

Sights and Sounds in India for Boys and Girls in Canada.

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS.—The east side is the front. The sun, rising out of the sea, shines in its face. But the setting sun does not shine on its back. The big hill will not let it. The hill is high. It is ribbed with black rocks and inhabited by hungry jackals. This rugged mount is in the background; and hides the glory of the setting sun. But the building, of which we are talking, faces the east, like the ritual slave, in the western world, who kneels in prayer with his face ever toward Jerusalem.

This building is the Mission School House. It might be called, "Bay View School House"; for you can stand on its front platform, look eastward over the roofs of the town, over the tops of the palm trees, and feast your eyes on the white-caps and blue billows of a rolling sea without a shore. Come and see for yourself! Far away upon the horizon, appears a black speck, floating on the orient wave. From some invisible fire in its bosom, there rises, scarcely larger than a soaring raven, a little cloud of smoke. This is, to your ken, the flying colors of a steamer, ploughing a path across the Bay, from Rangoon. Yes! Really it is coming from Rangoon,—the great sea-port of that land, which is so fragrant still with the name and memory of Judson. O, ship, on the trackless deep! Bring us a double portion of his spirit! It is enough to arouse and inflame a heart of stone,—to stand here, gaze across this waste of waters, and know that it was there, just on the opposite shore, that this hero of the cross suffered so many things in the service of our Master!

"Must I be carried to the skies
"On flowery beds of ease,
"While others fought to win the prize,
"And sailed through bloody seas?"

Perhaps, somebody who reads these lines will, some day, leave "Country and kindred and father's house" to preach the gospel in this school house. The gray-and-white cat has followed us. Purring for joy, she lies stretched on the stones at our feet. On every side, the shrill voice of many a chauticleer answers his neighbor again and again; nor will he desist, until the repeated alarm has roused from his slumbers the last drowsy denizen of this little city by the sea. But the roar of the sea, the thunder of the heavens, the rumbling of earthquakes, the fury of whirlwinds and cyclones, the ravages of cholera and smallpox, the terrifying rumors of approaching plague and pestilence, the wail of starving human skeletons in famine after famine year after year, when the heavens blazed like burnished brass, when the earth was baked like burning iron, and instead of rain and dew the land was swept with storms of powder and dust,—all these awful voices have left the great mass of the population still steeped in the damps of hell. The early breeze is laden with the cries of a hundred awakened infants. In the hedge and the trees, the birds are chirping and singing glad songs. From the steeple of the chapel, a flock of crows are saluting the new-born day with their insane call, "Caw, Caw,"—the same all around the world.

In front of us, a few rods away, is the front gate. An oxcart is going past. Its heavy wheels are crunching the pebbles. The driver is shouting. Over the front gate, we can look straight down a street that leads down the hill toward the sea. If it were only covered with snow, we could coast down through the town. What a sight we would be! All the inhabitants would come out to see us! But it is not good coasting in Bimili today. It never was. Even a hand-sled would be as much of a curiosity here, as an elephant in school at home. This street was never adorned with those pure flakes of frozen vapor, which have been your joy, and mine, ever since we learned to walk. No! The road is as hard and as red as a brick. Just now it is buried in a cloud of dust. The municipal sweeper is giving it its morning brush with his Telugu broom. Adown each side of the highway, runs a neat gutter, made of cut stone. It is about a foot deep, a foot wide at the top, and no width at all at the bottom, like the letter "V". Indeed, I think it is called the "V drain." During the heavy rains, the muddy water rushes down these furrows like young torrents. As Bimili is situated on the foot of a hill, sloping towards the beach, the rain water and sewage are drained off quickly into the sea. Therefore, this is one of the cleanest towns in unclean India. So close to the road that the rain from the eaves drips down into the gutter, are rows of thatched roof mud-huts. With the exception of one part of the street (of which we will speak later) these palm-leaf roofs fringe both sides of the way, as far down as we can see.

