

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

SEVEN YEARS IN THE INDIAN MISSION FIELD.

(Continued.)

The history of our mission for the past three years naturally divides itself into two parts, viz.: the portion of time which precedes and that which follows the arrival of the ladies, Miss McGregor and Miss Forrester (now Mrs. Fraser Campbell) in India.

Rev. J. M. Douglas, Miss Rodger and I entered the field ten months before their arrival, while it was the fourth year for Miss Rodger and myself in India. Thus we had acquired the language, and this too was a great advantage; we met the people ready to converse with them, not struggling for words, but able to comprehend them, and they us, in ordinary conversation. Zenana work opened easily and rapidly. The Court circle at Indore comprised many of the most advanced and educated of the native nobility of Hindustan. Many of its officials were graduates of the mission schools and colleges of Calcutta, Bombay and Poona, and although not professors of Christianity it commanded their avowed admiration, and they extended to us a most cordial welcome. We owe it to two native judges of Holkar's Court, graduates of the Free Church Institute, at Bombay, that our boys' school in Indore city (with a roll of 90 pupils) was allowed to be opened, and after the trouble in the city, which induced his Highness to issue the order to close our work there, these men quietly used their influence to stave matters off, and the final order extinguishing our school, and even the liberty to preach, was not put into execution for months after it was left with Sir Bahshi Sing—Prime Minister—by the durbar for that purpose. These men are still professed Hindus. The good seed sown by their teachers has not been without effect, for the Bible is read by them, although as yet it is in secret.

At the zenanas, where I visited—and I had seventy-seven by the end of the first year—I found English-speaking gentlemen. If practicable I introduced Mr. Douglas, and in this way, within the first eighteen months, I was enabled to bring upwards of 300 natives within the range of his influence, and make them amenable to him. Many of these fill the highest offices of the state. Thus work came in upon him and grew up and strengthened in his hands, but his was not the only advantage; it reacted upon me, strengthening both my influence and usefulness; in this way what we called our "home work" was established, and our evenings were devoted to it.

A native boys' school was early begun in the camp bazaar; its superintendence was in my hands, Mr. Douglas occupying himself with the smaller classes, and thus aided himself in the acquisition of the rudiments of the language.

Soon we established our English service; it began in this way. Mrs. Van Heythuysen, of Mhow, was visiting us at Indore. She was a very active Christian worker, in fact the leader in everything relating to the welfare of the soldiers' wives, and Eurasians in any way connected with her husband, Col. Van Heythuysen's department in that station. At her request I went with her to call upon the women belonging to the detachment at Indore, and she appointed a "woman's meeting" for them at our house; they came, and before those thus assembled she appealed to both Miss Rodger and myself to continue the meetings weekly, as they were needed, and it would be a pleasure rather than otherwise, she supposed, to have something in our own language along with the native work. Miss Rodger declined; I then said I would do what I could, and the meetings were continued. Mr. Douglas soon afterwards began weekday services in the verandah (going to preach at Mhow on Sundays), and as I found very soon that the women could not be induced to come twice to religious services during the week, and attend church on Sabbath as well, my woman's meeting was merged into Mr. Douglas' services and removed from the verandah to the bazaar school room.

In connection with this I began, through the advice of Col. Van Heythuysen, to visit the European hospital and do what I could for our own soldiers. The charge has so often been brought against missionaries that they will do anything for a native but let our own people perish without an effort to save them. Then

natives not unfrequently point to a dissolute European as a specimen Christian, judging all English people at least to be of the Christian caste. They are greatly silenced, however, when they know we teach them the way of life also. We then merely ask the question, Do all Hindus live up to the Shasters? and they are silent.

We learnt to sing the "Moody and Sankey" hymns together. I read the Scriptures from bed to bed to those who were too ill to hear singing, but when no very bad case was pending I usually read aloud a chapter, those who were convalescent gathering around the long, central table, and there together, with bowed heads, we repeated our evening prayer, concluding with "Our Father," all the men joining in, even the Roman Catholics not unfrequently listening reverently. This was our twilight work, the barracks being close at hand. These men attended our church services very faithfully, forming our choir, indeed they formed our mission Sabbath congregation, which began when Mr. Campbell took over the Mhow chaplaincy. During the outbreak of cholera among our troops, in August of 1878, I visited our men constantly, giving up all other work for that purpose, for the time. On the 7th of January, 1879, I started a Bible class for such of them as desired to know more of the way of life, and numbers have expressed their gratitude and their sense of benefit derived from the weekly study of the Bible at my house. Now we will glance at the second period. Shortly after the arrival of the ladies from Canada a consultation was held by the gentlemen as to where and how we ladies were to work. It was impossible that all of us could remain at Indore. We were only allowed a small bungalow with three rooms; Government would give us no other. I expressed myself openly as willing to go to either station. It was finally arranged that Miss Rodger, with Miss Forrester, should go to Mhow, while Miss McGregor should remain with me at Indore, because, as Mr. Campbell stated to me, I had "hold of the work at Indore."

