

## A Heathen Festival.

II. ON THE WAY THERE.

To the Mission Bands,

Dear Boys and Girls:—It is three o'clock Saturday afternoon. We are about ready for a start. Let us glance at the things packed away in the cart to see if we have all that we need. That box contains our food supplies. In the large red box is the magic lantern and its accessories. The tracts and handbills for free distribution, and the books for sale, are tied up in a cloth. A cot, a lantern, bamboo poles to serve as frame for magic lantern screen, ropes, hatchet, etc., etc. Only one essential is missing, namely, our jug of water. But that is soon supplied. We stow ourselves in beside our goods and are away to Ramateerthamu.

Although the intense heat of the day is past, the sun is still shooting his scorching rays upon us. An hour later, however, his blinding brightness will have vanished and from that quarter, at least, we may expect no discomfort.

The road is indistinguishable. It is more crooked than the letter S. In fact it is not a road, but simply ox-cart tracks which serve to guide us to our destination. For a few furlongs we are drawn through newly ploughed lands; then jostled over the rough, hard, sunbaked rice fields, now up in the air climbing a steep embankment, now suddenly and most unceremoniously tumbled into a deep ditch. Up tips the cart, sliding down the bank at the same time; doubtfully groans the driver, and fearfully yells the missionary and his two preachers, as they spring from the cart to secure a firmer foundation. But the cart recovers its equilibrium. No one is hurt and no damage is done. From that time however we chose to walk for the most of the remaining distance, it being a less violent form of exercise than the former. The oxen are not at all grieved at our decision. The grain fields are left behind and we have reached a desert waste, very small but very sandy. At first the oxen object to being hurried over such a place, then they refuse duty altogether, or at least consider it their duty to stop and rest a while. Moral suasion having failed, the driver applies the lash, emphasizing each stroke with a grunt followed by language not the most complimentary either to the dumb beasts or himself. But his anger and his efforts are wasted in that desert air. When the oxen get ready they start off and go till they get tired. Then they stop again. In due time we see the end of the sand, and resume the rough and rugged way to the journey's end.

See the people coming!! Their destination, like ours, is northward, but they seem to be coming from every direction. Singly, in twos, threes, dozens and scores they come. Fathers, mothers, sons and daughters of all ages from cooing baby to tottering granddaddy, all bound for Ramateerthamu. Some look happy, some miserable; some poor, some in fairly good circumstances. But all are intensely expectant. They evidently think that great things are in store for them. Some have already travelled ten, twelve and fifteen miles in the heat of the day, and are now thoroughly weary. But the thought of Rama and his favor inspires them, and they forget their physical fatigue in anticipation of the reward.

Someone from almost every household carries an offering for Rama in the shape of various fruits and vegetables, and oil for their torches and other lights to be used in the temples and on the altars.

But why are there so many babies in the crowd? Just look at them, will you? There is a little one not more than three months old hanging on its mother's breast. And there, immediately behind is another astride its mother's hip, (children's most common mode of travelling in India) in another direction is a third and a fourth, sitting on daddie's big shoulders, bright and happy, serenely satisfied with the entire situation and enjoying the trip to Ramateerthamu as much as anybody.

But what is that thing being borne by two young men who are evidently brothers? Suspended in a large cloth from the middle of a bamboo pole which rests on their shoulders is a very small, but evidently very precious parcel. What do you suppose it is? Possibly some offering for Rama you say. You are right. That is just what it is. But see! it moves! and therefore it must have life. What can it be? Perhaps it is an innocent little lamb they are going to offer to that ugly idol, Rama. Right again; that is just what it is. A dear little innocent lamb, mother's infant baby, only two months old. But don't be alarmed. They are not going to sacrifice the little child. It is to be dedicated to Rama and given his name. Well, there are at least a dozen babies in sight, and as many more have been taken past us since we started.

