

Sights and Sounds in India for Boys and Girls in Canada.

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS:—What a tall telegraph pole! Look at the top of it. It is crowned with a mammoth bouquet of broad, clean, green leaves. It is holding this ample posy up to the clouds, as if to present it in adoration, to the King of heavens. Indeed, its emerald fronds look as pure as the blue sky itself. This is not a telegraph pole at all. It is a palm tree. This kind is called the Palmyra palm. With the exception of this colossal tuft at the top, it has no more foliage than a telegraph pole. Each leaf is a whole branch, in itself. This kind of a leaf is called a "frond." These fronds are, perhaps, the cleanest things in India, for they float in the air, far above the dust of the pagan earth and the tread of heathen feet. One of the sounds that you may hear when you come to India will be these fronds, rattling together in the breeze; for the palm holds its head above the tops of the other trees, so that the winds sweep upon it in full force. A hawk with broad wings, and white head and breast, has just alighted upon this one with a crash like a box falling upon a pile of stiff brown paper. When an eagle alights upon a palm you can hear the fronds rattling sixty rods or more away. I am only judging the distance from memory; but I never saw a vulture light upon a palm without hearing the crash of the commotion cause by his arrival.

Here we are, encircled by rows of these lofty palms. Our camp is an old Indigo factory. It has a tile roof. A number of the tiles have slipped out of their place and lie upon the ground, crushed by their fall into countless crumbs. Big, black bees buzz about the door and hum in the blaze of the noonday sun. The Telugu brothers who are with me are Tathayya, Gurrayya and Easwarrow. Within a radius of three miles are ten villages, full of men, women and children, to whom we have come to preach the gospel. If you stand in the east door you can see over the tops of the palms in the southeastern sky, ten or twelve miles away, the snowy clouds that hang over Bimlipatam. I am looking for a coolie, with a basket of provisions and a letter from Mrs. Morse, and, lo, here he comes.

Amongst the packages, brought by the coolie is a paper called "The Madras Mail." Let us read it. It brings news about the war on the Indian frontier, about the plague in Bombay and Poona and elsewhere. Here are telegrams from all over the world. But one short item catches our eye and has more interest for us, just now, than all of the others. It announces that the "S.S. Oriental" has left Aden, and is expected to land at Bombay early tomorrow morning. This is the ship on which Bros. Higgins and Hardy and Miss Archibald are coming. Hurrah!

I am spinning along towards home. Did I say spinning? Not yet. There are three miles of rough country to cross before reaching the road. The bicycle and the rider take turns carrying each other until we strike fair sailing. To go around by the road the distance to Bimil is about fifteen miles. The wind is against us, the sun is low in the west and there is no moon this evening. But joy makes a good steam engine and my wheel tries a race with the sinking sun. A small, black cow is grazing on the side of the road. She sees nothing, until the phantom wheel is upon her. One-leap takes her across the ditch, and she bounds over the rocks like a wild reindeer, as if a tiger were after her. But the bicycle and I must rush along. Across a brook, which has no bridge, over four more miles of road, across another brook that has no bridge, out upon another and a better road, five miles more, and the sun has won the victory. Night falls upon the road and upon the fields. These thick shade trees, which hang over the road in some places, are just what we need in the daytime, but in the night they often hide the light of every star, and bury the traveller in darkness, so dense that he cannot see his hand before him. I have no lantern with me and there are still six miles to go. There are short cuts to make, bullock carts to meet, whose drivers are asleep and never wake up to turn out until you get by. There are deep ditches and holes along the side of the road, and bridges over rocky wadies. Committing my way to Him, in whose sight the night shineth as the day, I find a safe path through the darkness to the Mission Bungalow at Bimlipatam. "I will trust and not be afraid."

This is Thursday afternoon, two days before Christmas. A spin of sixteen miles toward the north pole brings us to the gate of the Vizianagram Mission House. A telegram had come stating that our missionary party hope to reach Vizianagram R.R. Station this Thursday evening. The station master had assured Mr. Gullison that passengers from Bombay cannot possibly make connections so as to reach Vizianagram on the half-past eighteen o'clock train. He said that we need not expect our friends until the train came that was due at twenty-four o'clock. Nevertheless, we were unable to keep away from the station, and when the engine came steaming in we were on the platform. We looked into all the cars, but could not find them. Then we turned to come away, having given up seeing them that evening until midnight. Suddenly there was a rush behind us and a sound of familiar voices. We turned around and lo, there, as if they had just dropped down from the stars, were Mr.

