

The Hindus and the Coronation.

BY MABEL E. ARCHIBALD.

"Let us deify Sri Edward the Seventh! Yes, we will enter his name in our religious calendar then he will be worshipped every year by peasant and peer." The word is proclaimed throughout the land, and another god is added to India's three hundred million deities.

In one short day the Hindu gentlemen how poetical they have become! Editors receive Coronation odes by the score and some of these would form brochures of considerable size.

The Maharajas, Rajas, Rances, Sardars, these extremely pictorial dignitaries, representing dynasties as old as the sun, with their brilliant suites, flutter away to England's shores like a "flight of peacocks, pheasants or birds of paradise." The Maharaja of Jeypore attracts the most attention. Thousands gather on the Bombay wharf to say farewell. His Highness performs *puja* on the steps of the bunder and brahin priests perform the ceremony of propitiating the sea by burning incense, waving lights and by throwing into the deep thousands of broken coconuts and an abundance of fruit; All the while books showing that sea voyages are not contrary to religion are distributed.

And empty-handed does the Raja go? Ah no, he takes tons of impedimenta—one hundred and thirty-two servants, six hundred pieces of luggage, a generous supply of Ganges water for his personal use during his stay in England and (wonder of wonders!) a god of great sanctity, hoary with the traditions of ages, the golden image of Karshna of the reputed value of fifty thousand pounds. Even soil from Arya-Varta for cleaning brass vessels is taken on board, also washermen, blacksmiths, carpenters, so that it might not be necessary to purchase anything or have any work done by foreigners. Probably the British will be pleased with the picturesqueness of retinue and equipment although the latter virtually implies that their land and themselves are unclean.

A few weeks ago we read that the Raja of Cochin through the influence of the priests excommunicated with penalties a subject who had gone to England. Now we read that the priests go themselves and allow the family idols to be taken—thus the chaotic state of Hindu religious authority and public opinion is revealed.

Although it was announced that all celebrations in honor of the Coronation should not be held August the ninth but be postponed until New Year's Day, the day of the Imperial Durbar at Delhi the people in the country could not wait—hence the papers are replete with the reports of the festivities of the masses. It is interesting to note the variety of ways in which the day was observed. One writes: "It was with overflowing joy and babbling enthusiasm and our feelings rose in our gazards, etc." The festivities began with the leading of the elephant headed god *Vigneswari* (remover of obstacles) through the streets. Then to the accompaniment of the clashing, beating and piping of the native band Sri Ramaswami seated on the monkey god is paraded round and round his temple.

In Chicacole fourteen hundred children were given a treat and a photograph was taken of each of the twenty schools represented. These were afterwards framed and presented to the various schools. At one of our stations the Hindus gathered at the Mission House. Papers were to be read and speeches made. The lady missionary thought the meeting should be opened with prayer. Loud clapping followed (no disrespect intended).

As we glance over the reports we read of religious services in churches, temples and mosques; popular processions with their Majesties' portraits borne on elephants or in vehicles; parades of police and salt poens; feeding and clothing of multitudes of poor; planting of coronation topes and trees, inauguration and dedication to the King Emperor of buildings, fountains and terrace courts—all proceedings being characterized by spontaneity, heartiness and completeness.

Sir and Lady Harnam Singh were invited by the Government to represent the Christian community at the Coronation, and he in person presented the address and casket (costing \$600) which the Indian Christian Association of the five Provinces united in sending His Imperial Highness.

The address printed on vellum is beautifully illuminated—a curious blending of green and gold with other delicate tints. The floral border of oak and olive foliage represents long life and peace; at intervals are medallion portraits of the distinguished Presidents of the five I. C. Associations. At the top, between the Indian crown on the one hand and the English crown on the other, is the Royal coat-of-arms. Beneath the latter is an Urdu quatrain containing not only the salutation to the Emperor but also a cryptogram giving the month and year of the Coronation.

The casket, twenty-three inches long by twelve broad and deep, is made of an exceptionally fine piece of sandalwood. It is lined throughout with yellow velvet and the fittings are of silver. Two silver doves facing each other form the handles.

