

Canadian Missionary Link.

CANADA. In the Interests of the Baptist Foreign Mission Societies of Canada. INDIA.

VOL. III., No. 8.] "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising"—Is. lx. 2. | APRIL 1881

Needs of the Foreign Field.

BY MRS. ARMSTRONG.

(A paper read at the Annual Meeting of the W. M. A. Societies of Nova Scotia.)

It is true that the present is an anxious time in many ways to those who are connected with our Foreign Mission work; but all such have strong ground of confidence in this, that many are earnestly working and praying at home, and that God has committed to their care one of the most promising portions of all His harvest field abroad.

The northern portion of the Telugu country, where our people have established their mission, is white to the harvest. Faith in Hinduism is kept up almost wholly by the women, who in their seclusion have heard of nothing else. The men wavering between Christianity and infidelity, are held nominally to their ancient faith very largely by the home influence which they have not yet dared to face. Let me try to bring before you as vividly as possible your mission field in India. I shall not try to give you a comprehensive view, so much as to bring out some details of the work there which may not be familiar to you.

There are three phases of mission work in India; that for the Mohomedans; for the Hindus proper; and for the outcasts and pariahs. They differ about as work here for Catholics, for infidels or freethinkers, and for the negroes. I fear the popular idea of heathens is that they are all savages; but the Mahomedans and the Hindus are no more savages than ancient Greeks and Romans were. Many of them listen to a missionary with precisely the same feeling that Paul encountered at Athens. "What will this babbling say?" has been the question of many a heathen philosopher of India, and the cross of Christ is foolishness to them just as it was to the Greeks. They, too, seek after wisdom, and unless you can show that your thoughts have gone as deep as theirs, and deeper, you are powerless before them. These people are not poor, many of them are very wealthy: They are not illiterate, many of them are more thoroughly educated than some in America, because they are able to think for themselves, and are not dependent on the thought of others. But let us never forget that they are utterly without God, and without hope in the world, entangled in a mesh of cunningly devised fables and science, falsely

so called—just such material as the Jewish bigots and the Greek and Roman idolaters of the time of Christ and His Apostles were. The Mahomedans are confessedly the most difficult to reach, simply because so much of truth is mixed with their false worship. "A lie that is all a lie can be met and fought with outright, but a lie that is half the truth is a harder matter to fight."

The great difficulty with the Hindus is, that though you may meet and convince them intellectually, "they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." Their moral depravity is such that they do not want to believe that truth which will oblige them to give up their evil practices of heathenism. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and the same thing that hinders "lovers of pleasures" here from being Christians, holds Hindus with tenfold power. In Burmah, the grand success of the Gospel has been among the Karens, the outcasts of that country. In India, also, its success has been almost exclusively among the Pariahs or outcasts. Writing to the men of Corinth, Paul said, "Not many noble," but "God hath chosen the base things of the world." God chooses the same to-day. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The work among this class has not only been the most fruitful, it is in some ways the easiest. Anyone can see how it might be easier to take a poor illiterate negro, educate him, and hope to lead him to Christ, rather than to undertake to do anything for a wealthy and educated infidel, who needed nothing from you, and was quite as wise as you in his own eyes, and did not want the man Christ Jesus to reign over him, who loved the world and its pleasures, and had no doubt that he was as good as the next one, and would fare as well hereafter. And yet one saved from this class, who could turn his wealth and influence toward Christianity, instead of against it, would be capable of doing much more in some directions than the negro. He would probably be an abler man. This is precisely the case in India between a caste man and a pariah.

Our work in Chicacole was particularly interesting to us, because it was almost wholly among caste people. Out of twenty-nine church members, twenty-three had been caste people, and six only had been pariahs. These twenty-three represent a very large circle of relatives and friends to whom we had access, and who were more or less well disposed towards the Gospel, some of whom