigo, ores and precious stones. Fruits also grow in abundance, chief among them being bananas, cocoanuts, pine-apples, mangoes, oranges and lemons.

There are ninety-eight distinct languages spoken in India, and a much larger number of dialects. Of religions there are also a great many, Brahmanism taking the lead, being deeply rooted in the history and social life of the people. Besides this, we find Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Demon worship and Parsi-ism. The Hindus are said to have 330,000,000 gods. Surely to these poor deluded and misled people the Gospel of Christianity must seem plain and simple!

As you all know, India is one of our sister colonies, and our beloved Queen is "Empress of India," having been crowned in 1858. However, there are 688 native sovereignties, all of which are in subjection to the British power.

Although India is so often thought of as a land of wealth, there are a great many poor people, who really live in a state of semi-starvation. The English government has done much to help this class and to prevent the periodic outbreak of famine.

Infanticide, child-marriage and the opium traffic are the greatest evils of India. Women are so degraded and their lives so unhappy that often girl babies are secretly put to death. If they are allowed to live, often while in their cradles, they are betrothed, and between the ages of five and ten married, going at once to their husband's home to become the slave of his mother, who teaches them to be obedient and faithful to him. If the husband should die, the little girl becomes a widow and must remain one all her life. The suffering of these poor widows is terrible to think of. Kindness and sympathy are never shown them. All their lives they must wear coarse clothing, eat coarse food, and have no place at the family feasts. Whether they remain with their husband's parents or return to their own, they are no longer daughters, but servants, disgraced and despised. At present there are 21,000,000 widows in India, 77,363 of which are under ten years of age. Just think of it! And why are they treated so? Because these poor deluded people are taught by their religion that the death of the husband is caused

by some evil spirit residing in the wife, or for some evil which she has done, and so she must be punished. How sad to think that these things really exist!

Much is being done, however, to improve this terrible state of affairs. A law has been passed, raising the age of marriage several years, though to us it still seems very low. Pundita Ramabai, in her schools for child widows, is doing a grand work, and at present sixty-five hospitals are affiliated to the Countess of Dufferin fund for supplying medical aid and there are two hundred native female students of medicine. But, alas! what are these among so many? When we think of these 21 millions of widows suffering, at this present time, degradation and hardship beyond description, our hearts go out in earnest prayer that God, the all-merciful Father, will speak peace to their aching hearts.

The Methodist Church of Canada has no mission in India yet, but the M. E. Church of the United States is doing a grand work there, and very many are forsaking their old religions and believing in Jesus Christ.

We are also to remember in prayer this month "All Mohammedan Countries." In India we find there are forty millions who worship Mohammed, a man who was born in Arabia about 1300 years ago, and who claimed that he was a prophet of God. In Persia also there are about 675,000 Mohammedans; in Africa 40,000,000. In Syria also there are a great many adherents to this faith. The laws of this religion are so strict that it is especially hard for Mohammedans to become Christians, and in a great many cases where they have done so they have been persecuted that they have been obliged to leave the country. Let us pray that the kingdom of our God may speedily be established in all these lands, and this false system of religion perish.

Ontario.

A. C. W.

QUESTIONS FOR JULY.

- What is said of India? Its area?
- Its population? Its antiquity?
- What are its productions? Fruits?
- What of its languages? Religions? Gods?
- How must Christianity seem to its people?
- What is its relation to Great Britain?
- What is said of the poverty of the common people?
- What are the evils of India? How are girls and widow treated?
- How many little widows in India, and why are they treated so?
- What efforts have been put forth for their help?
- Have we a mission in India? What Church is doing grand work there?
- Who was Mohammed? How many in India worship him?
- In Persia? Africa? Syria? What makes it hard for Mohammedans to become Christians?

The several volumes which have been compiled for the use of Chinese girls are all very similar, and usually bear some such title as "Counsels," or "Instructions." Girls are there exhorted to pay close attention to all household duties, and particular directions are given as to the dress and manners becoming to young maidens. They are taught to be respectful to their elders, and very minute directions are given to guide them in their behaviour to their mothers-in-law and their future husbands.