

MISSION FIELD.

Letter from India.

CANADIAN MISSION, DHAR, C.I., Oct. 3rd, 1895.

DEAR REVIEW,—The progress of our work here would have justified a letter to you some time ago, but various things have united to hinder my writing. We are just now in the midst of building operations, harassing enough anywhere, but in India doubly so. It is something, however, to be building at all, so we gladly submit to the annoyances involved. Since Miss Dr. O'Hara came to Dhar in the beginning of July, we have been singularly blessed in every way. H. H. the Maharaja has been very good in the matter of granting land, and we are now the happy possessors of some excellent situations just without the walls of the city. Miss O'Hara, Dr. Buchanan and I interviewed the Maharaja and his officials several times in regard to the securing of building sites, and succeeded in obtaining ample ground for a hospital and two bungalows, that for the former building being quite separate—a little nearer the city than the other—and yet sufficiently close to the bungalows to make the going and coming a very easy matter. We have very special reason to thank God for the speed with which this matter has been so satisfactorily settled, as in no other case, I think, has land ever been obtained in a native state with so little delay and trouble. The Maharaja's well-known predilection for English people has, of course, been a great factor in this case. But even so, we cannot help feeling that special blessing has attended the opening up of the work here, and every indication seems but to emphasize the feeling we have had from the beginning that God was very manifestly leading us to take possession of this heathen city for Him. And though three months have barely gone since we first made Dhar a station of our Mission, we can already see results which, even if insignificant in themselves, are of vast import in their relation to the future of our work. For the first three or four weeks after my coming here, I was living in a native house in the city, and held nightly meetings on the *chibutar* (verandah) in front. In spite of its being right in the street and close to the gate of the city, we always had large numbers present, rain or shine,—occasionally hundreds, listening quietly while I read a part of the Word, and gave them a twenty minute address. Our meetings are always, of course, accompanied with a great deal of singing—and so familiar have some of the *bhajans* become, especially to the children, that we have often as many as fifty of the latter who join heartily in the singing—understanding, necessarily, little of what they sing as yet—but we cherish the hope that these words, so pregnant with Gospel truth, will still remain in their memories when growing intelligence shall have given them power to appreciate their meaning. The prayer with which we always close our meetings has never been interrupted, and, if some do leave, the greater part remain to the end, and linger long after the last word has been said, talking among themselves of the truth to which they have been listening. The Spirit is work, and, I believe, working mightily. May there be "showers of blessing." A number are showing a very vivid interest in the message we bring them. Several already profess themselves to be Christians—and to be ready for baptism—but a caution which, especially in new work, one feels to be well-founded, keeps me from doing any more at present than encouraging in them the assurance that when they exhibit some real difference of conduct and are prepared for all the trials involved, they will be openly received as followers of Christ. And, we trust, these few are but the first beginnings of the ingathering from a field which seems even now "white to the harvest." We recognize, to be sure, the share which the novelty of our work has in engaging the interest of the people. At the same time there are indications of an interest deeper than any such superficial reason could account for. And in spite of misunderstandings, discouragements, and disappointments, we must confess to a feeling of profound thankfulness that we have so much to record.

Our bungalow is progressing, though not as speedily as we, who are anxiously waiting for a good roof over our heads, could wish. We hope to have it ready for occupation before next hot season. Mrs. Russell joined me a couple of weeks ago—and Miss O'Hara very kindly insisted on giving up the *Dak Bungalow* to us for the month, while she occupies quarters in the city. Before the end of October we propose going under canvas, and leaving our present abode to Miss O'Hara and the young lady who joins her here in the work.

The hospital, though much needed for Miss O'Hara's work, has not yet been started for want of the necessary funds. The only accommodation Miss O'Hara has been able to secure for medical work is a native home in the city, limiting the relief of these suffering people to what can be done by daily dispensary work. Little can be done in the more important departments without the

conveniences which an hospital building alone can afford. And we trust that when the requisite money is forth-coming we shall soon see, on the excellent site granted to us, such a building as will amply provide for all the medical needs of the women of Dhar.

The time forbids my writing at more length this week, but I hope to give you further news of Dhar soon.

Yours very faithfully,

FRANK H. RUSSELL.

Mission Notes.

Is it not perfectly erroneous to talk of the failure of missions when they started with 120 despised Galileans, and when now there are at least 120,000,000 of Protestants, and they have in their power almost all the wealth and almost all the resources of the world!—*Archdeacon Farrar*.

It is said that the Christian natives of the South Sea Islands prepare their Sunday food on Saturday. Not a fire is lighted, neither flesh nor food is cooked, not a tree is climbed, nor a canoe seen on the water, nor a journey by land undertaken on God's holy day. Then it might not be amiss to import some shiploads of them into Christendom to show the saints how to carry themselves on the Sabbath.

According to that eminent missionary, Dr. Griffith John, there are at present in China about 55,000 communicants, a remarkable increase since 1889. Says Dr. John: "If the next five years be as prosperous our China communicants will, at the close of 1900, number not far short of 90,000. We are on the eve of great changes, and great changes for the better also." A ray of encouragement this to cheer us amid the gloom caused by the tidings of Chinese pillage and murder. But what a vast army of unreached souls the figures suggest. Fifty-five thousand converts among China's hundreds of millions!

In the *Missionary Review* an interesting account is supplied of the power of Christian love in the mutual relations of Chinese and Japanese Christians in the Pescadores. When the Japanese took possession of Makung, the inhabitants, among whom was a group of believers, retreated to the north of the little island. Afterward, the Chinese returning to Makung, the Christians asked that their church might be restored to them; and this being granted by the Japanese, Divine service was held in it as in former time. No sooner did the Christians in the Japanese force learn of this Chinese Christian Church than they came to join them in their worship. In each case the New Testament and hymn-book in "character" help to make the service interesting to those to whom otherwise it would be in an unknown tongue. The plan adopted is to hold a Chinese service in the morning, the Japanese attending, and in the afternoon the service is in Japanese, to which also the Chinese Christians come. Mr. Barclay writes of this "beautiful Christian union" with a glad and thankful heart.

The valuable medical arm of the mission has assumed a position of great influence and usefulness, with three established hospitals located at Oroomiah, Tabriz and Teheran, Persia; and five large dispensaries, one of which will soon be another hospital, at Hamadan. The social influence of this expanded work cannot be photographed in words, but traces of it may be seen in the new appreciation of education, the breaking down of prejudice, the disintegration of superstition, the quickening of the spirit of reform among the people, the elevation of home life (especially among Christian converts), and the transformation of some of the more objectionable social customs. Christian forces are rallying, and the spiritual heaven is working.

Mrs. Eliza J. Wilder, of Kolhapur, India, wrote, Aug. 1st: A few days ago I attended, with all the ladies of our mission residing in Kolhapur, the annual prize-giving for the State Girls' School. Three queens were present. One of them read a paper telling us of the great advance in female education in past years, and hoped we might see still further improvement in the future. Do you wonder that at such times my thoughts are carried back to the beginnings of work here in 1852, when we found not even a boys' school worthy of the name in this kingdom, nor a girl that knew the alphabet? Now hundreds of girls and thousand of boys go daily to good schools.—*Woman's Work*.

The most important step toward heaven for you is the one you take to-day.

Sincerity is not Christianity, nor will it take the place of Christianity, and yet it is essential to all Christian service.