

MISSION FIELD.

INDIA.

NAZARETH—It was the aim of the original founders of the Tinnevely Missions to promote the formation of villages entirely Christian; where the absence of all tumult and seduction of heathenism, the simple earnestness of Christian life, and the daily enjoyment of Christian ordinances, should exhibit in the most advantageous and amiable light the excellence of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord over that debasing system with which it is thus placed in strong and beautiful contrast. The security the converts thus enjoyed was no inconsiderable boon; but this was as nothing in comparison with the vantage-ground thus obtained for the further extension of the Gospel. It is now matter of history, and pregnant with the richest wisdom for the future, that the Christian villages planted long ago by the foresight of our elder brethren in the work have now been made, by the blessing of Almighty God, the foci of light and knowledge to the surrounding districts. In 1840 Bishop Spencer, of Madras, wrote: "Among many sources of comfort during my journey through Tinnevely, one of the greatest has been a sight for which I candidly confess I am not prepared—the sight of *whole Christian villages*. He alone who had passed some time in a heathen land engaged in the work of the ministry can understand the delight I felt at finding myself met, welcomed, and surrounded by crowds of native professing Christians, whose countenances spoke a most intelligible welcome."

Nazareth Mission is in the extreme southern point of India, close to Cape Cormorin. As a Christian village it soon began to exercise an influence over the surrounding districts. In 1844 the Rev. A. Caemmerer wrote to the Bishop of Madras:—"It is now my privilege to report that nearly the whole of the *Shanar* population as far as the river—which is the northern boundary of my district, and is about four miles distant—has embraced the Gospel. Since October last, 227 families, residing in seven villages, have renounced idolatry. The number of converts is 832, and I have little doubt that many more will soon be added. In other villages, also, already in connection with Nazareth, there have been considerable accessions; their number is between 500 and 600."

At the present time the number of Christians on the roll of the Mission is no less than 6,472, with all kinds of evidence of religious vigor and spiritual life. The whole Mission under its present Missionary, the Rev. A. Margoschis, includes the Mudalur, Kadaianodai, and Christianagram Missions, and thus occupies ninety villages, with more than 13,000 Christians. The heavy responsibility which thus rests upon Mr. Margoschis he has to bear alone, as far as European helpers are concerned. Working

under him are six native clergymen. From some of these we have received reports of great interest. For instance, the Rev. V. Abraham sends an account of the comparatively new work of the Kadaianodai pastorate of the Nazareth Mission, which relates several most noteworthy things.

"In this pastorate there are 19 congregations, and the number of Mission agents is ten. The total number of Christians is 2,017, of whom 1,325 are baptized, 692 catechumens, and 461 Communicants. The number of persons who can read is 451, and there are 142 new converts."

"Nearly all are new congregations. The people can be seen only during the evening, as they are busily engaged in the daytime far from their villages. I generally go to them in the evening and stay with them, visiting many people, whom I advise and exhort in religious matters. I encourage family prayer among the people, and stir up the Mission agents to set a good example; I do also advise them how to manage the congregations."

"This year there are 140 converts from heathenism, the majority of whom are at Parklam and Kurukatoor. Parkulam is about a mile distant from my station; the people are landholders, who are generally called Nadhers. They are moderately wealthy people, and were orthodox Hindus. A few, however, were Vedantists. For many years there has been only one single Christian soul in the place. When I visited this place I spoke to these men about Christianity, but they would not listen to me, and if they listened they used to argue. If any of them wished to become Christians, the others would persecute them. They determined not to allow any church to be built in their village. My head station being a village under their control, they tried their best to make the Christians of that place renounce their faith by abusing them, breaking into their houses, and carrying away their property."

"Bitter enemies of Christianity they were, but 69 of them have been brought to the feet of Christ, and are firm in the faith. They have given a piece of land for a church, and it is being built at their own expense. One of them has bought a Bible and he reads it regularly. When there was cholera in the village, this man helped the people much by going boldly amongst them and administering medicine which he had got from the dispensary at Nazareth."

"The Christians of Kurukatoor were converted last year and are very firm. Sixty-one of the catechumens who had relapsed, owing to the persecution of their landlords, have since placed themselves under instruction for Holy Baptism. There is no fear about their relapsing, because their landlords, the Brahmins of Tenseruperi, came to the Rev. Mr. Margoschis and promised that they would no longer molest them. According to their promise, the Brahmins stopped their persecution, and those

who have come back are gladly learning their lessons for Baptism. At present they hold Divine worship in a small shed which is quite insufficient. Being very poor people, and having suffered much by persecution, they are unable to build a church for themselves. They have also suffered very much by cholera, which, though it carried away ten of them and left most of them penniless, has not been able to shake their faith."

"It gives me great pleasure to speak of the encouraging works of the Christians of Kadaianodai. There is a small church of brick and chunnam here. It is called St. Thomas's Church. In my last report I said that as the building would not hold all the people on Sundays and Festival days, they were enlarging it at their own expense by adding a chancel and two transepts. The work was begun in August, and finished with much difficulty in November last. It cost Rs. 2,000 in addition to the personal labour given without pay by the people themselves. All the labour, such as carrying stones, sand, timber and tiles, was done by the people. The church walls were raised and a great deal is quite new. The length was increased by 33ft. and the chancel is 15ft. long. In order to make the church cruciform, two transepts, 18ft. by 13ft., were added on each side of the nave. The church is now much stronger and more beautiful than it was before. The Holy Eucharist was administered for the first time in this church by the Most Rev. the Metropolitan on November 16, when the number of Communicants was 252. The dedication of this church was an event which will never be forgotten by the people, who exerted themselves to make it a joyous and festive occasion. They erected a long pandal between the church and the school which was prepared for his lordship's residence, and decorated it with leaves and plantain trees. The church was also beautifully decorated with flowers. The Metropolitan, preceded by the choir and clergy (European and Native) went in procession along the pandal into the church. The whole place resounded with music. The converts of Parkulam and Kurukatoor came and visited his lordship, who was very much pleased with them, and after giving them good advice sent them home very happy."

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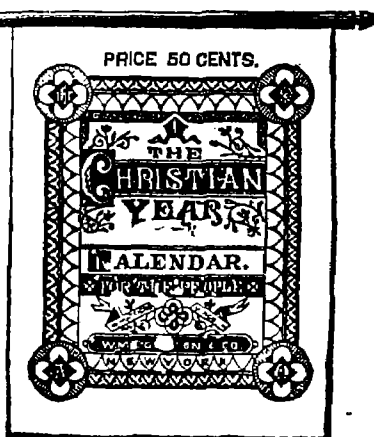
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