

THE BLIND HINDU'S FAITH.

In March, 1879, a Hindu lad about 18 years of age was employed as a punkah coolie at Allahabad to work the punkah or swinging fan which cools the houses there. He was not at all good-looking his face being painfully scarred and disfigured by smallpox. The same dreadful disease had left him totally blind. This great affliction had been sent on him when he was so young that he could not remember light, or this lovely world, or the face of his dear ones. One day a missionary lady spoke kindly to the blind boy and asked him,

"Do you know Jesus?"

"I have heard of him in my home in Rajputana but I know little: tell me more," was the eager reply.

So Miss P— told him about Jesus. The blind lad heard with joy of a Saviour, and took that Saviour as his own.

Then when instructed further and when he had become acquainted with Bible stories and Scripture characters, he asked to be baptized and to be named David, "for like him," he said, "I want to sing of God's mercy to me." Those who used to pity poor, sightless David, now saw that he was too happy in the sunshine of Jesus' love and the Holy Spirit's abiding presence to need any pity.

Every day David use to call at Miss P—'s house for his "daily bread," by which he meant the daily portion of Scripture, which she slowly and carefully read and explained to him, and the "golden text" daily committed to memory to roll as a sweet morsel under his tongue all day or meditate on in the night watches: for a punkah coolie must pull the punkah by night as well as by day, taking turns with his mate.

As in the course of his wandering life he had picked up a good knowledge of English he attended the Methodist church services and his distorted features seemed changed by inward light when he spoke or sang of Jesus at class or prayer-meeting. But one day there seemed a passing cloud on his usually bright face.

"Oh teacher," he said, "I so wish I could read!"

"Why David, how can you?" Miss P— replied. "You are *blind*. You *cannot* learn to read."

"Why teacher," he said, "I have heard that there are Bibles for the blind which they can learn to read with their fingers, haven't you?"

"Yes," said Miss P—, "I have, but they can't be got in India and besides they cost a great deal of money; so be content my boy and let me feed you with line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, as I have been doing." A moment's pause, then David said,

"Will you, teacher, kneel down with me? I want to ask my heavenly Father to *send me his Book* and teach me how to read it."

Miss P— thought, "Is it not better to discourage such a request? It is not likely that a Bible for the blind will be sent out from England in answer to this unknown blind boy's prayer." But already David had slipped down on his knees and was pleading God's promise, and his teacher knelt, too, and added her Amen!

Three months passed by. David came daily for instruction in that Word which was a lamp to his feet and a light to his path but never alluded to his prayer.

One morning the teacher was seated on the veranda when, "tap, tap, tap," and David and his stick, with which he felt his way, came into view.

"Teacher," he shouted, "are you there?"

"Yes David, but what have you under your arm?" for a package stitched up in cloth and looking as though it had come over sea and land, was under his arm.

"I've got a package here. Please open it for me. As I was coming to you I felt this pushed into my hand and a voice said: 'Here poor blind man, I have long pitied you and trust this gift may be a blessing to you.' Now what do you suppose it is?"

"A good coat I hope," Miss P— said, smiling. "Some kind friend has pitied your rags David." Little thinking what it was, the stitches were cut, covering after covering unwrapped, and,

"Why, what's this?" Oh thou of little faith. "Why David my dear boy it is St. John's Gospel for the blind!"

Oh the radiant joy of David's face! "The blessed Lord! I knew he would send it to me if I waited his time! My Father's own precious Book," and he kissed the Book divine with reverent but rapturous love. Together they knelt to praise and thank their covenant-keeping God and the teacher humbly prayed for the pardon of her unbelief.

Then began steady, hard work, learning to read that priceless treasure, praying and toiling, but never giving up till he could spell along the sacred lines. One day he exclaimed: