

A VACATION TOUR IN INDIA.

BY MARGARET M'KELLAR, M.D.

DEAR MR. SCOTT:

PERHAPS a few notes of what I saw in Southern India and Ceylon may interest your readers.

Dr. Margaret O'Hara and I, were joined, on a British Indian coasting steamer in Bombay Harbour, by Rev. W. H. Russell and Mrs. Russell of Mhow, with Jaffna, Ceylon, as our destination, purposing to see what we could by the way.

For those who want to get from Bombay to Ceylon in the shortest time, a P. & O. steamer is the best, as it makes the voyage in three days. But for worn and tired out missionaries, who wish to gain strength and vigor which sea breezes alone can give, a British India coasting steamer is just the thing.

Our ship, the Rajpootana, was bound for Calcutta, away up on the opposite side of the peninsula of Hindustan, with bills of lading for almost all the intervening ports along the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, and expected to be nearly a month making the voyage. Had she been chartered to enable us to see the cities of Malabar coast she could not have been more obliging in her stoppages, as she travelled slowly at night and at daybreak anchored three or four miles off some important town to discharge or receive cargo, which could only be done by daylight. This was just what we wanted.

The cabins were all below, and were very close and stuffy, so we slept at and lived on the deck under a double awning of canvas. If it were not for the motion we could have fancied ourselves tenting on the shores of Lake Huron or Ontario.

During the vessel's daily stoppages we betook ourselves ashore in native crafts, whose timbers were held together by strings, and whose locomotive power was the brawny arms of the "supple sinewed" Malayans. Two or three mats were thrown in the bottom of the boat to keep us from getting wet in the water, which oozed in from below.

This little boat in turn reached its depth of water, so we had to be carried on shore, by Coolies, whose only garb was a loin cloth.

Hundreds of the natives flitted on top of the waves in catamarans, which are made by tying three or four logs together. At a little distance the men appeared to be walking on the water, as their rafts were hid by the waves. It is wonderful with what dexterity they propel them. The men are blacker, stronger and wilder, than the sick Hindoos. Really, with their all but naked bodies, they looked more like some sea animals than like human beings. All the men wear their hair long and tied up in a great knot on one side of the head, usually the left side. Neither men nor women wear any covering on the head.

We were delighted with the vegetation of the Malabar coast. It is the India of our Canadian dreams. The moist atmosphere and uniform temperature are the secret of the prodigal growth. We were told in one city there, that the average rainfall is 180 inches.

Thousands of stately, cocoa-palms waved their feathery plumes high in the air, and looked beautiful against the sky, when viewed from the water; Bite nut and Tallpot palm came next in order of height. Mango plantains, tamarinds, bamboos and beautiful pepper trees with flowering shrubs, ferns and lowly creepers made a perfect fairy scene of marvellous loveliness. From the rich mo. s to the crown of the highest palm there was an infinite variety of leaves of every

shape and form, manifesting the wondrous designing power of the Creator.

In the midst of these were many of the hard woods, e.g. sandelwood with its rich fragrance, ebony of blackest hue, teak of adamant like hardness and gawk with its bitter fruit.

The houses of the natives are made almost wholly of the leaves, branches and stems of the cocoa palm, so are all the vessels they use and the umbrellas they carry. The cocoa palm is put by them to over a hundred different uses. In a large factory, which belongs to an American firm, which we visited there, we saw the whole process of coir-matting, which is made from the fibre of the cocoa-nut. I have no doubt, but that the matting on many of the aisles of the churches at home is from this very factory.

One thing that struck me in regard to all the houses, whether of natives or Europeans, was the absence of glass in the windows, in fact, there were no windows at all, simply shutters. From this you will have an idea of the delightful climate they have all the year round. No need of Canadian flannels and coal stoves there.

Why they do not use horses along the coast I do not know. There are very few and in some of the places none at all. Bullocks are used in two wheeled carts, by those who can afford to keep them. Jinrickshaws, or push-push as they are called there, are used largely. The push push, is something like an invalid's carriage, drawn or pushed from behind by two or three coolies. If the traveller is heavy, then he or she will hear many groans from her push-push *Walus*, by which they indicate that a present should be forthcoming, as well as the regular coolies' pay.

In the different towns we had the pleasure of seeing the workings of the Basel German Evangelical Mission, which was established in 1851. There are 87 missionaries, 71 of whom are married, and their wives superintend the girls' school and Biblewomen's work.

There is but one single lady missionary. The reason why is this, that there are no zenanas, the women are free, with very few exceptions, to go out and in as they please, and therefore hear the gospel in the bazaar as well as the men. 24 stations, in five different districts are worked by these missionaries. Their Christians number 10,895 and give yearly over 5,000 rupees towards the church expense, the mission and the poor. Over 6000 pupils are taught in their schools, and of these two-thirds are Christians. In nearly all their schools boys and girls study together.

They try to reach the heathen principally by bazaar preaching. If a man becomes interested in the Gospel and shows a desire to become a Christian, then he is taught all about the Christian religion, and if he says he accepts Christ as his Saviour, he is kept as a probationer until the missionaries feel satisfied that he is truly a converted man, then he is admitted to full communion in the Church.

In each station, each man has his own work e.g. in Calicut where we spent a delightful day with a dear old German father, there are, pastor, doctor, High School teacher, managers of the mercantile department, weaving establishment and tile works. These in no way have anything to do with each other's work and are responsible to the Home Board alone for what they do.

Mr. Tauffer, our host, told us that all the missionaries met once a year for amicable interchange of ideas, and to send home to their F.M.C., suggestions concerning their work, but that all power rested with their F.M.C., even to the marriage of their missionaries. The young men are not allowed to marry, or even to become engaged, before coming out nor for two years