The front of the casket, devoted to Bombay Presidency, reveals portrait busts of characteristic types: a Brahmin,

Chatia and Scindic. On either side of the centre panel are excellent carvings of the Bible House and Wilson College. The left end of the casket contains a faithful copy of the Taj Mahal and is the contribution of the united Provinces.

The Punjabi panel, only about eight inches square, represents a complete picture of village life. In the midst of heavy foliage is a well, with wheels, oxen and driver. Beside a stack of fodder a man and woman are busily engaged in the preparation of the mid-day meal. Nearby a man is working in the field and cattle are grazing.

The back of the casket which is devoted to Bengal has three panels. One represents a lion lying down and close by stands a Bengali boy with his hand resting on the head of the lamb while a cobra is coiled at his feet—symbolic of the words, "A little child shall lead them."

The lid which bears the presentation plate belongs to Madras and contains no less than eight panels tastefully united by scroll work. These reveal admirable carvings of the seven principal public buildings, and in the centre, to the front, is an outline map of the peninsula with the Madras Presidency in relief, the whole being surmounted by a sun with a cross in the centre. Around the base on the pedestal are the words: "The King shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord. Exceeding glad shall he be of thy salvation. Thou shalt present him with the blessings of goodness and shall set a crown of pure gold upon his head."

Many caskets have gone from India to be presented to His Majesty. Some have been of beaten gold, some of silver and some of ivory. The one sent by the Maharaja of Benares was creditably original. The address was written in Sanskrit, on Indian paper, with native ink and illuminated by one of the Rag painters with Indian colors and design. The casket was made of white ivory from His Highness's own elephants and it was surmounted by a model in gold of the famous golden temple Vishwanath, the presiding deity of the "Sacred City."

Perhaps it is doubtful if any of the caskets presented can be said to excel the simple yet artistic box of the Indian Christians and perhaps none would tend to touch the heart and win the sympathy of the Sovereign more readily. It was first put together in Lahore and then the various parts were distributed over India to be carved. The carvings are beautifully executed in bold relief and represent practically the whole of Protestant Christian India irrespective of sectarian differences. The address and casket are no less samples of Indian art and patient skill than they are of the "ninety that exists among the Christians of India in their Christian fellowship as well as in their loyalty to the Crown."

Letter From Rev. S. C. Freeman.

S. S. Egypt, near Port Said,
Nov. 18th, 1902.

DEAR FRIENDS:—Remembering how anxiously I have in previous years awaited the first report from the outgoing missionaries I have thought that I would write and through the MESSENGER AND VISITOR reach a much larger circle of friends than it is possible to do by private correspondence.

I am surprised to find how tame life on shipboard can be and how little of interest I can find to write. The day we sailed from Boston stands as one of the great days in my experience and yet I cannot describe it. There was an inward joy that words cannot express. My friends were there, more than thirty of them. Friends from Acadia and the college yell came with special flavor. Newton friends the associates of preceding months, Shiriev friends who had come 40 miles to see their pastor as he went forth in obedience to his Lord. Other friends were there who cannot be classed in any general way but whose friendship has given to the name "friend" a deep rich meaning.

The voyage to Europe was made in pleasant weather. About one-half of the second cabin passengers were Mormons going to various parts of Europe as missionaries. During several conversations with them I obtained some new ideas on Theology. We made the acquaintance of several New England people and found it very pleasant to meet them again at the British Museum, London. On Sunday we had the pleasure of listening to Rev. Henry Varley the celebrated London Evangelist.

The journey by special train from Liverpool to London was through a charming section of country or thus it seemed to me but I am told that it does not compare favorably with other parts. The week we spent in London was intensely interesting. We visited many places of historic interest and such places as the Tower, Museum, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral. Canadian Commissioner's offices mean more to us than mere names now. As loyal Baptists we went on Sunday to hear Mr. Spurgeon at the Tabernacle. We found many things in London in marked contrast with Canadian and Boston life but I leave it for others to describe.

