

Northern Messenger

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A Question of Privilege.

'Will I join the Woman's Home Missionary Society? Well, what does that mean? Just paying two cents a week and offering a prayer? Do you expect me to attend the meetings? and to take part in them? Must I help get up fairs and festivals for "the cause"? Shall I be constantly appealed to for extra money for this or that? I want to know exactly what is expected of me.'

So said Mrs. A., more frankly, perhaps, than others, but voicing the unspoken thought of more than one woman who has been asked to join the W. H. M. S. Fortunately for Mrs. A., and for the society, the reply came from one who understood not only the mind of the questioner but knew the work, and loved it.

'One at a time,' said the unofficial organizer, for this was a quiet conversation in a corner of the home church. 'Two cents a week—that is the very slightest return that you can make for the privilege of having a hand in the great work that God is doing through this society. So far as the letter of the law goes, you pay no more to be in "good and regular standing." No one in the society is likely to ask if you pray for it; no bureau secretary sends a blank for the report of the number of prayers offered for the work of the society by its members. But as a Christian woman you can hardly omit the prayer.

'The meetings? Well, what do you think of the director of a business institution who habitually absents himself from the meetings of its board? What of a school committee man who never attends the sessions of the board of education? Would you feel altogether easy and comfortable in your mind to be giving to a cause, and praying for a cause of which you knew little or nothing? If it's "the King's business," ought it not to have a proportionate share of your time and interest?

If you really pray for the work, if you attend the meetings faithfully, the rest of your questions will answer themselves. You will find yourself saying, "What is the measure of my responsibility for these sisters of mine who have never known of Jesus, for the girls who lack the chance that I had, the chance that I am so glad and thankful I can give to my daughters?" You will look at their pictured faces and thank God that it is in your power to help uplift the nation through them. You will feel as if your hand were on the lever that sets in motion mightiest forces, world forces, and you will sit in awe and trembling lest you fail to push with all the strength that God has given you.

'Take part in the meetings? You cannot keep still. Your soul will be on fire. But fairs and festivals—how glad I am that in this auxiliary, at least, we do not get the Lord's money that way. Not so have we read his word:—"Freely ye have received, freely give." We have learned to tithe the money that he sent us, and found that it multiplies, even the part that is left, through such division. We have learned a little—a very little—of the meaning of sacrifice. And we are learning the joy of giving, the real blessedness of such service.

'Will there be frequent appeals? There certainly will be, for the Master's work does not stand still. Will they be more than we can meet? Yes—and we must use our wisest,

most consecrated judgment concerning them. But they will never be more than we shall long to meet. And, knowing this, you will gladly seek, as we do, to interest other women in the work.'

Did Mrs. A. join the auxiliary? Being a really Christian woman, how could she do otherwise?—"The Michigan Christian Advocate."

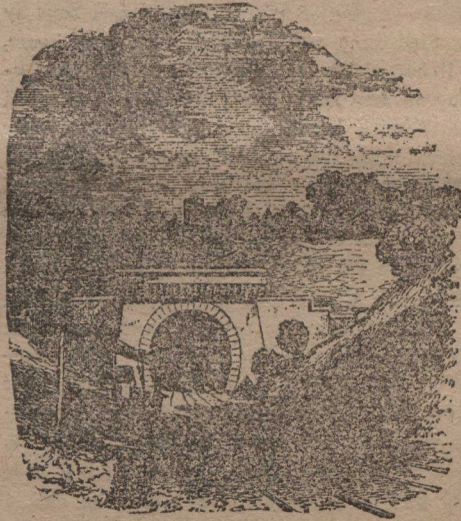
Tunnels.

(M. B., in 'Friendly Greetings'.)

'Just in time!' exclaimed a young woman, as she entered the country railway station, holding her little daughter by the hand, and saw the train moving slowly in.

'Very nearly late, ma'am,' said the station-master; 'you run it rather close.'

It was very pleasant steaming along so merrily in the fresh morning air, and watching the trees and fields from the open window as the train skimmed by. Sometimes the motion seemed to the child almost too swift; she could have fancied the train was running away. But one look into her mother's calm, placid face



THE TRAIN RUSHED INTO A TUNNEL.

reassured her; and she knew and felt that all was right. Suddenly she was startled by a loud whistle, and the train, which was going at what seemed to her terrific speed, rushed into a tunnel.

The darkness, and the increased noise and vibration filled her with something like terror. She could not speak in the midst of that roaring sound; so she just slipped her little hand into her mother's, and waited in breathless silence.

In a few seconds (but, as it seemed to the little girl, many minutes) they were out in the light again, and she gave a sigh of relief.

'What was that, mother?' she asked.

'Oh! it was only a tunnel, dear. I forgot to tell you about it beforehand. You were not frightened, were you?'

'Yes, a little,' replied the child, 'before I found your hand.'

'I am sorry. Well, don't be afraid another time. We shall have to go through one more before we get up to town; but it is quite safe, as safe as when we are in the open; and it only lasts such a little while, almost as soon as it gets dark, you can begin to see daylight again.'

But the journey was rather spoiled for the

little traveller. The dread of being once more enveloped in darkness prevented her enjoying to the full the lovely country scenes which lay between, even though she crept closely up to her mother's side.

Meanwhile the elder traveller was taking to heart the meaning of her own words.

It was a time of trial and sorrow with her, and the darkness which surrounded her seemed very much like the blackness of the tunnel.

'How very much the journey is like my life,' she thought, 'this present life, these travelling days!'

'But haven't I always found that I am no sooner in the darkest spot of a trouble than I begin to see light again? Has not God run me safely through a great many tunnels, and cannot I trust him for those that are to come? And not only myself, but I have seen so many people go into the dark, and I have felt so sorry for them; but I have looked again, and they were out on the other side, and the sun shining upon them bright and clear once more.'

If we could only stretch out our hands, when things around grow black, and feel for a Father's hand; if we could only look out for the coming light, which shines so quickly into the dark places of life, what a safe and happy journey ours might be!

There is one dark tunnel through which we shall soon have to pass, the dim and solemn shadow of death.

But, hold on! It is a short, safe passage. And, before you are aware, you will be at the journey's end, and all its toils and dangers will be forgotten in the joy and gladness of the welcome home!

Mary Rajanayakam Gnanamani.

(Jacob Chamberlain, D.D., in the 'Christian Intelligencer'.)

God's ways seem to us very mysterious. We cannot fathom nor understand them. Among all our unordained native Christians one who stood forth pre-eminent for absolute consecration to the Master and deep, all-pervading piety, and of whose usefulness through a long career we had formed most earnest expectation, was the first to fall a victim in our Telugu field to the dreaded plague.

Mary Rajanayakam Gnanamani fell asleep in Jesus. A telegram reached us from her bereaved husband, announcing the sad event.

The whole Christian community there are all bowed with grief at the loss of one who had been so much to them all, not only in her freely rendered and skilful medical practice but in her wise and much-prized spiritual counsels and advice.

It was in June, 1889, that I first came in contact with Mary Rajanayakam. She was then headmistress of the Girls' Boarding School of the Madura Mission, under the superintendence of Miss Swift. I had told Miss Swift of the offer of the ladies in the Synod of Albany to educate a young Hindu native Christian lady as a doctor, under my supervision, if I could find a suitable candidate, and had asked her if she knew any young Christian native lady who had sufficient preliminary secular