Here comes another one, perhaps a year and a half old. How peculiar its hair appears! Why it is all tangled and matted and filthy. It certainly has not been combed for months and months. We ask the mother why she does not attend to it. Lifting up the matted mixture of hair and filth, she says: "Who can clear that out?" I suggest the use of the scissors as a pre-

liminary step in the operation. At this the mother's face expresses surprise, pain, and fear in turn, and then smiles and says: "We are going to have the hair cut off to-night after we offer it to Rama. She superstitiously believed that one of the gods had caused the child's hair to be thus tangled. This is a most propitious sign indeed. But if any attempt is made to clear and cleanse the hair till the child has been presented to one of the great gods at some famous festival, the child will surely die, or some other great calamity befall the household."

Because of all this and much more that I cannot now write our hearts are sad and sore. We try to get in a word or two of the gospel as they rush by us. But the poor blind people are not prepared to hear anything against their idol-worship. They are willing slaves to Satan. They believe his lie, and kiss the rod that smites them.

Pity them with all your heart. Pray for them with all your might, and hope in God that he will yet cause the light of Life to shine into their darkened hearts, revealing their eternal needs and his infinite fulness.

Next week you may look for some notes on the feast itself, and the part we played at that centre of attraction.

Yours and His

RALPH E. GULLISON.

## Letter from Africa.

The following letter was not written for publication, but contains matter which will doubtless be of interest to readers of this paper. It was sent by Rev. Louis M. Duval to Deacon Wassop of the Germain St. church, St. John. Mr. Duval, who was a member of that church, went to Africa last autumn to engage in missionary work there in connection with the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

O. yo, March 2nd, 1902.

DEAR BRO. WASSON:

You cannot imagine my delight on receiving your very kind letter. I have been away from home for eight years, with the exception of a week or two once in a while, and yours is the second letter which I have received from a corresponding secretary of our Y. P. S. C. E. Probably they have always been so busy writing to others that they could not get a chance for a few lines to me. If so I forgive them. I am very thankful you wrote and will be glad to hear quite often from you or any other members of the society. I often wished it when away at other times, but since coming out here the wish has been growing stronger. I am enjoying the life far better than I expected, but that does not lessen the desire to be back home again. As it is impossible to come home for several years, the next best thing I can think of is to hear from old friends very often. Oh, how I look forward to Sundays (which is mail day) and how rejoiced when receiving several letters from home or how disappointed when others get many letters and I get none. I suppose this is one of the pleasures of being a missionary and will have to bear it joyfully.

The Lord has been very good to me. I enjoy splendid health. One has to be very careful in regard to health. You cannot work and study as in a more healthful climate. At mid-day it is very hot but the early mornings and evenings are very pleasant.

I am not doing very much of what is generally called missionary work but am preparing. My chief occupation is in studying the language, on which I spend from seven to eight hours per day. About an hour and a half is spent instructing two native workers in Bible and English subjects. Three days in the week we have dispensary, where the sick and lame and blind come for treatment. Mr. Pincock, with whom I am staying, has turned all the worst cases over to my care. It seems an imposition for me to treat some of these cases with what little knowledge I have. The people are in need of help and I am supposed to know more than most of the missionaries about diseases and their treatment. I have to do what I can. I am treating one of the chiefs who has a sore foot and was nearly dead this time last week with blood-poisoning. I had to amputate the large toe at the second joint. He is now much stronger and his foot is healing very well, though this time last week his friends did not expect him to live, and we had very little hope of him. This is only one of the many who come to us. This was one of the chief works of Jesus when upon earth and I think we should follow in his footsteps, not only preach salvation for their souls but for their minds and bodies as well. It is very expensive work and our Board provides no money for it. The missionaries, if they carry it on, have pay for the medicines themselves which they are unable to do. They just have a few drugs and have to make these do for everything and of course the results are not as quick and satisfactory. Doctors at home would hold up their hands in horror to see the antiseptic methods we have to employ in dressing wounds.

This people is very interesting as to their mode of living, their language and traditions. They have so many habits and customs that remind one of the Bible

stories and very many illustrations can be taken for what we read in the Bible.

