

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

NOTES FROM CENTRAL INDIA.

BY THE REV. J. M. DOUGLAS, INDORE.

It is now twelve months since we arrived in this strange and interesting land. Our experience and knowledge of place and people are necessarily limited at this stage of our work, yet such is the interest of your readers in the mission band in Central India that a few facts may be acceptable.

The Empire of India extends over a territory as large as the Continent of Europe, without Russia, and has an area of 1,486,319 square miles with a population of 250 millions. From Pesbawar, the northern frontier station, to Cape Comorin the distance is 1,900 miles, and the same distance separates Karachi, the port of Sui, from Sudiya, the frontier post on the eastern border of Assam. Geographically the country may be divided into Northern and Southern India. Northern India, or Hindustan, lying at the foot of the Himalayas, and stretching from sea to sea, comprehends the rich alluvial plains watered by the Indus, the Ganges, the Lower Brahmaputra, and their tributaries. Southern India, or the Deccan, is a plateau of triangular shape, and very old geological formation, bounded on two sides by the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, which converge at Cape Comorin, and on the third by the Vindhya Mountains just south of us, and north of the Narbaddah River. Three-fifths of this great empire is now under the direct rule of the British Government, and is divided for administrative purposes into nine provinces, viz., Bengal, the North West Provinces, Punjab, Oudh, the Central Provinces, British Burmah, Assam, Madras, and Bombay. The remaining two-fifths are made up of a large number of Native States, whose chiefs, one and all, acknowledge the sovereignty of Her Imperial Majesty, Shri Shri Rani, Victoria, Kaiser-i-Hind.

THE GOVERNMENT.

Her Majesty's representative is styled the Viceroy and Governor-General. He sustains the authority of a Secretary of State for India to the Home Government, and is aided by a council of six members. This body forms the Supreme Government, and to it is committed for review the entire administration. The business is conducted in six separate departments—Financial, Home, Foreign, Military, Public Works, and the Department of Agriculture, Revenue, and Commerce. It is through the Foreign Department that the power of the Supreme Government is felt here. Its secretary corresponds with the political agents of the independent Native States of Rajputana and Central India.

In 1875 the receipts of the Supreme Government amounted to £2,568,299, and the expenditure to £13,447,250. With this Government rests the entire cost of the army and the interest on the national debt, and in fact the whole imperial expenditure. The above excess of expenditure over receipts is balanced by the aggregate surplus of the nine provinces.

THE PROVINCES.

The provinces of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay are called "Presidencies." This term is calculated to mislead, as if British India were at present divided into these three parts; it is a relic of the time when the three settlements of Fort William and Fort St. George were each under the authority of a President. These settlements then comprised nearly the whole of the British possessions in India. British India now comprises nine provinces, each under its own Civil Government, and each independent of the others, but subordinate to the Supreme Authority. In 1853 Bengal became a separate administration. It embraces in extent the basin of the Ganges, including Bengal proper, and Behar, together with the ill-watered country of Chota-Nagpur and Orissa. About two-thirds of the population are agriculturists, and one-third are Mahomedans. Opium contributes more than six millions of the gross revenue of the year. The large surplus of Bengal, added to the smaller contributions of the other provinces, forms the fund out of which the Imperial expenditure of India is discharged. Its most important products are opium, indigo, jute and grain. The North-West Provinces were separated from Bengal in 1833, and made a Lieutenant-Governorship. The area of this province is nearly equal to that of Great Britain. Out of a population of thirty millions, more than twenty-six millions of the people are Hindoos. The "Punjab" was annexed in 1848,

chaffing, to bear from some, but I swallow it all, and they soon come round." A man of tact, with his heart in the cause of Christianity and temperance, will find numberless ways of helping on the cause. If he gets on friendly terms with a customer he can repeat the remark of this one or the other who told him the other day what a blessing the coffee rooms had been to him; or he can tell of some poor woman who has given up the public-house in their favour, and exchanged a life of misery for one of comfort and peace; or he can answer inquiries, if they are made to him, regarding churches or religious services, where the anxious may be guided to blessings infinitely higher than the comforts of the coffee-rooms.

