

Mission Field.

Letters from Indore.

Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

SIR,—Possibly a short description of some of the inner features of our work may not be uninteresting. Two weeks ago one of our now Christian women, Rheo by name, went in to the city to buy some bamboos to make for herself a house, when she was seized by two of her old caste men and kept a close prisoner all day in one of their houses. As she did not return in the evening, inquiries were made, and through the help of the chief justice of Indore, she was released and allowed to return to her house after midnight. She, her husband and son had been living in one of the Mang wards of the city. First the husband and son were baptized, without any special bitterness being developed; but when the wife, in the face of the pleading and threatening of the caste women resolved to become a baptized Christian, the whole family had to leave the house and ward, losing the house and all the property they were not able then to carry away with them; and they have been since then living in an old disused lunekiln on the college compound. As this afforded them protection neither from the weather nor thieves, and gave them no kind of privacy, I agreed to let them build for themselves a small temporary grass hut on the back of the college compound, and it was to get bamboo for this that the wife went into the city the day she was arrested.

In the same ward with the family lived a married daughter who had also imbibed Christian views. Her husband and caste tried very hard to change her ideas by means only too well known to them; and when all failed one day the husband on coming home at noon throw her on the ground and cut off the hair from the lower half of the back of her head, the lowest, most degrading form of punishment known to a Hindoo in regard to a woman. By this act she becomes divorced, outcasted and practically dead to all human relationships in this land. None dare speak with or help her in any way, and so those usually so dealt with jump into the nearest well as the only course open to them. This girl, Radhi by name, though only fifteen years old, had too much spirit and knowledge for this, and at once ran over to her mother and afterward to Mr. Johory's, whose wife has what we call the "Industrial Home" in her care.

Next day, finding that the purpose intended had not been secured, and that not only had the man lost his wife but he had driven her into the arms of those he wanted to oppose, he and his people tried to get her to return to them. Had she agreed to this they would in all probability have resorted to more summary methods of getting rid of her, and this the young wife knew well and so refused to have anything to do with them. We twice allowed them to come over and in a *panchayat* or council, state their case as fully as they wished, and we thereby were brought face to face with a phase of our difficulty that was new but all-important. The greater number of those who came were women, and the most of these were Murlies, i.e., women who have been married to one of the gods, and who, professedly in their service, spend their lives in sin under the wing of the temple. In the past from the Mangs and other low castes have been received this class, and also the poor creatures that minister to the passions of the soldiers in the military cantonments. A large class of men are engaged in this horrible traffic, and those who have become enslaved are their most determined assistants. The priests so gild and praise the life of the Murlie that some parents agree to it; and in time of difficulty or danger the priests only agree to help or get the help of the god on condition that one or more of the daughters are promised to the god as his wife. These women get money, are apparently saved the slavery and even starvation of the married women of their caste, and in addition have an immense influence amongst even the highest classes, and so we need not wonder if some of the poor, ignorant and deeply prejudiced, are misled.

One poor widow had two daughters. One fell ill, when the priest so worked on the fears of the mother that at last she agreed to

the marriage of her two daughters to the god as soon as they should be of age, and accordingly the sign of the god was pricked into their foreheads with blue ink. One of these about thirteen years of age came under our notice when the Mang movement began. The priests were clamoring for her even then, and the mother, though unwilling to have the horrid marriage farce performed, yet could not keep her. To save her and her sister we took them under our care, much to the joy of both the girls and their mother. This is what led us to think of our "Industrial Home," which Mrs. Johory took charge of without remuneration, and in which we are trying to train the women to be self-supporting. Our action in regard to these two girls roused the Murlies and their friends to a state bordering on frenzy, and so began a most determined opposition to our work from these.

These so-called wives of the gods, backed up by the influence of the priests, have an immense influence amongst all classes, but especially amongst the poor ignorant women, and through these they have been trying as best they can to oppose us. It was they who caused Rheo to be carried off, and caused the husband to cut off the hair of his wife. All unfavorable circumstances, such as sickness, are attributed to the people becoming Christians. Threats and even violence are resorted to when possible and as these Murlies would not be punished by the ordinary magistrates of the city the women fear them.

Can you realize the condition of an ignorant people, whose religious ideas are derived from such filthy sources, whose whole past has been associated with tyranny, contempt and even a species of slavery? Would you wonder if they did not at once rise to the manly vigor of our home "ideal," and if some should fall away in the face of the terrible odds they have to contend against. Can you not also see why it is often as hard and even more difficult for a low caste man to become a Christian as for a Brahmin? I can, however, say I am simply amazed at the power of the Gospel of Jesus and at what God by His blessed Spirit has done amongst these poor people.