Higgins, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Archibald and Miss Archibald. Mr. Archibald had gone down as far as Samalocotta to meet his niece. The train did not seem to be in a hurry to go, and we had about half an hour to talk about everything. But now the bell is ringing "All aboard." Mr. Hardy, Mr. Archibald and Miss Archibald get on the train to proceed to Chicacole, while Mr. Higgins accompanies us to the Vizianagram Mission House. It seems so natural to see Mr. Higgins in India again that I can hardly believe he has been home at all. We sit around the table with the Vizianagram missionaries, and if you want to see a happy family come and see us, as we rejoice over the safe arrival of these three fellow-workers. All have so much to say and so much to ask that the evening is gone before we know it, and the Rajah's gong strikes twelve.

On Friday, the day before Christmas, Mr. Higgins comes to Bimil. Mr. and Mrs. Gullison and Mr. Sanford also come and spend Christmas, with us. It is a glorious day and reminds us of the great Christmas which God gave us, last year, when Mr. and Mrs. Gullison, Miss Harrison and Miss Newcombe landed on this shore. Sunday morning, Mr. Higgins is preaching for us in Telugu. It is surprising to hear him speak so freely, in spite of his two years absence from the country. It is a grand thing to have him back again, all ready for work. "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

These three missionaries have brought a world of encouragement with them. There is nothing here to pay them for what they have left behind, but the smile of their Master. I know that my Redeemer liveth, for He lives in them. What does the coming of these missionaries mean? It means that we have three more fellow-workers in this great vineyard. We have three more to help preach the gospel to these boys and girls, these men and women. We have three more to help train our Telugu brothers and sisters, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. We have three more to encourage our hearts and quicken our zeal, by their presence, their words and their deeds, three more children of God, in the midst of the children of Beelzebub. And their coming means more than this. It means that the Telugus are not forgotten in the dear home land. Their coming brings a flood of sympathy from the shore which they have left behind. They have left their country, their kindred and their father's house, that the kingdom of heaven might come with power amongst the Telugus. This helps us to realize that there are many beside ourselves who love the Telugus and long for their salvation. It shows us that you are with us. More than all, it shows that God is with us. It means that God has set his love upon the Telugus. Their coming means that God has been preparing them all their life for this work, even before they knew it themselves. And we believe that He is preparing many others for this same work, whether we know who they are or not. Indeed, they may not know it yet themselves. God's sending these missionaries means that He has an elect people here whom He is going to bring into His fold, even though now they may be serving dumb idols. He is going to bring them out. He has sent these missionaries after them. We thank God and take courage. As I close this letter Mr. Hardy and his munshi are hanging away at the Telugu. He is fighting it with a vim that is sure to conquer. He has already learned the lesson, that we may even study Telugu in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Sincerely yours,
Bimlipatam, India, Jan. 12. I. D. MORSE.

McGiffert's Apostolic Age.

BY D. A. STEELE, D. D.

The above volume has already received a notice in these columns. But a more extended consideration may be allowed, inasmuch as it is an extra good piece of work, and also typical of the present manner of dealing with the early records of Christianity. "Work," we say, and wisely, for to write one chapter would tax the strength of some men. It is not an old time history of the dry-as-dust order, but a comprehensive study of all the sources of our knowledge of the first century of the Christian religion and of the growth of the views and beliefs expressed in the New Testament and contemporary records lucidly set before us. It is a calm recital of the wonderful story of the founding of the kingdom, and of the way in which it spread.

THE CLEARING OF THE MIST.

Our author dwells on the dawning of light upon the minds of the apostles as to the true nature of the mission of Jesus. It took time to apprehend Him as Messiah, and to see that He was not to set up an earthly kingdom. There is clear statement, also, of the gradual discovery of the church that Jesus was not to return immediately. This was the hardest lesson to learn, indeed the Paulus has been a source of perplexity ever since. There are several references to this engrossing subject, and the manner of dealing with it is at once informing and fair.

P. 252, in speaking of the second letter to the Thessalonians, the author says: "It is clear that though he (Paul) believed that the consummation was not far distant, and apparently expected to witness it himself, he was nevertheless convinced that an interval of greater or less duration must elapse before the end came."