Very wisely the directors resolved that nothing should be wanting that could reasonably contribute to the attractiveness of the rooms. On the ground-floor there is usually a large apartment set with rows of benches and narrow tables, where men, very like their work, and that by no means cleanly work, are accommodated, especially at meal times. How to keep this place clean, especially in wet weather—of which commodity Liverpool is by no means stinted—is the insoluble problem of the concern. Up-stairs there are usually apartments where a slight increase of cost secures a somewhat more select class of customers. Here the floors are covered with floor-cloth, and the tables with marble slabs. Everything looks bright and cheerful. If you get your coffee in a snug down-stairs, here you have the luxury of a cup. Sometimes there are rooms for women—of course very civilized. As to smoking, if it is wished, a room is provided for it. In fact there is accommodation for a considerable variety in the social scale. The letter-carrier may refresh himself at his ease when he has got rid of his bundle; the telegraph boy when he has run his message; the clerk or tradesman in the lull of business; the teacher even, while the school is at play. Our sympathies are liable to forget these, and we are apt to fancy that the working classes have a monopoly of temptation. Often it is far otherwise; and though the cases may not be so numerous, there are, no doubt, not a few intermediates, as we call them, to whom the coffee-shops are a great boon.

It is indispensable that the coffee-houses be early of opening and late of closing. Even "early to bed and early to rise" does not go far enough for them. Every door must be opened by five in the morning. Not only must the door be opened, but the viands must be ready. This involves getting up about four—a hard enough condition on winter mornings. But it would never do to miss the chance of the working man as he passes, cold and empty, to his work. He really needs his "morning," and in no shape is it so useful as in that of cocoa or coffee. Then it is found that the demand continues till ten at night, or even later. By relays of servants, or by arrangements among themselves, provision is made for both early and late customers. It is evident, in this point of view, that it is a great benefit to have a dwelling-house on the premises; this is well worthy of being kept in view in places where it is contemplated to begin the work.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

In our hours of ease we hate the thought of pain, we shrink from the self-sacrifice which exertion on behalf of others requires, and our pain and our sorrow too often render us more exacting instead of softening us and making us more considerate. We expect others to sympathize with us. We demand of them that they rejoice with us in our joy, and that they weep with us when we weep. We call them hard, and selfish, and unsympathizing when we find no response. But did we ever, in our own sorrow, seek its sweetest, purest, holiest alleviation in ministering to the grief of those whom God has wounded? Oh, there is a great deal of misery and unhappiness in the world. There is many a heart which needs the oil and wine of compassionate mercy, many a wound that needs a tender hand to bind it up. There are many bitter, bitter tears which we may help to wipe away, many a grief which we may soothe, many a burden which we may lighten, many a broken and contrite spirit to which kind words would be sweet and refreshing as the dew of heaven. And shall we stand aloof from this vast mass of wretchedness and woe, and selfishly nurse our own griefs, instead of remembering that God sends us sorrow to unlock in us the springs of sympathy, that we may be strong to comfort others? Oh, let us learn this lesson at the foot of our Saviour's cross—whether in sorrow or in joy, no Christian man liveth to himself. All the fountains of his heart, all his best affections have been hallowed and consecrated by the breath of the Spirit of Him who hung upon the cross; and that spirit is a spirit of sympathy, a spirit of compassion, a spirit of self-forgetfulness, a spirit of tender, thoughtful, considerate love.

WIT loses its respect with the good when seen in company with malice; and to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast, is to become a principal in the mischief.—*Sheridan*.