I should have said that the congregation has undertaken the support of these poor women that are being trained to make their own living, but we would be glad of companions in this blessed work. Yours, etc., J. WILKIE.

INDORE, Dec. 28th, 1893.

Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

SIR,—The inclosed letter speaks for itself and though it was not intended for publication yet in the belief that it will do good I send it to you. The letter is as follows:—

NEEMUCH, 27-12-93.

DEAR MR. WILKIE,—I have only time to write a few words but I know they will bring you and Mrs. Wilkie joy and gladness and I trust many more.

Enclosed please find a draft for £52 which I had sent to me by a friend in the home land as a Xmas present. It has already brought much joy to my heart, so I pass it on to you to be used in the College building as my gift. I had often thought how nice it would be if I could give something to help on the building. I cannot give you my friend's name but the instructions that came in the letter were that I was to use it on myself privately. This I feel I cannot do while the College building stands unfinished in the sight of the heathen.

Should you acknowledge it in any way in your reports or in the papers please put it in such a way that the friend may see what has become of it. I don't want any one to think that I have wealth from which I could give it, nor do I want any one to think that we are paid such large salaries that we can lay up money in this way. I wonder if I have made myself plain—the substance of my remarks are that a friend in the home land, whose heart the Lord opened, sent me a Xmas box of £52 and that after prayerful consideration I pass it on to you for the College building, as I believe that to be the most pressing need. God, I am sure, will in His own way provide all the money to finish the College.

Sincerely yours,
MARQUART McKELLAR.

In the hopes that it may do others good as it has already the whole Indore staff I send it on to you and shall be glad if you can find a corner for it in your columns.

Yours etc.,
J. WILKIE.

Indore, Dec. 29th, 1893.

Mission Work in B. C.

Editor of THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

SIR, This station was opened some three or four years ago by the missionary stationed at Chilliwack village, and about three years ago was placed in charge of Mr. Jas. McKay, (now Rev.) who worked faithfully under special difficulties for two years. A church was built at one point (Camp slough) and two school houses were utilized as preaching places.

Time and space forbid detailing the struggles of my predecessor—not against a depraved, godless element, but with an enlightened Christian (?) element which strove to oppose—but the work has steadily progressed until to day, when, in spite of some drawbacks, it is a very promising field.

The great obstacles to be met in this locality may be classed under two heads—

1. Disagreements among people.—These are not yet entirely wanting, but are considerably lessened. Were I not familiar with similar troubles in the east, I would suppose it impossible for sections and neighbours to be divided over such trifles as are sufficient here to break up the harmony of the settlement, invade the sacred precincts of the church and Sabbath school, and add to the missionary's burdens an undesirable but necessary work of attempted conciliation, with added discouragements when failure ensues.

2. Disagreeable weather.—During the past 13 months we have had, in the Fraser valley, every phase of weather from the loveliest summer to 20 below zero, with a fierce wind blowing—but with the exception of three or four months all disagreeable. Of course, the "oldest inhabitant" never saw such weather before in B. C., but if it continues like the past year for many seasons (and it seems to be getting worse every year) the far-famed reputation of B. C.'s climate will be sadly marred.

Our normal condition of weather is rain, and when it can't rain it snows or blows, always excepting a lovely period in summer. The result is almost impassable roads—mud everywhere, sometimes floating corduroys, mire holes, etc. What this locality wants most is good roads. The people can stand the rain and are willing to do so if the roads were only put in a decent condition. With good roads and weather there is no difficulty in getting good congregations.

But let not easterners think there are no encouragements. The people here are just as kind and hearty—perhaps more so—as they are in Ontario. Life here is just as pleasant in many respects. Friends become just as dear, yes, it would almost seem dearer in some instances, as they are yonder, and no man coming to labour in a locality like this can afford, as was truly remarked by one of the residents here, to do less than his very best.

True, in some parts there is a great indifference to the Gospel, and worse, but this is not general, at least in Upper Chilliwack.

Were it desirable to fill up your space with such matter, I might describe the physical characteristics of this place, the surrounding mountains, the muddy and ever changing and woefully treacherous Fraser, the intermittent rivers, called "sloughs," the winding roads, the magnificent trees, etc., but I fancy I have already occupied too much space.

But let me, ere closing, appeal to those who have the cause of our blessed Lord's work at heart, in behalf of this province. It is a shame that Dr. Robertson should have to report ten or eleven stations without a missionary. Are there no men in Ontario? Must it continue to be a stigma upon the theological students and unacted ministers of Ontario that they are trampling upon each others skirts in the east or flocking to the U. S., while the rain and the mud frighten them away from B. C., and the cold