

## MISSION FIELD

### BATALA AND AMRITSAR

The *Lahore Church Gazette* furnishes the following interesting account of an Itinerant Mission by Rev. B. Bateman, of Amritsar: "I have so recently 'reported' myself at Amritsar on my return from a long sick leave, that I can present write only as an observer saving my brethren to report on the work they have had in hand.

"On my way up country I went with Mr. Beutzel to visit the agricultural settlements near Ghazipore, Alimgarb, and Shajahanpur. We saw and heard a good deal of what should be aimed at or avoided in Sarkabad. My impression is that though such settlements are required here and there for 'the present necessity,' the principle of segregation involved in them is not one that can be usefully employed in a missionary agency. Ultimately they may become centres of aggressive Christianity, at present they are 'refugees' and laboratories for rumpler classes of Christians who have lost their means of livelihood in consequence of their change of faith. Perhaps they will be most useful in the future in connexion with orphanages, for we must aim at what is accomplished near Ghazipore, the maintenance by Christian cultivators of their own poor in their own villages.

"It would have been pleasant enough to find myself side by side with Mr. Clark on the platform at Amritsar, where sixteen years before I had been welcomed by him alone, but it was more delightful still to be received by several hundred native Christians, and to learn from the welcome and the address they offered me, that the bond of Christian brotherhood in the Punjab is strong enough to bear and to overcome the strain under which other ties between Europeans and Indians have snapped of late.

"At Amritsar, the address was in sober prose, but on the Batala platform a banner was floating which set forth in Hindustani verse how that just as 'the faithful' strain their eyes for the appearance of the noon which shall release them from their long fast, so now my friends were looking the appearance of my age out of one of the windows of the approaching train. As a matter of fact, my long illness was due to be sun, and had nothing whatever to do with the other orb. The revered A. L. O. E. was on the platform as bright and I had nearly as active as any body. To give an idea of the health and heart of the man was in, I will mention that he allowed himself to be dragged with me in a dog-cart by a team of enthusiastic school boys at school speed.

"Clarkabad has so wonderfully improved in appearance during my absence, that had I arrived, as was intended to do, by the night train and entered the village illuminated in my honor, I should have required a guide to show me the way. It was impossible not to feel the loss of the dear old Pastor on my return to the scene of our com-

mon labor. Mr. Beutzel has had to meet many distressing and vexatious difficulties, but patient continuance in well-doing has brought its reward. For it is not in external matters alone that old things are passing away. I noticed a marked change for the better in the industry, intelligence and conduct of the settlers. A change which shows itself in their private life and in the public ordinances. There is no doubt that this is the place for the boys' orphanage. Whether it will be well to move the girls' orphanage thither also is a subject for anxious consideration. If this step is taken, an experienced European lady must be put in charge of it, and I am not sure that one would be enough.

My next point was Narowal. On the way there I found in the establishment of the Zenana Village Mission at Ajnala a happy sign of progress and promise. But I entered Narowal with a heavy heart and went straight to the cemetery to mourn at two graves both new to me. In one lay the body of the first of the school-boy converts, in the other that of the excellent Catechist Nasrat Ullah, who peacefully died of hydrophobia about a year ago. He was one of those holy and humble men of heart who say little and make no show; but many a young Narowal Christian cherishes his memory as a helper if not a father in the Faith. The Pastor, too, has been removed from Narowal, and his place is empty. The school is in excellent order, but not doing active Missionary work. There have been no conversions for more than four years, so it was a sad place to go to. I spent Christmas there. Two old Christian boys came to join me, and we tried to strengthen the things that seemed ready to die. Two more old pupils of the school have asked for admission into the Church by baptism, so we were soon encouraged. Moreover, the townspeople are much more open and friendly than they used to be. This is partly because many of the old Mission pupils are now heads of houses; they have long known the doctrine and manner of life of the Christian agents, and they have nothing to say against either, and it is partly because they know that those who were truest and best of their fellow students were and are those who became Christians.