Coming towards us up the hill is a six year old boy. Under his left arm is a basket without a handle. His right hand is busy supporting the burning end of his morning cigar. Do you think it strange that a six year old boy should smoke? Why here comes a five year old girl up the same street, this minute, puffing away at her cigar like an old sailor. There are a few white boys in the world who think it is a manly thing to smoke! They puff away at their first pipe and feel so big that they nearly burst. But it does not take much of a man

to smoke. A little, black, naked, four year old, pagan papoose who cannot count two, can smoke like a Turk. I remember as well as though it were yesterday, the morning when Satan and all his angels seemed to come to me and tell me that I was big enough now to learn to swear! I was standing about three rods east-south-east from my father's shop. From the east side door the paint had shelled off. The seams in the door were covered with long, narrow strips of wood called battening. I can see those strips of battening now, as they stared at me in that critical moment. My lips were parted to utter the wicked word, that would help to make me a man! Then as suddenly as the multitude of the heavenly host descended upon the midnight fields of Bethlehem, something from heaven seemed to hover over me and enter into my heart. It was the Holy Spirit and for all I know, a troop of angels with Him. Better things were whispered in my ear and crowded into my heart. They seemed to say that I was big enough to fear God, and dread to take His name in vain. The bad word was not spoken. Satan and his demons slunk away to the gates of hell. That was one of the great days in my life. It makes my heart burn within me as I write, to think of the grace of Him who came down in that hour of temptation and saved me from the wiles of Satan. If I begin to print His praises here there will be no room for anything else. It is manly to be godly. The more you are like the devil, the less you are like a man. The more you are like Christ, the more you are like a man. He was the manliest man that ever lived. It is a manly thing to be childlike and to be a child of God. It is a manly thing to confess your sins and seek for pardon through the blood of the "One Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." It is manly to stand up like a man before all your comrades and tell the honest truth, both about your own unworthiness and about the Son of God, who took upon Himself the form of man to save you from your awful sins.

But let us come back to our Telugu street! The girl smoker has turned the corner, and gone on her way to form more bad habits. It is as easy to contract bad habits as it is to ride down hill. In this way the Telugus do a good deal of coasting. Although there is no snow, yet the path to hell is steep and slippery enough for anybody who wants to go. Satan keeps it smeared with oil and brimstone from the pit of gehenna. Farther down the street is a woman with a stick, beating the dust out of a cot. Side by side, one white and the other black, two young goats are walking up the hill as if in a yoke. Brindle pigs, lean dogs, and ragged chickens are fighting for the refuse that has been thrown out on the side of the road. A motley of red and white garments flit to and fro. The head of each pedestrian is encircled with a wreath of smoke.

Less than half way down to the sea, the street bends around to the right, and its busy throngs are out of our sight. On the left hand side, just as the road begins to bend, the last two houses are better than the others. Their roofs are covered with a kind of warped earthen shingles, called tiles. In the farther house, about sixteen years ago, a boy was born, and they called his name Narasimulu. This name means Man-lion. It will be shorter to call him Lion. Perhaps it will be easier still, if we name him "Loe," which means lion. He was named after the idol, up in the big temple, on the hill. The name of this hideous image of stone is "Narasimhaswamy." This means, "Man-lion-god." However, we shall dub the boy "Leo." Leo was born a shepherd. That is, his tribe is called the "Shepherd Caste." The Telugu word is "Golla" caste. The chief business of this tribe is to tend cattle or sheep or goats. But they farm also, and do all kinds of coolie work.

When Leo was old enough, he walked straight up the hill, came in at the front gate, and commenced to go to school at the Mission school house. When he commenced to go to school, Mr. Sanford was the missionary at Bimili. Miss Gray had charge of the school then. Leo remembers Mr. and Mrs. Sanford and Miss Gray very well. He remembers also Miss Lottie Sanford and her brother, Roland. He was about eight years old, when they left Bimili and came to Wolfville, N. S. He used to see them playing around the Mission house and yard, when they were children. He was about thirteen years old when Miss Gray left India. That would make him less than two years old when Miss Gray landed on this shore; for she was here more than eleven years.

It was here in the Mission school, that Loe learned his letters. Here, also, he learned the words of eternal life. The gospel is preached in the school every day. About a year ago, in company with a Christian boy, he came to see me. They sat down together on the mat, and he said, "Sir! I have heard much about Jesus in school. My mind is turned around; and I want to be baptized." His face and eyes shone like the full moon. There was something in his voice, in his manner, and in his countenance that made me believe he was a converted boy. "My mind is turned around." This was his own description in his own words, of what had taken place in the secret chambers of his heart.

