

“THE WONDERFUL BOOK.”

One day, at the door of his bungalow in Upper India, sat a devoted missionary. Behind him the Himalayan mountains pointed their white fingers to heaven. Around him the sights and sounds of Oriental life were gathered. His hair was white and his form bent, for he had labored for many years under the blazing sun of the torrid zone.

Presently through the compound came a little group of people. Twenty-seven in all he counted as they paused in front of him. With a deep salaam the chief of the men opened the conversation.

“My father! Seventeen miles have I and my people walked since the sun the all powerful hath risen this morning.”

“And what do you want of me?” questioned the missionary, slowly, for his heart was weary and his body tired.

“My father! Thou art a teacher come from God the all good. We wish for the wonderful book!”

“Do you mean the Bible?” The tones were eager now, all weariness and heart-sickness lost in glad surprise.

“My father! We have sent for the wonderful book written by God the all-wise - to Calcutta, but the great city hath it not; to Benares the holy, the Ganges beareth it not to us; to Agra, but the Temple containeth it not. Now we come to thee; can the teacher of all truth give us one!”

The missionary answered: “I have one copy of the wonderful book, but only one. I cannot give it you. I know not where to get another. If I give my copy to you, what shall I do when my people bid me read to them out of the wonderful book?”

Still they pleaded for it.

“And why,” he said, “do you want this book?”

Very humbly, very softly, fell the next words: “We want it—the wonderful book—because it tells of the Lord Jesus Christ—the all-loving—and of the way to heaven.”

The missionary could not resist that appeal, and gave it to them. Then the leader

fell on his knees and kissed his feet. He clasped the book to his heart, and kissed it; then gave it to his son, who kissed it again and again.

Presently from his “cummerbund” (or girdle) he drew out a little bag, full of gold and precious stones. Little value were they to him compared with the “wonderful book.”

“My father! I bid thee take these stones; they are worthless; thou hast given me the true riches.”

But the missionary refused, saying—

“Nay, keep thy gold, I ask it not; For the word of God is free.”

“The book was a present to me,” he added, “take it as a gift; I cannot sell it.”

With many farewells the travelers were about to depart, when he asked one more question. “Tell me, what will you do with the wonderful book?”

Reverently the Hindoo held the little volume up. “I will go out by the temple—the temple of the all-false—every morning; I will stand by its marble steps, and I will read from the wonderful book—the all-true—for twenty minutes to all who will hear.”

“And may the blessing of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost be with you.”

And with the white teacher's words in his ear the sable missionary went on his way.

A CHILD'S EVENING HYMN.

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me;  
Bless thy little child to-night;  
Through the darkness be thou near me;  
Watch my sleep till morning light.

All this day thy hand has led me,  
And I thank thee for thy care;  
Thou hast warmed me, clothed me, fed me,  
Listen to my evening prayer.

Let my sins be all forgiven,  
Bless the friends I love so well;  
Take me when I die to heaven,  
Happy there with thee to dwell.