

## NOTES FROM INDIA.

[The following has been handed us for publication.]

MY DEAR MRS. HARVIE, Here are a few lines to tell you that we have just returned from a visit to Indore.

We were exceedingly pleased with all Mr. Douglas' work. He is a splendid man, so prudent and wise in his movements. He has proved that you had chosen well in sending him as your pioneer to establish a mission in Indore.

We spent a very long time inspecting the Press, and carried off specimens of work done. Then the new houses and grounds we were very pleased with. When completed your property will be both suitable and satisfactory.

The Bombay and Poona girls were overjoyed to see us, and the pleasure was quite mutual. We were so pleased to hear that they were useful. The boarding school is a very interesting addition to the other agencies at work.

Mr. Campbell very kindly came from Mhow and spent one day with us. On the afternoon of that day my husband, by request, delivered a lecture on "Caste" to a large audience of native gentlemen.

Excuse me writing at greater length to-day, because yesterday I had fever. With united kindest regards, believe me, dear Mrs. Harvie, yours affectionately,

KITTIE STOTHERD.

Mission House, Singapore, Feb. 1st, 1879.

MY DEAR MRS. HARVIE, Events of no small importance to our mission have been following each other in rapid succession since I wrote you last, and before you receive this, in all probability, our arrangements, as to mission work, will be completely altered. In my last letter I wrote concerning mission buildings, and that a site for such had been purchased. More correctly I may say that our bungalow and a location for another has passed into our possession, and you can scarcely realize what a relief it is to think that we are *really settled* in Indore, and not completely at the mercy of those who hate the cause with all the bitterness of men whose hearts are "at enmity with God." The bungalow is quite too small for more than one family, so that another place had been rented for me, where Mr. Douglas and the two ladies lived when they came first to Indore. As I have made particular mention of these matters in a letter to Miss Mackintosh, and I believe you exchange correspondence, I shall not dwell on the subject, but pass on to other interesting facts connected with our work.

Did I mention that there has come amongst us lately rather a remarkable character, one of the class of Fakirs, sometimes called "the holy men of India." They are generally wandering vagabonds, who go about besmeared with the ashes of the dead, and by a pretence of holiness get their living from the people who hold them in high esteem, though not so much as in former times. The man of whom I speak is an exception to the general rule, inasmuch as he abhors the filth in which they delight, and he dearly loves "the Book." When he came first he was restless and excitable, and whether reading, talking or singing, he was an example of perpetual motion, his body swaying back and forth, and his whole face lighted up with eagerness and interest. He never saw "the Book" until eight months ago, so he informed those who spoke with him, but the way in which he devoured Bible truth, making it his study night and day, might well rebuke more luke-warm Christians. Mr. Douglas was very much pleased with him, as indeed every one is, and he gave the Fakir a little house in the compound, all to himself, and there, with "the Book" for his companion, he has been making wonderful progress in Scripture knowledge. From the first he proclaimed himself a Christian, and fearlessly made the fact known to natives as well as Europeans. He would take no Scripture knowledge at second-hand from anyone, but must see the words in the Bible for himself, with his own eyes, and then he was perfectly satisfied. Some of his peculiarities he is now exhibiting less than formerly, but occasionally his oddities excite a laugh even now. At first he was so eager to be taught that he went to each one who could speak with him, and received a Scripture lesson, or rather three or four, every day. However, he took care to inform the ladies of the mission that, although "they were very wise," he could never be taught by a woman, and he repeated this in the most impressive manner. Once he told Miss Rogers, who was visiting us, that

"she might know two or three things out of a thousand, but she could never teach *him*." This idea in his mind arose partly from the fact that it is a rule of his order that they must not even look at a woman, but he is different now in many respects. He has been with us about two months, and is very friendly with everyone. To a native man, who begged him not to become a Christian, he said, "Jesus Christ I know, but who are you?" To the same man who said, "I will die if you become a Christian, don't do so," the Fakir answered, "My father and mother did not die when I became a Fakir, and why should you take such an interest?" He comes in, sits down on the floor, and is ready for any exercise, but searching "the Book" is his particular delight. He invariably refuses a chair, saying "he came from the earth, and will go to the earth, and he wants nothing better to sit upon." He fears to accept any of the comforts of life lest "his heart should get fond of them." He says "the Saviour was a true Fakir," and that "the missionaries live too much like rajahs, and have too many cares." Well, to sum up, he was baptized last Sabbath evening, he and one of the inmates of the Orphanage and her little child, the first baptisms actually taking place in Indore. The Fakir's conduct has been, thus far, satisfactory, and, as he pressed for baptism, there was no reason for denying it. He is a man in the prime of life, and his abilities will make him a most useful servant of the Church if he is spared amongst us. Of course we must make large allowances for early education, and the little moral restraint inculcated from childhood upon such as he.