I love them more and more and am very anxious for the time when I can talk to them in their own language about Jesus and his salvation. I pray the time will soon come when many missionaries will be sent out to labor here. In my travels I have passed through city after city, town after town, village after village, without a single Christian, and large tracts without a single worker for Christ. Give my love to all and continue to pray for me.

Very sincerely yours,

LOUIS M. DUVAL.

## The Young Man in Business.

BY THE REV. F. W. FARRAR, D. D.

Dean of Canterbury.

The young man in business, if he is living a much more ideal life than that which keeps a too exclusive eye on the main chance; if, in the demands of business, he does not forget the loftier and eternal claims of a noble human life, must cultivate a certain courage and independence of manly rectitude. Whatever may be his business, he may be thrown among others of his own age; and it is one of his highest duties, not only to abstain from setting a bad and dangerous example, but also to escape the average, and to maintain a high standard before all men. And this is where the fear of man, the feebleness which is afraid to say "No," makes so many young men fall. When Benjamin Franklin was a youth in a printing office, the other lads went out to bring in for lunch their foaming tankards of beer or porter. Franklin was then a total abstainer from conviction, which was very rare in those days. His comrades laughed at him, and jeered him to their hearts' content, as a milksop and a fool; but he held his own with unwavering good humor. All those other printers' lads died in humble obscurity, but Franklin rose to greatness and immortality.

"Eripuit oculo fulmen sceptrumque tyrannis."

In the courageous steadfastness of his boyish character, we see one of the secrets of his future eminence.

The quality is needed wherever men, and, above all, wherever young men are gathered together. It is needed in the army, both among officers and privates. Cromwell's Ironsides went to battle each with a Bible in his knapsack, and were sneered at as snuffing and hypocritical "saints"—strange that the word, descriptive of the grandest of human characters should be regarded by the coarsely vulgar as the bitterest of sneers! But they made the Cavalier chivalry skip. Nelson's "Methodists" were the most trusted of his crews. Havelock's "Saints" saved India. Once in Burma, when nearly every other soldier was drunk, and the enemy threatened a most dangerous surprise, the General was in great anxiety and alarm. But one of his officers said to him, "Send for Havelock's 'saints'; his men are never drunk, and Havelock is always ready." But undoubtedly such faithfulness of high principle costs something, especially at first. A youth in my parish enlisted. He was a total abstainer, and a splendid young fellow. He rapidly rose to be a sergeant. The soldiers who had laughed at his totalism determined to play him a trick. It was a cavalry regiment, and they had to ride some distance, taking their rations with them. They took his flask, which he had filled with water, and filled it with brandy. He knew nothing of it, and when they halted for the midday meal, they watched him. Taking his flask, he found it full of brandy, and immediately, while every eye was fixed upon him, he turned the flask upside down, and poured all the brandy on the grass.

A young officer in India found himself serving among very godless comrades, amid the fierce passions which were kindled during the suppression of the Indian Mutiny. He thought that we were acting mercilessly and unjustly, and he remonstrated. He was severely persecuted. "What am I to do?" he asked of General Outram, the Bayard of India, when he felt deeply depressed amid a storm of calumny. "Do you fear God or man?" asked Outram. "If you fear God, do as you are doing, and bear the insults which are heaped upon you. If you fear man and the mess, let them hang their number of rebels every day." Did not General Gordon's almost magic influence arise from the all pervading sense, inspired by his mere presence, that here was a man who always was, and always would be, inflexibly true to his highest convictions? When he was in the Sudan, he never hesitated to place outside his tent the white handkerchief, which meant, as all men knew, that he was at prayer, and that during the sacred hour when he was alone with God, he must not be disturbed. The young man who is guided by such principles, and who has attained to such moral courage, is perfectly certain to succeed in the highest form of possible success, whatever his lot on earth may be.

And, after all, the young man in business is situated as regards companionship, very much like the boy in the public school, or the young man at the universities. His good example will be of priceless value wherever it is exhibited. When Coleridge Pattison was a boy at