SEAT OF CHARACTER.—Deeper than the judgment, deeper than the feelings, lies the seat of the human character—in that which is the mystery of all beings and all things, in what we call their "nature," without knowing where it lies, what it is, or how it wields its power. All we know is, that it does exert a power over external circumstances, bending them all in its own direction, or breaking its instruments against what it cannot bend. The nature of an acorn turns dew, air, soils, and sunbeams to oak; and though circumstances may destroy its power, they cannot divert it while it survives. It defies man, beast, earth and sky, to make it produce elm. Cultivation may effect its quality, and training its form; but whether it shall produce oak, ash or elm, is a matter into which no force from without can enter—a matter not of circumstances, but purely of nature. To turn nature belongs to the Power which originally fixed nature.—*W. Arthur*.

after the second Sikh war, and in 1859 it also became a Lieutenant-Governorship. It has an area about as large as the kingdom of Italy. "Oudh" was annexed by Lord Dalhousie in the interest of the people, who for more than a century had been terribly oppressed by their own rulers. It is about equal in size to Holland and Belgium. The "Central Provinces" were formed in 1861 out of territory taken from North West Provinces and Madras. The line of railway connecting Bombay with Calcutta passes through it. The traffic which passes through Jubbulpur is larger than that of any city in India except Bombay; and cotton, its chief product, finds an easy outlet to the markets of Europe. British Burmah was annexed in 1825, and Pegu in 1852. This province for its size is the most thinly inhabited in India, not because of its sterility, but from its want of roads. This matter is receiving due attention from the Government and the valley and delta of the Irrawaddy will soon maintain almost double its present population. Assam which formed part of the jurisdiction of the Governor of Bengal until 1874, was then made a separate province. Its revenue is small, but Cachar and Sylhet are the most important tea-producing districts in India. Madras is larger than Great Britain and Ireland together. It has a coast line of 1,730 miles and yet does not possess a single good harbour. The Governor is assisted by a council of three members, and by a Legislative Council. The beautiful island of Bombay was part of the dowry of the Infanta of Portugal, and was made over by Charles II. to the East India Company in 1668. The total area of the province of Bombay is not far short of that of Germany. Native States occupy one third of the area; Said, about one fourth, and Bombay proper, once the territory of the Peishwa, the remaining 82,000 square miles. The greater portion of the people are Hindoos, say about seventy-five per cent. are Mahomedans. Bombay is fast becoming the great commercial port of India, and after London and Calcutta, the most populous city in the British Empire. The revenue of these nine provinces, amounting to about fifty millions sterling, enables the British Government to maintain peace, and good rule in an Empire as large as Europe without Russia, and among a population of 250 millions almost entirely heathen.

NOTES FROM CHINA.

BY REV. G. L. MACKAY.

You remember I wrote to you some time ago about establishing a chapel in the city of Bang-Kah, and about meeting determined opposition. The head men and Mandarins began to quibble about the house which was rented. As I had other work pressing me, I left for a time, and made known to the Chinese authorities, that on the 5th day of the 11th moon, I would again enter the city. Immediately proclamations were issued to that effect, and warning all parties not to interfere with me. Saturday before last, with my students and several helpers, I proceeded to the spot and quietly entered the house intended for chapel. I passed the night in a dirty, dark, damp room, and in the morning quite a number of hearers attended worship. Forenoon, a dozen rough looking fellows stood at the door and pushed two of their number inside, whilst more of the same band were assembling outside. After some time, I induced the two who were within to leave, and had no further disturbance throughout the day.

Monday morning, I sent for masons, and began to take down the old building. They worked till evening and the following day without being disturbed. Tuesday afternoon I went to Sin-tsung, a town not far distant, and preached the Gospel of Jesus.

Wednesday morning I went to the Toa-liong-pong chapel, and from there to Sek-khain, where I extracted eighty teeth; and made known the way of salvation to hundreds in the street. From there I went to our Sa-teng-po chapel; had a bowl of rice and started back: when about half-way, I met a messenger running, who told me that my students and helpers were in the inn where I left them with the doors closed lest the mob that drove the masons away and levelled the rented house to the ground should beat and kill them. I hastened on, and at dark was entering the city where I observed a large crowd in front of a temple, and said to the helper who was with me, "I am going to see my students if ten thousand devils stand in the way, so you can follow me or go back;" he quickly replied "I'm ready to die at your side;" "All right," I