

as that of the present year. Recent letters from missionaries in the famine districts bring heart-stirring and *purse-stirring*; appeals for help from the Christians of America. From these we take extracts. India is entering upon the greatest famine of the century. The afflicted areas comprise the Punjab, Western India, parts of Southern India, and many of the native states. Following upon two years of scarcity which have impoverished the country, the present year, with its almost total failure of rain, and the utter loss over large areas of two entire crops, leaves hungry millions in absolute and awful famine. Reviewing the situation, the viceroy said, "We are now face to face with famine of water and food and cattle, which is unprecedented in character and intensity. The greatest aggregate famine area will thus be about 300,000 square miles, with a population of 40,000,000. There is a further population of 21,000,000, in which more or less general scarcity and distress prevail."

Picture the bulk of the population of the eastern half of the United States in *total famine*, without food and without money to buy grain, even if it were imported. Add to this the population of the Western States in "general scarcity and distress." Imagine outside of every city a great relief camp, with thousands breaking stone, covered with rags and bareheaded in the sun—men, women, and children silently fighting for life. A friend writes from one camp: "Poor, emaciated women, clothed only in thin rags, came and fell down at our feet and said, 'Oh, sir, we can not live, we can not keep from starving on two and a half cents a day, with grain so high priced, and breaking stones is such hard work!'"

Already there is a population equal to that of Ireland on the relief works, and they are increasing at the rate of several hundred thousands every week. The government finds its revenues reduced by the very famine it is trying to relieve. England is overtaxed by the war in South Africa. Large famine tracts lie in the districts which have been allotted to the American missions, and hundreds of these missionaries and their people can look for help only to America. Even where the government is offering relief to the heathen, native officials are often unprincipled. Some of the people are deprived of part of their wages, while the relief works are often demoralizing even where they save life. A Christian woman writes of one poorhouse: "Bad men, immoral women, pure young girls, and innocent children were freely mixing. Many were suffering from leprosy and other unmentionable diseases. God help the young girls who are obliged to go to the relief camps and poorhouses." Government is doing its best, but what is needed now is money to offer the people work in digging wells and tanks, to lend weavers yarn, and farmers seed, to provide those actually starving with grain, and build orphanages of mud or thatch for deserted children.

In South India a veteran missionary, who had been through the "great famine" of '76, when 6 millions died, said that the present famine will be greater than that "great famine." I saw one group of gaunt spectres stalk silently in from the dusty road. They had walked 75 miles. "Sir," they said, "we have no work, no food, no water; how can we live?" The old missionary could only point them on, 30 miles farther, where there was work at two or three cents a day. "But our wives and children—what will become of them, how will they live?" The old man could not answer. Here in his own field were 10,000 Christians destitute of food, praying and waiting—for what? The last hope of rain has gone; there are no crops left to be saved. The people are living on berries, roots, the thorny cactus, and grass seed, and this can last but two weeks longer. Beyond this one dreads to think. At best, no crop can come now for eight months. From April to September the famine will be at its height.

There are hundreds of men and women bravely trying to meet this famine, but who must see people die almost before their eyes because they have nothing left to give them. The missionary with whom I am staying told me this morning, that her own little girl died in the last famine because they had tried to deny themselves and give their own food to the starving natives.

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#### HOW THE ESKIMO GOT THE SCRIPTURES.

Among the successes won by the Church Missionary Society may be mentioned the giving of the Gospels to the Eskimo in their own language. For the first step in this direction we go back to the work done by Mr. Evans some sixty years ago among the Cree Indians in North Canada. When he went to them they had no literature, no written language, no true knowledge of God. They believed in a great spirit called "Manito"—from whom their country was named "Manitoba," or the great spirit land—but they thought him arbitrary and stern. By living among them, showing kindness to them, suffering hardships with them, and troubles from them, Mr. Evans gained their confidence and love. Having learned their language, he invented signs to express it in writing, these signs indicating not the letters of an alphabet, but the syllables of their language. With a burnt stick he wrote these signs on the face of a rock, and taught them to utter the corresponding sounds. He next taught them to join these sounds together. Thus, having pointed them to signs the first of which sounded "man," the second "e," and the third, "to," he bade them utter these sounds in quick succession, as he pointed to the signs. They did so, saying, "Manito." They now looked to each other with