

THE JOURNEY TO THE BHEELS.

Letters from Rev. Dr. Buchanan.

It is not easy for a mission family to sever home ties and go to the jungles of India, to live among the heathen. It is a good deal harder, as did Rev. Dr. Buchanan a few months since, for a man to leave his wife behind him, eick, with the children, and go forth alone; with anxiety about the recovery of those behind added to the loneliness and difficulties of the work, and that a new untried work, and no other European missionary with him. In such cases let us not forget that they go forth for us, to do our work, and let them feel that they have, in a very special manner, our sympathy and prayers.

We have been kindly permitted to make some extracts from private letters to Mrs. Buchanan, telling of the journey to the Bheel land. Though a few months old, they have lost none of their interest.

Dohad, Central India, Jan. 7, '98.

. . . . I have seven carts loaded up with luggage, necessaries for building, etc., ready to start early in the morning on our slow, toilsome journey of some fifty miles into the jungle, to Amkhut, which is to be our centre of work among the Bheels. To-night I called in our Hindu boys for prayers. We read of John the Baptist as a "voice crying in the jungle." This seemed a voice specially for us, and I was very deeply impressed with the desire and belief that our testimony will, like John's, be owned and blessed of Jehovah.

After prayers I went out to chat a little, and what was my great joy to find that all these garies (carts) are from within a few miles of Amkhut. Surely, surely, this is a special Providence of God, bringing these very people within our reach so that they may know us and our message.

I just felt like praising and magnifying God. I knew He was going to do great things for us, but I was not prepared to have the people sent out in this marvellous way, about fifty miles, to meet us. They had come in with grain, and the Kotwall seized them and brought them to us.

Neither we, nor the authorities, nor the poor Bhils themselves, had any idea what was being done. God alone was directing all. To Him be the praise of all our hearts. I know that you and perhaps many others have been praying that God would give us an entrance into the heart of this people, that He would prepare them for the reception of the truth, yet I did not think he was going to give such a plain leading in advance.

Of course, they are very much frightened, but as we shall have them with us four days, they will find out what kind of men we are.

Jan. 8th, 1898.

I went out and had a little talk with all the Bheels last night, and they seemed helped.

But when one of the garies was kept this morning, what a hubbub! The two brothers came crying to me, asking to please let them go with the other garies. They seemed to think I was going to send them away in some other direction.

I explained everything very carefully to them; told them I was only waiting till the train would come with my horse, when I would go and join the other carts, for my things were there.

Then I gave them a little money to buy feed for their oxen, told them, again and again, not to fear, as I came not for their harm, but for their good, etc., etc.

They seemed comforted. It is a trial of their faith in me. I hope that not only for my own sake but for theirs the horse may come. The Lord is doing great things for us. He will bless us still.

Jan. 10.

"I am now out some 25 or 30 miles on my way to Amkut. We left Dohad on Saturday evening, tired out, and after about fifteen miles had our tents put up to stay over Sunday; and, oh, but I was tired, all day, I have not been so tired since I left India.

The Bheels who are taking us out have now become very happy and contented. I am perfectly sure that this matter of their coming is of God's appointment, to give us an introduction in the land.

My heart is sore for the poor Bheel people, everywhere about. I do believe God that He will give us this Bheel country. The difficulties were great to Abraham, but he believed God and was blessed, and through him what untold blessing we have. So we shall trust Him nor be afraid of any obstacles.

Just another word. It is now 4.45, and the carts have just left for another stage. We have eight carts, fifteen men, and thirty-two oxen, to take us, with luggage, things for building, etc. It looks as if we were going in to stay.

I have yielded to the wishes of the Bheels in their desire to get on to-night. It would be more comfortable for me here, but they made this plea, "We have been away from our homes for fifteen days, and want to get back."

I told them that I felt for them very much, for my wife and children were very far away; and if they were as near as their children were I should take off my boots and run there this very night. I sympathized with them, and they in their turn sympathized with me. In this unlooked for way God is making friends through my affliction. Perhaps this is also a part of the hundred fold promised for forsaking loved ones for His sake. It is a sweet part.

Now I must away and follow the carts. When you come there must be some good arrangement for you to get out and in. Here there is a very nice house, erected by the State, and by the kindness of the Superintend-