Just at this moment there is a native singer at the door who really has a fine voice, and I am reminded of an incident which took place during one of our visits to the city, when we went to see a woman of the same class. She wished very much to learn English, and Venoo took a slip of paper with the word "Presbyterian" printed on it in large letters. The woman eagerly set to work and learnt P. R. E. S. That was well enough for one day, but when we went back, she said some one had told her that was not English at all, but the name of our God. She laughed when we told her that was not true, and she continues to learn, and has now mastered all the letters of "Presbyterian," sometimes following me to the gari to ask some letter she has forgotten for the moment. One day when in the same neighbourhood, we went into a house across the road, having been invited by a woman who wished to sing for us. A man was there with a sort of native guitar, and I thought there was an opportunity to do something better, than to listen to their rather questionable songs, as these people are by no means of good reputation, sitting down with a good deal of apprehension on a native bedstead (on account of its appearance), I asked the man to try whether he could follow or rather accompany Venoo in singing her Marathi gospel hymns, and he did so, being well pleased with the change. This is a specimen of the way we work, not only reading to them, if they will hear the Word, but seeking to interest them, and even by trifles directing their attention to better things, sometimes a bit of knitting, sometimes a gay pattern will win for us a hearing, and now and then a little child will lead the way. This last is rare however, as the little girls are as timid as deers. On my way through the city, I passed a little school where I see about ten or twelve "small boys" having a good time, while the old man who teaches is huddled up in a corner having a delightful nap. I longed to go in, but if I did I would only be turned out for my pains.

One little incident concerning Sukh-a-nunden and Narayan, who are now of Jalna, with Narayan Sheshadrai. Last week the eldest brother called on Mr. D. to ask if S. had really been baptized. It will illustrate the terrible hatred boiling and seething in their hearts towards him, when I inform you that he made a remark to this effect, "If I could catch him I would put him down between my feet and beat him with my boots." This about his own brother, and I believe he also added "we dare not mention his name in the caste, they are thirsting for his blood." Fortunately the object of this persecution is out of their reach, but the probability is that he will never dare to come to Indore. We hear good accounts of them both from Narayan Sheshadrai.

I had almost forgotten to mention that Mr. and Mrs. Stotherd were in Indore a short time ago, and spent some days here. I can only say that I long to see Mrs. S. again. We had some delightful talks

able, which would be a trifle at best, but by awakening an interest in the Church's work and evoking its liberality and its prayers.

It is also the duty of ministers to see that some suitable method of collecting funds be adopted and efficiently used. The very least they can do is to form a missionary association in each congregation with a regular staff of collectors, who shall call frequently and regularly on the members and adherents for their contributions. But all this is not enough. The collectors are generally ladies, and many give them the trifles they may have in their pockets at the time,—just enough to get rid of their visitors politely. The trifles thus collected are contemptible, and such as gentlemen collectors would not accept of or consider worth asking.

Now as gentlemen collectors cannot generally be obtained, the pastor might in his stated domestic visits bring this matter under the notice of families, and endeavour to induce them to resolve to contribute a respectable sum annually and to make arrangements for paying it regularly as they would a debt of honour. It should not be left to the people to say how much each should give. The pastor should aid them in arriving at a sound judgment in this matter. What is wanted is frequent, systematic, conscientious giving. This never will be attained without the pastor's assistance. Let any minister, especially in a rural congregation, attempt to do what I have suggested, and he will probably find the annual contributions of his congregation at once doubled.

In accordance with the principle insisted on, I have no confidence in any other method of raising the means needful to carry on the work of the Church. I have no confidence in mission agents. Such agents displace the minister and give him an apology for shirking his responsibility and neglecting his duty. Besides agents can pay only occasional, flying visits; whereas, what is wanted is constant instruction and excitement, and also dealing with individuals. The excitement produced by the visit of an agent is at best spasmodic and uncertain; whereas what is wanted is sustained interest and effort. People soon become tired of the visits of agents. They do not approve of the expense connected with the employment of them; and they do not give much heed to the pleadings of an agent who is paid to plead.

I have no confidence in missionary meetings as a substitute for the systematic labours of the pastor and of the leading members of the congregation. There is generally little information communicated at these meetings, and, were the pastor to do his duty, there would be little to communicate. People brace themselves up for a great effort, and, when that is put forth, they relapse into indifference for the remainder of the year. Besides, owing to the badness of roads or inclemency of weather, these missionary meetings are often a complete failure.

I have no confidence whatever in anything the General Assembly can do. It can make admirable regulations, but this has already been done. It can order circulars to be sent forth, but nothing can be less inspiring than such circulars generally are. I believe our Home Mission work could be efficiently carried on even if there were no General Assembly in Christendom.

I have still less confidence in statistics, especially competitive statistics. Statistics are often misleading; besides it is a poor thing to be anxious to know that we do no more than our share of the work individually; it is still worse to generate a spirit of carnal rivalry. Love to the souls of men and sincere and loving desires to promote the glory and satisfaction of our blessed Saviour are the highest and only adequate motives to exertion; and these motives will make any work however hard, a labour of love.

There is, therefore, no need to wait for the meeting of Assembly, or to expect the visits of deputations, or to anticipate such terrible appeals as shall both terrify and exasperate us. We find that the Lord is giving us a great work to do, far greater than we thought, and is thus conferring on us higher honour than we expected; and we find that neither we nor our contributions have been equal to the emergency. Let us endeavour to set about the work in earnest, devoting to it, if need be, much of our time and a good share of our preaching. Let the sentiment of every minister be, "as for me and my congregation, we will do our duty."

PRESBYTER.