We were glad when the time for departure came and we were sailing down the Thames. The second and third days the majority of passengers were not on deck, (I speak from report). This included one Sunday. The

next Sunday and Monday the conditions were the same. (I speak from experience). So the religious life on this steamer is not being developed in a public way. Several Mohammedans joined us at Gibraltar. Conversation with them is more spirited than enlightening since we have no common language.

This steamer "Egypt" carries 526 passengers and every berth was spoken for weeks before she started. Several noted passengers are on board such as Prince Raj Kumar Victor, Maharaj Kumar of Cooch Behar, Mr. W. Kissendorper and four native servants and Lord Kitchener.

A great number use strong drinks of various kinds at dinner. We have heard the brands of whiskey discussed and the strongest arguments are in favor of the Irish. Smoking is strictly prohibited except in the smoking room and on deck but here they rival the smoke stack. To-day I saw a lady smoking a cigarette through her veil.

They have various games that one might play, but little is played except cards and from early in the morning until late at night several games are generally in progress. Sunday my room mate came in and said, "I am tired of drinking, I am tired of smoking, I am tired of cards, I am going to bed until Tuesday." I did not have my choice of cabin mate as some do, nor am I as well suited.

We have found some missionaries and quite a few children, but for some reason I find little to brighten the days unless I can read. I feel the burden of the work to which I go. I know to some extent the qualifications of a missionary and I realize how imperfectly I measure up to the standard. I read the other day "a man's holiness is the measure of his usefulness. We fall in success chiefly because our piety is too feeble to propagate itself." So I turn to Paul and repeat his many requests for prayer as I send this my first letter as your missionary.

S. C. FREEMAN.

New Light on Babylon.

The wonderful story of misty centuries that intervened between the time of the creation and the time of the Patriarch Abraham may now be largely revealed through discoveries which have been made in the ruins of the city of Nippur, or Babylon. These discoveries were made by scientists sent out by the University of Pennsylvania. Professor H. V. Hilprecht, who has been in charge of this work, has just returned to the university from Constantinople, where he has been for eighteen months classifying the results of his work.

The matter upon which Professor Hilprecht has been engaged consists of 20,000 clay tablets from the Imperial Library of Nippur. This library was discovered by Professor Hilprecht twelve years ago. Since that time, through his efforts, probably one-eighth of the historical tablets contained in the library have been recovered. Most of them have been stored in the Imperial Ottoman Museum at Constantinople. A comparatively small portion was brought to the University of Pennsylvania.

At the request of the directors of the Ottoman Museum, and with the sanction of the sultan, the professor took charge of the classification and interpretation of the tablets. In this work he has been engaged for the last eighteen months. After a stay of a few months at the University of Pennsylvania, where he will lecture upon his discoveries, he will return to Constantinople, and will divide his time between the museum there and the ruins of Nippur, where he hopes to complete the exploration of the library. He will devote his life to the work, and has a mighty task before him. He estimates that the library will yield at least 150,000 tablets. When these are recovered he and his assistants hope to classify and translate them.

"The contents of the tablets which we have recovered," said Professor Hilprecht, when seen at the university, "will altogether change the ideas of the world as to the state of civilization and knowledge of that early people. It will be seen that the Babylonians knew, 2,300 years before the Christian era, that the earth was round, and that their astronomers took the same views of celestial phenomena as we take now."

"Nippur is, in fact, sixteen cities, one built above another. We have by no means reached the lower of these buried cities. Much of the Temple Library has been brought here, and is now in the museum of the University of Pennsylvania. The temple at that early period was not only a place of religious worship. It was also the school; the college. The priests were the teachers of all branches of knowledge, and it was, therefore, natural that the library should be in the temple."

"The inscription on the tablets which we have discovered are in cuneiform character. Their deciphering is a matter of much difficulty, for we have no Babylonian alphabet. But we have made some progress in the translation of the tablets, and have thus obtained a glimpse of the marvels which await us in this great library."

Twelve years ago, at the beginning of the explorations, Professor Hilprecht first rode over the mounds of Nippur and pointed out what he regarded as the mound cover-