During this time Mr. Campbell had elaborated a scheme for an orphanage, and urged Mr. Douglas to begin this work as there were in Mhow several children requiring such a home. Mr. Douglas objected, as its support might be considered burdensome at home. Mr. Campbell urged that the sums of money annually sent to Scotland by the Juvenile Missionary Society, were really not required there, and he felt sure that the society would be only too glad to send their contributions directly to Indore. I fully agreed with Mr. Campbell in this matter. I was not desirous for an orphanage exactly, but all our native help, in woman's work, had to be obtained from other missions. Although doing the best they could for us, their best very naturally was employed in their own work; they had wide doors of usefulness opened for them in their own fields. Then there is always the feeling of antipathy with which a native woman leaves her home and the friends among whom she has always lived, to combat; so that it seemed wise to me, as well as to Mr. Campbell, that the sooner we put ourselves in the way to obtain a good home supply of competent teachers and Bible women the better for ourselves, but it was a matter of time, teachers are not trained in a day, even in Canada, but we wished to get rid of foreign assistance as soon as possible.

Rev. J. S. Beaumont, senior missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, in India, and who was at the head of that mission's educational department at Poona, the capital of the Deccan, very kindly gave us two of the most intelligent girls in the large orphanage there. They had made considerable advancement in their studies, and were already pupil teachers—being taught how to teach others—and we should shortly have made a beginning. The Committee here, since my return, closed this school. On the arrival of the ladies and Mr. Douglas the home work was given up. I regretted this exceedingly. In June, of 1878, I moved into a native house in the camp bazaar, and here the orphanage was commenced. I had Yamoona as my Bible woman, Anoo as teacher, and Elizabeth as matron, all these girls uniting in the common work of the house, which was no sinecure. Our native work lay chiefly in five departments:

1. Villages (which I have already alluded to), we visited as nearly as possible within a radius of twelve miles from the camp; within this limit we had 144. In very few of them had the name of Jesus, as the Redeemer of men, been heard of (after the purchase of my pony, which the Board had very kindly sanc-

tioned, I was enabled also to join in this work). We took these places in rotation; if large we all went together, if small a catechist went with Mr. Douglas to one village, the other going with me to another. We had to be away early enough to get the ryots before they went to work in the fields, and it was imperative that we should be home before the sun was high. I made friends with the women of many of these villages. Mr. Douglas distributed medicines and cared for the sick; while the men preached, and afterwards we all united in service of a song. This was our common mode among them. At nine o'clock he had worship with our native Christians in the lecture room.

2. The press was established early in 1877, and the idea of giving a "free Gospel" to the people adopted by Mr. Douglas. The Hindus are much too poor to purchase our Scriptures. The masses of the people have not enough to eat, let alone buying books; they who are wealthy will much sooner possess themselves of vile Persian novels than the Bible of the Christians. What is it to them? None of us, I presume, have any special longings for the books of Confucius that we should spend hardly earned money for them, and just so with the Hindu. What makes a merchant send round samples of his goods? The time for purchasing comes later. A taste for the Scriptures must be created, and to create it they must be able to reach it, and that simply means we must give it. It is objected that when bought it is more highly valued, but then what if not one man in every 125,000 buys? I have given away within two years, of texts and booklets, comprising a single chapter, over 200,000 portions of Scripture in the streets of Indore city, and I can honestly say I never saw them wantonly destroyed except, perhaps, where a greedy urchin gets a few extra copies by hiding them; but very seldom indeed, are they destroyed, except the servant tries, by force, to recapture any from one who is so detected. It is also objected that not unfrequently they fall into the hands of those who cannot read. Certainly they do, but in most cases we have found they obtain some one who can read to do it for them, and could tell intelligently what was written there. Just now I remember giving a book to a poor old man saying, "It is useless giving you a book, you cannot read." "No," he replied, "but I have a lame son who never could walk at all. A pandit taught him to read, and he loves your books, and when he knows your books are going by he sends me out to obtain one. He has eight in his box, and he reads them over and over, and to the neighbours as well." Many such instances have occurred in the history of our book distribution, which have greatly encouraged us.

3. The paper for these books was folded, sewed and cut by the children of my orphanage school, and it was no small amount of work for their dark fingers after the lessons and work of the house was over, the three girls Anoo, Yamoona and Lizzie joining in it also. This was our noontide work while the rest of the station was asleep. The paper for this department was furnished by gift from the "Bible and Tract Society," even the freight being paid as far as Bombay.

4. We had over eighty zenanas actively kept up, Yamoona and Elizabeth being my helpers in it. In the evening followed worship at the barracks, as already mentioned; the two evenings of service (Thursdays) and my Bible class (Tuesdays) excepted.

5. From seven o'clock p.m. my house was thrown open for the entertainment of native gentlemen, who could come in in a friendly way and be sure they were welcome. On these evenings I did not make the Bible prominent. It did not seem wise to me to force it too much upon their attention, but rather on these occasions not to seem anxious to do so. When they, therefore, introduced the subject of religion they took the position of inquirers, and of course I was only too glad to assist them. This prevented discussion of a fruitless kind. During the year and a half I resided in my bazaar house my visitors' book shews 522 names (natives), and of these 169 were women, mostly Brakminis. Their sons and husbands having reported favourable receptions, they also ventured, but they came earlier in the day and mostly by appointment. Native gentlemen never keep appointments. Their favourite time was between four and five o'clock.

Such was our busy life at Indore, and I believe it was very successful. I believe few missions in India have enjoyed the same success in the same time.

M. FAIRWEATHER.