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Northern Messenger

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KILLAMS MILLS
NB

VOLUME XXVIII. No. 11.

MONTREAL, MARCH 14, 1902.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.



VIEW OF ADAM'S PEAK.

Pilgrim's to Adam's Peak.

(By the late Rev. R. T. Dowbiggin, in 'Ceylon Church Missionary Gleaner.')

March is, I think, the hottest month in Ceylon. The sun has most power and the sky is a clear blue the greater part of the month. The ground gets so hot that the people say it burns their feet, and you see them going along the road hugging the sides where there is a chance of getting any shade at all. Even my horse will do the same thing. It is a favorite month for pilgrimages to Adam's Peak, for the people prefer the sun to the rain.

In March I am usually at Nambapana. While there I saw numerous groups of pilgrims on their way to the Peak. The groups are mostly mixed of both men and women and vary from twelve to forty people. I noticed a band of fifteen women, with only two men who were carrying the food and other necessaries of the pilgrims. The women were leading the singing.

I also saw two or three women carrying quite little babies, and there were old men and women trudging along, who must have found it very difficult to get to the top of the mountain, and even then only by help from stronger and younger pilgrims, for they could never get up alone. Among the people were boys and girls ten or twelve

years of age, the sight of whom reminded me of the first visit of Jesus to the Feast of the Passover. Now and again some of their offerings were openly carried on the road, with pipe and drum and shoutings. In front of the procession you would see a man with a platter to collect alms and offerings from those who were not going to the Peak, but who would like to share in the merit of the offering.

Round the base of the mountain, or where they halt before beginning the final ascent, which is very steep and difficult, the people leave their extra clothing, food, and other property, and it is perfectly safe; no one will steal it while its owner is at the top of the Peak, but anywhere else, either in coming or going, it would not be safe out of its owner's sight.

As they move along on the way to the Peak they sing or chant some verses at intervals. They say it shortens the way and cheers them along. In the same way, I suppose, the 'Songs of Degrees' (Ps. cxx.—cxxxiv.) were sung by the Israelites on their way to the feasts at Jerusalem.

As they return from the Peak there is very little if any singing, for they are too tired and footsore. So far as I can make out from inquiry the pilgrims only stay two or three hours upon the top of the mount-

ain, make their offerings at the shrine of the Footstep, and then come down again. All that is to be seen at the top of the Peak itself is a very rude resemblance of a huge footstep indented on the rock, left there, as they believe, by Buddha 2,400 years ago. But there is no person there to worship; no one to help them or bless them.

They take great trouble, walk long distances, are exposed to heat, sun, and rain, and yet there is no one that regardeth, for Buddhists are without God and without hope in the world.

The idea at the root of all this is that they must do something to make themselves good, to accumulate merit, in order to secure a happier existence at the next birth, or to help towards the attaining of Nirwana. This idea lies at the root of all man's religion. 'What must I do.' 'What must I do,' so different from the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are to receive everlasting life as children—receive it as a perfectly free gift, 'without money, without price.'

Seventeen good, sober boys went from an Illinois town as soldiers to Manilla. One was killed; the other sixteen met with a worse fate; they came home confirmed drunkards—canteen drunkards.