

Our Mission Bands

A Mission Band in Every Church in Our Convention in Two Years.

A LETTER FROM MISS LOCKHART

Written for Maritime Bands, but good for any Bands.

Dear Mission Band Boys and Girls:

Just about the time that you are reading this, some of our Indian boys and girls will be saying: "Next Sunday, we are going to have our Rally. And if we can say our Bible verses and sing our hymns, and tell our stories well, we shall all get bags and nuts and candy and picture books. Perhaps little Anna here may get a doll for she is only five years old and she can recite thirty Bible verses. And so each day, the excitement in the little Indian village will grow more and more, until Saturday night comes. "Tomorrow, what a wonderful time we shall all have. Tomorrow we shall sit under the big shady trees in the mission compound and eat candy. And do you know what else they have there? Two white babies. And one baby is only two years old. And they can both speak our language. Why, they look just like angels. My, I wish we were white." And when Sunday arrives, the earliest dawn will find them awake. "Teacher, Teacher, it must be time to start." But the Indian teacher is never, never in a hurry, and so he says: "Yes, yes, I am coming," and goes on leisurely eating his breakfast.

In the village itself, what combings and what scrubbings do go on. Yesterday, that little girl's hair looked like one wild black animal. We have a joke on the girls when they look like that: "Say," one of the Bible women will laugh. "Why do you not comb your hair?" "We have no cocoanut oil. We are too poor to buy it." "Well, everyone has kerosene oil. Rub your hair with that." "Yes," some one else adds, "then touch a match to it." But, on the great Rally Sunday, there are no such remarks. Ramurdu puts on his big father's shirt and glories in it. Appalasami has nothing on but a little short coat. Little Philip, the blind boy, rejoices in his mother's old silk jacket. But the crowning glory of all is Mary, the teacher's daughter—a little Christian girl, in a new white jacket and a long white skirt

with frills. These Christians, the way they dress! They look like Sudra caste people almost."

Finally, the whole school of twenty children is assembled, and off they start. But be sure that an anxious father or mother will call out: "Remember your caste. Don't you dare sit near those Madigas, or eat one bit of candy that they touch." Can you imagine the excitement of that happy, chattering group of little boys and girls. And then—the rally itself, with boys and girls from ten other villages, and the missionaries' children with their white frocks and their blue eyes, talking with the Indian children. And the missionary's wife has a gold watch. "Look at our missammagam, too. How wonderful to have gold teeth." How strange, too, to see them wear those queer baskets on their heads. Women in our country do not wear turbans, only the men do."

But, oh, Canadians, if you could hear that singing, you would giggle. Yes, you would. You never heard the like of that raucous sound. Still, they sing not only with their noses, but also with all their hearts. And so you will forgive them. Could you repeat the first Psalm and the fifteen chapter of John? One little eight-year-old Indian boy can do it in Telegu and in English. So we will forgive them for their lack of tune and harmony.

And did they get their prizes? Yes, this year, some mission bands in Ontario sent four large boxes and no child has to go away disappointed. "Bags, Bags." That is the cry, and fortunately, there are enough so that every child this time may have one. The older ones receive New Testaments for saying their verses and stories. The little girls of the third class each get a doll. Oh, what a wonderful thing. The boys have soap and pencils, and the one who did best in each village received a towel. How delighted he was, for he can wear it as a turban or put it around his neck for a scarf. Wee tots have very large picture books made from scraps. All have candy, dried peas, and the precious bags.

What happy, noisy children they are as