When Leo arose to go, he stood as tall as most boys at seventeen or eighteen, although he was only fifteen years

old. He was tall and slight. He smiled as he said, "How glad Miss Gray will be to hear about me!" The story would be too long to tell, how we kept him waiting to consult a good lawyer about the lawfulness of baptizing one so young without the consent of his guardians; or of how he kept urging us not to put him off any longer! At last, with the necessary legal assurance, as well as the assurance that he was a new creature, we baptized him, in the baptistry, under the margosa tree, in the garden. It was on Sunday, the first day of last May. Pearl, of whom I wrote you some time ago was baptized the same morning. It was the day, when Admiral Dewey won that great victory in the harbor of Manila. Pearl was baptized first. Amongst the spectators, were two Golla men, of the same caste as Loe's. When he was led down into the water, a contortion of mingled amazement, anger and agony passed over their faces. Leo was the first apostate from the Golla caste in Bimili. His fellow-caste men felt the keen disgrace. He would be looked upon as a turn-coat, a renegade, a fanatic and a fool. We went from the garden to the school house, and had service there. We did not go to the chapel; for we knew that we should probably be disturbed by a mob of angry relatives. The school house is on the Mission Compound. Therefore, we locked the gates and had meeting in the room, where Loe had first learned the way of salvation. There, he and Pearl sat down together, for the first time to the Lord's Supper.

As we were about to close, I looked out through the open window, and saw a man standing at the gate. First one man; then a mob. Up the street came a woman, wringing her hands, wailing, and calling out toward the school house. It was Leo's mother. By the time, we could sing the doxology and dismiss the congregation, the gateway and the road was filled with a raging crowd of heathen shepherds. The frantic mother had forced her way through the mad rabble and was up against the gate. By turns, throwing her hands up to heaven, and bowing her face down to the earth, she kept wailing and gnashing her teeth, and calling for Leo. If she had seen him writhing in the flames of hell, before her eyes, she could hardly have moaned or groaned worse. Indeed, there would have been less grief in his home, if he had died and gone to the bottomless pit. Almost any Hindu would rather burn his son alive, than see him become a Christian. The mother in her wrath and anguish, shook the gate and tried to climb over. Her eyes gleamed like two demons. Her spirit seemed to leap out of her mouth. Mr. Higgins and Mr. Hardy were with us. We went down to the gate, and told her that her boy was all right. He would not come home today. They were all so angry now, it would be better for him to stay here a while. After a few days, when their wrath had subsided he would come and see them. But we might as well have talked to the moon. She only screamed the louder, to drown our unwelcome counsel. The crowd joined her. The air was black with threats. Dark innuendos were flung around, hinting what they would do to Veeracharyulu, the head master, when they found him alone some dark night. The mother declared if her boy did not come home at once, she would go straight to the well and throw herself in. Leo saw and heard it all, from the platform of the school house. He was amazed. He had no idea that they would make such a row. He saw. He heard. He trembled. He felt that his soul was among lions indeed. He loved his mother. It cut him to the heart to hear her say that she would go home and throw herself into the well! In India this is a favorite way of frightening friends into submission. He feared that his mother would thus wreak her vengeance on him. We called the police, and after two or three unsuccessful attempts they at last succeeded in driving the mob away. If we had not had the crowd dispersed, they would have broken down the gate and carried Leo home on their shoulders rejoicing.

About noon Leo's heart began to fail him. He told us he thought it would be better for him to go home a little while. He would comfort his mother, stay with her an hour or two, and then come back to the afternoon prayer meeting at three o'clock. Poor boy! He knew not the strength of the devil's system of caste; for he had never before tried to break loose. We told him that he was free to go any minute he chose to start; but our advice was that, by all means, he should stay where he was for a few days. We knew the temper of his people better than he did himself. If once they got him into their hands they would be sure to beat him and keep him a close prisoner. We told him all this and more. But he thought that they would not hurt him. The wail of his mother kept ringing in his ears. In his imagination he could see her drowning herself in the well. The vision was too much for him. He could stand it no longer. Yet he did not feel like going away against our advice before our eyes. Therefore, at night-fall, he slipped out of his room, without telling anybody he was going. He glided out at the front gate, and down the hill to his mother's house. There was great joy in that home. The instant he crossed the threshold, they shut the door and fastened it. Leo was a prisoner. The next morning his big brother came home and beat him. This brother was away when the baptism took place; but being sent for by telegram, he came home in hot haste. The father of the family was dead, and according to the custom among the Hindus, the eldest son reigned in the father's place. His heavy hand fell in angry blows upon the brainless boy, who had brought such indelible disgrace upon the whole family. As this letter is already too long, we shall have to leave the rest of the story until next week.

Yours truly,

L. D. MORSE.

Bimlipatam, India, Oct. 15th.

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