There is a movement among the lowest classes, many hundreds of whom have been baptized in the neighborhood by the Sialkot Missionaries. Most of them are exceedingly ignorant, and are likely to be a stumbling block to their better-born neighbors, but on this very account they claim our sympathy and effort. I have not baptized any as yet, though I have had several applications. While it is one of the signs of the Kingdom that 'to the poor the Gospel is preached,' we must beware of receiving on mere profession those whose profession costs them next to nothing either in acquisition of truth or renunciation of falsehood. There is an abundance of work to be done in and about Narowal, and I wish I had the strength left to live

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there and do it. It is time that some of the young Christians who were born and born again there should return to take up the work as it falls from older hands. When her children "think upon her stones, and it pitieth them to see her in the dust," we shall know that the time to favor Narowal, yes, the set time, is come.

My instructions from the Home Committee were to itinerate in the cold weather as much as possible, so after visiting the stations above referred to, I went into camp. I find a great change in the manners of the people. They pass you with an impudent leer where they used to embarrass you with their politeness. It is the fashion to attribute this kind of thing to the Ilbert Bill. I have not been out long enough to feel sure of the cause, but I think it comes of the multiplication of law courts. Nobody is safe from anybody else. One part of the population lives on the quarrels of the other. You can get any number of stamps for court fees where you could not buy a single postage stamp. Low-born vakils triumph over Honorary Magistrates. To-day I was threatened with prosecution for preaching the Gospel, on the ground that no one had a right to interfere with the faith of another. Two days ago I was sitting amongst some respectable Muhammadans at a well. My discourse was interrupted several times by the shouting of one of them to a young mehtar who was breaking up the fence for fuel. At last I said, "Why don't you stop him?" "How can I?" said he. "Run after him," said I, "and drive him away, and pull his ear for him if you catch him." "Oh," said my friend, "I dare not do that, his parents would sue me for assault at once and employ a vakil, and whether I got off or not, I should lose more than the fence is worth." Respect is dead and fear is dying. Meanwhile people are certainly enquiring more freely about religion and challenging their own teachers (as well as us) to explain their proofs to them. Now and again one is made to feel like "the off-scouring of all things," but much more frequently than in years gone by, does one hear the sweet sound of earnest, thoughtful enquiry. I have had the assistance of Dr.

Clark during part of my wanderings and very valuable I found it. He strengthened my hands in God, and I think I helped him too. Without making any comparison between the claims of town and country on the time and effort of a Medical Missionary, it is at least safe to say that he will find as much as he can do among the villagers, and that failing him they have practically no one else to turn to. So in the interests of the people and of the Lord's work among them, I look forward to Dr. Clark's continued and increased efforts in the district with the greatest delight.

IN THE course of a sermon preached at the ordination in Cuddesdon parish church, the Dean of Windsor said:—"Did you ever, in the face of the cry 'our creedless generation,' and the 'rotteness of our moral standard,' turn back a century or so, and compare with such detail as is possible the then literature, the then popular creed, the then moral standard, with our own? Do we realize what the faith and the morals of educated men in England were, say, at the beginning of the century? Look at the sparkling pages of the *Spectator* or the *Tatler*, and see how Steele and Addison drag to light a moral turpitude, and intellectual creedlessness, fifty times blacker than anything our own day has been. To appreciate Addison's scathing essay on the supposed visit of an Indian king to St. Paul's Cathedral, or Swift's satirical *Argument against abolishing Christianity*, it is necessary to realize a prevalence of godlessness among educated men to which the nineteenth century in England offers no parallel at all. Pass on half a century, and we find Bishop Butler—the most careful and guarded of men—opening his famous charge to the clergy of Durham with a complaint that 'the influence of religion' is now wearing out of the minds of men, and again, 'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons that Christianity is not so much a subject for inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious, and nothing remains but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule.'