But really the first impression concerning the return of Jesus was incorrect, and, moreover, the disciples for some time thought of a carnal kingdom. We quote

again as explicative of the early view of the longed for return of the Lord. Note p. 63, "Looking to the future as the disciples were for the consummation of the kingdom and for the complete fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, they must inevitably feel less interest in the life of Jesus on earth than in His future advent. The life which they had witnessed was only preparatory, not final, and had value chiefly in its relation to days to come. Thus is explained the remarkable fact that for a long time the significance of Jesus' earthly life was almost entirely overlooked."

Is not the mistake indicated in the above made by some modern disciples? The grand emphasis of Christianity during the dispensation of the Spirit is on what Christ did at His first advent. Our Lord's last addresses clearly point to this (Luke 24:47) "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations," and to this main end they were to be clothed "with power from on high;" "Preach the gospel to every creature, and lo! I am with you all the days until the end of the world." We do not mean to depreciate the second advent, for that holds its appropriate place, but the main stress, it seems to us, at present must be on the Atonement for sin made when the Messiah was in the flesh.

LITTLE LIBERTIES.

We have in "The Apostolic Age," specimens of the free manner in which the modern scholar greets the plain statements of the New Testament. As illustrative of this point pp. 49, 50 in dealing with "Pentecost and the earliest evangelism," Dr. McGiffert shows his independence of received views by insisting that, "It was not the birthday of the Christian church . . . for the Christian church was in existence before Pentecost . . . Pentecost was a day on which the Spirit of God manifested Himself through the disciples as a power for the conversion of others. It was the inauguration of the evangelistic activity of the Christian church. . . . It was not the coming of the Spirit, but the testimony of the disciples that constituted the great central fact of the day." Is this in accord with the narrative of Luke?

Now let us see how our author further treats the statements of the historian: "But in accordance with his general conception, the author of the Book of the Acts finds the chief significance of Pentecost in the descent of the Holy Spirit whom he regards as not given till then." So our author's view is not that of Luke. Moreover, in treating of the tongues in which the apostles spoke at that great inaugural service, our brother does not agree with Luke. He classes the speaking at Pentecost with the gift of tongues so much set by in Paul's letters and says:

"It was apparently this 'gift of tongues' with which the disciples were endowed at Pentecost, and they spoke, therefore, not in foreign languages, but in the ecstatic, frenzied, unintelligible, spiritual speech of which Paul tells us in his first epistle to the Corinthians."

How were they understood, then? and how did every man hear in his own native language? are the queries that come to a plain man. But here again Professor McGiffert in a long note intimates that Luke's idea is different from that which he has so carefully stated: p. 52 n. Luke "evidently supposed that the disciples used foreign tongues, for he took pains to emphasize the fact that those present heard them speaking in the languages severally native to the auditors."

It is also insisted at some length that Luke misinterpreted this part of the Pentecostal phenomena. The view above presented, that the disciples did not speak in foreign languages, has been argued before, but that Luke should not understand, and should misrepresent the phenomena, is something we are quite unprepared for. For our own part, we will stick to Luke. These are specimens of the freedom with which the narration of events in the Acts is treated. All through the reader is brought to a stand by questionings of a similar kind. This is the bane of modern interpretation. The commentator must be wiser than the inspired writer. His opinion overrides the plain statement of the narrator. We in the Provinces are not prepared to take issue with the sacred writers; but unhesitatingly accept their narration of events.

OTHERWISE GOOD HISTORICAL INTENTION.

Our author insists that the first Christians were not liberated from their Jewish modes of thought, and from a close interpretation of the record in the Acts of the Apostles he makes out his case. He is quite right here. They were in bondage to the letter for a long time. While he gives Peter and others credit for their admission of Gentile converts, it must, however, "fairly be doubted whether the idea of eating with Cornelius and the other Gentile converts presented itself to Peter." "The outpouring of the Spirit [on the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius] . . . did not necessarily mean that a Jew, because he was a Christian, had a right to violate the *kabala* law."

"That they admitted that it was lawful for a Jewish Christian to break bread with his Gentile brethren, or, in other words, to disregard the Jewish law, in any particular, must be unequivocally denied." The disciples did not see in the conversion and reception of this Gentile, "the ultimate abrogation of the Jewish law, or the rise of

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