

## LETTER FROM DR. MARGARET McKELLAR

NEEMUCH, Central India, 8 Feb., 1894.

For the RECORD :

"GOING through the Golden Cow" was the heading of an article in the *Pioneer*, one of India's daily papers, yesterday, and as I think you will be as curious as I was, to know what it mean to go through a golden cow, I am going to tell you.

Down at the extreme south of India is a little kingdom a hundred and seventy miles long from north to south, by fifty wide. The Maharaja of Travancore, for that is the name of the state, in spite of his long title, His Highness, Sri, Patmanabhi, plasa, Vanji Baharama Varmah Kulasahara Kridapadi Mannay Sultan Maharajah Rama Rajah, Bahadur Shamshir Yang, Fellow of the Madras University, is not a Brahman by birth, but a Sudra. In order to put him on the same footing as the Brahmans, he had to distribute among them the golden coins, which had to be poured into the scale pan until he himself was hoisted in mid-air, and last week he passed through the ceremony about which I am going to tell you.

A vessel was made of gold, ten feet high and eight feet in circumference, this was filled with the five products of the cow, and the Brahmans performed the prescribed rites over it. The Maharaja then mounted an ornamented ladder, for the express purpose, and entered the vessel where he immersed himself five times in the sacred (?) liquid, while the Brahmans surrounded the vessel and chanted and prayed.

The ceremony lasted ten minutes, after which the Maharajah came forth, prostrated himself before the image of the deity of the Travancore kings and received from the hands of the high priest his crown. Now he is considered as having made himself holy by having passed through the golden cow.

From the above you will have an idea how strong is the hold which the Brahmans still have in that state. When we visited the missionaries of the London mission there last year, they told us many things with which we were not before familiar with.

The low caste people are not allowed to come within 90 feet of the sacred person of a Brahman, they must cover their mouths, lest their breath should taint the air. While passing a temple there the missionary told us that they would not allow a person of low caste nor a Christian convert from a low caste to pass even on the road before the temple.

The low caste people must not clothe themselves above the waist.

In no other state in India are caste distinctions so insisted on, nor are the lines of separation so rigid.

How much need there is of more to tell of the "fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness." When the people will have been taught by God's Holy Spirit of this "fountain" then there will be no desire to pass through the golden cow, in order to be made holy.

## LETTER FROM MHOW, C. INDIA.

BY REV. NORMAN H. RUSSELL.

*A Christian Convention.*

THERE was held during the Xmas week Dec. 28th & 29th in Mhow, a Christian Convention or Mela as it is called in the language of the Country, which was probably one of the most unique and promising events in the history of our Mission.

The convention was held for the purpose of bringing the Christians of Central India together to discuss practical religious questions. A programme of subjects for discussion had been carefully prepared embracing all phases of Mission work. Representative men were chosen from the different stations to introduce the subjects by reading papers. In Mhow extensive preparations were made for the reception and accommodation of visitors, tents were erected and other rooms fitted up sufficient to accommodate all comers.

Many arrived on Wednesday evening the 27th to witness the formation of our Mhow Christians into an organized congregation by the Indore Presbytery. The others came early Thursday morning. The Convention was thoroughly representative. Large contingents came from Neemuch and Rutlam, though the former is 169 miles away; the Ujjain Christians turned out almost *en masse*; a good delegation came from the new Christian community in Indore; Berwai and Manipur were not unrepresented. And all came at their own charges.

The Convention was enthusiastic and unanimous. No partisan spirit, no jealousy was to be seen. Every one seemed desirous to hear as well as be heard. Fifteen minutes for papers and three minutes for speeches gave ample variety, if the bell did cut some speakers short, and they all in consequence spoke more tersely and pointedly than is usual in this land of talkers.

Thursday and Friday morning the day was opened by an hour of prayer an hour of brief exhortation and earnest petition.

Our meetings were held in the large new Church building, and it was generally comfortably filled with Christians and a few outsiders.

The first meeting was led by Rev. Mr Campbell in a paper setting forth briefly the history and aim of our Mission. This was followed by papers on School and Medical work. One of the best and most keenly discussed papers was read by Mr Johory of Indore on "The independence of the Christian Church of India," How to be