

Sister Belle's Corner.

(For the little folks who read this paper).

DEAR BOYS AND GIRLS,—The people of India are very superstitious, that is, they believe a great deal of nonsense. It is hard for our missionaries to convince them of their errors, or to make them leave off old heathen customs.

For instance, in a letter I received last week from our dear Mrs. Timpany, she tells me about an eclipse of the moon in India: "It was total about nine o'clock, and we enjoyed seeing it very much. But, oh, what a noise the natives did make! Do you know their idea of an eclipse? They say it is a large snake trying to swallow the moon, and are always very much afraid that it will succeed. So they make all the fearful noises they can to drive it away. Then just as the moon comes out of the eclipse they rush off to a tank to bathe, believing that the water falling from the snake's mouth has defiled them. Numbers of these people really know better, but still join in their heathen customs."

I was reading to-night a sketch from the *Bombay Times* about pilgrimages in India. Twice every year the great temple of the goddess Bhowani is thronged by men and women of all classes, who come to pay their vows and sacrifice to the idol. Then at every full-moon long trains of pilgrims flock there, believing that the idol has great healing powers. One man the writer had seen near Barsee making the journey by lying on the ground and measuring himself as he crawled along. It was under the burning sun of noonday, and hardly able to go on, he looked the picture of despair.

Another man took a long journey to this temple by rolling himself on the ground. When the writer saw him he had been on the way for fifteen months and had rolled 450 miles. If he came to a river that could not be crossed that way, he would go back a distance equal to the width of the river and roll over it a second time. His only clothing was a coarse cloth bound tightly around his waist, and another about his head. Thus, almost naked, over rough stony roads, exposed to heat and cold, drenched with rain or covered with mud, for a year and three months, this poor man had been rolling himself along to reach the idol and gain pardon for his sins.

Dr. Duff, in his book about India, tells us that some of these pilgrims remain all day with their heads on the ground and their feet in the air. Others fill their eyes with mud and their mouths with straw. One man may be seen lying with his foot tied to his neck, another with a pot of fire on his breast, and a third bound tightly in a net of ropes. At a feast called Charak Pujah, or hook-swinging, many pilgrims throw themselves from the top of a high wall, or a scaffold, twenty feet high, on large bags of straw, which are full of iron spikes and sharp knives. Some have their breasts and arms stuck full of pins. Others tie themselves to a wheel and are turned round and round; others cover their under lip with a layer of mud, planting in it some mustard seed. Then they lie flat on the ground, exposed to the heavy dews at night and the blazing sun by day. They have taken a vow not to rise, or turn, or move, or eat, or drink until the seeds planted begin to sprout. This generally takes place in three or four days. At the great Charak festival

several blacksmiths with sharp instruments stand in the temple. The pilgrims come to them, holding rods, canes, cards or serpents in their hands. One holds out his arm, and the blacksmith pierces it through and passes his rod or cane through the hole. Another puts out his tongue to be pierced in the same manner. Then these poor people dance back and forward pulling these canes through their wounds until their bodies are covered with blood. And these cruel, dark things, are done year after year to make peace with their gods of wood and stone. Oh, how much India needs the Bible and the living God!

SISTER BELLE.

480, Lewis Street, Ottawa.

Mission Band Reports.

"EASTERN LIGHT" MISSION BAND.

Farmington, Wilmot, N.S.

DEAR SISTER BELLE,—A few of the girls of this place organized a Mission Band on the 27th of August, for the purpose of supporting a heathen girl at school. The band is very small, numbering only fifteen. We held a sale, Dec. 20th, and received about \$7, and intend holding another in the course of a few weeks.

LOUISE MACGREGOR, Sec.

Feb. 5th, 1881.

Paris, Ont., February 19th, 1881.

The Juvenile Missionary Band held their second annual meeting on Friday, 18th February, when a very encouraging report was read, showing our membership to be 55; and the money raised during the year to amount to \$19. We meet once a month, and the interest still seems to keep up. Besides the subscriptions of one cent per month, some of the members have Mission Boxes, which are opened once a quarter. We like Sister Belle's Corner very much, and often find it a help in our meeting.

B. M., Sec.

REV. MR. WILLIAMS who for some years has had charge of the Brownson Theological Seminary, Ramapatam, is soon to return to America on account of health, and Rev. Mr. Boggs is to take charge of the Seminary in his absence.

WOMEN'S BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO.

Received from January 24th to February 24th, 1881.

Paris M. C. \$12; Paris children's aux. \$2; Cheltenham M. C. \$3; Brantford M. C. \$23; Jarvis St., \$14 95; Alexander St., \$11 25; Aylmer, \$5; Georgetown, \$2 50; Peterboro, \$18 10; London (York St.) \$18 20; Mrs. E. Farney, Boston, Ont., per Mrs. L. C. Barber, \$1.—Total, \$111.

JESSIE M. LLOYD, Treas.

222 Wellesley Street.

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