

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

DEAR GIRLS AND BOYS.—If you shut your eyes you can see a haystack. Come closer and open your eyes again. Now, your haystack is really the roof of a house. The shingles are neither pine nor spruce. They were made in no saw-mill on earth. They were fashioned by no mortal hand. They were plucked, all glistening with dew, from the top of some princely palm, where they had been hung, ready-made, by the same hand that hung the moon amid the stars in the heavens. Each broad leaf covers as much of the roof as half a dozen shingles, and it is laid on, in its proper place, without the sound of a hammer. The eaves run down to the crown of your head. If you stoop and look under the eaves, you will see that the walls of the house are made of clay.

In this red mud hut, fourteen years ago, a father and mother bent over the helpless form of their new-born child. Two brothers and two sisters stood and gazed, with silent wonder, on the infant boy who had come to share their dark home and their frugal fare. He opened his black eyes, looked up into their faces and shuddered. He scanned their features, as if they were some dread monsters, into whose presence he had been ushered much against his will. Then his glance wandered around the smoky mud walls to the dusty cobwebs in the dusky corners, and then up to the rude, sooty rafters and the palm-leaf roof that let fall a crumb from its decaying fronds upon his quivering cheek. What his first impressions really were, nobody knows; but what his first expressions were, we know very well. The first wave that crossed his face was not a smile of joy, but a contortion of agony. The voice with which he announced his arrival was not a shout of victory, but a cry of fear and pain. The wail of the child floats out at the open door, and seems to declare to all whom it may concern that he is sorry that he is born. The sun goes down and dark is the night that falls on his sleepless eyes. Dark is the heart of the mother on whose bosom he lays his head, weary of life before life has fairly begun. Dark is the heart of the father who should be his guide and example! Dark are the hearts of his sisters and brothers, and dark the hearts of the villagers around him,—without one man or woman or child who has been turned from darkness to light! If he must live and die as his fathers have lived and died, or as all the people, in his own home and in his own village, are living on the day of his birth, it had been unpeakably better for him if he had never been born!

His parents named him "Mootyahlu." Pronounce the first syllable to rhyme with "Foot." Put the accent on "yah," and give it a long drawing sound. Now! All together! "Moot-yah-lu!" This is the Telugu word for "Pearl." We will put him in the singular and call him "Pearl." His eldest brother's name is "Samba." Let us Anglicise the word a little, and call him "Sambo!" The two sisters come next. Their names I do not know. One of them is married to a bad man, who drinks rum. About the other one there is some painful mystery. She left home in disgrace and they know not now whether she be alive or dead. They speak of her with a shame that makes you shrink from asking the particulars of her sad history. The fourth child is the second boy. His name is "Sooryanahrayana." This is two words put together, and they mean "Sun-god." His friends call him "Soory" for short. The next one is Pearl, the subject of this conversation. When Pearl was about four years old, another brother was born, and he received the simple name of "Goorumoorthy." We will take advantage of poetic license and call him "Goory." Here, then, are the four brothers:

Sambo and Soory,  
Pearl and Goory.

Although born in such a dark home and in such a dark village, who shall say that some of these names are not already written in heaven,—enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life, before the foundation of the world?

When Pearl grew old and strong enough to creep, he crept out of the north door into the front yard. On his left, that is toward the west, thatched-roof mud huts filled the horizon, and he could see nothing on that side but the village and the sky. Straight ahead of him, that is toward the north, he could look over the peaks of the houses and see the top of a lone, conical hill. There it rose before him, studded with huge black rocks and dotted over with flocks of sheep and goats, browsing amongst the thorns and shrubs. But he had to be watched or he would crawl around to the east end of the house and tumble into the brook. It is not really a brook, but a canal. Away to the south several miles, is a river. From this river the farmers have dug a long, deep ditch to let the water run into their fields to water their crops. That ditch is this canal. The water is always muddy, and the canal is not pretty like our brooks at home. On the other side of the canal there are no houses. Pearl's father's house is the last house in the village. It is at the extreme eastern end and is the first to greet the rising sun. If you want to make a call enter the village from the west side, follow the lane that runs through the middle of the village, until you reach the last house on the right hand side. That is the house. You cannot miss it. If you follow the lane still further, it will lead you out across a small bridge that spans the canal, and you may wander at your will over the rice fields. After Pearl learned to walk, many a time did he stand on the bank of his little canal and watch the slug-

ish flow of the water. Many a time did he look across to the other side and watch the farmers planting rice and watering their plants out of his muddy brook. His keen black eyes often swept the broad rice marsh which stretched away to the east, to the north and to the south. Year after year, except in the time of famine, he had seen the tall rice waving in the breeze like the waves of the sea. From the time when it was as green as the flocks of parrots that skimmed across its bosom, he watched it ripen day by day, until it turned to gold and fell before the sickle and song of the reaper. Eastward, across the rice marsh, he could have seen the blue Bay of Bengal; but a long crooked hill sprawls itself in the way and hides the view of the white-capped billows and the passing ships. Over this hill the sun has risen, regularly, every morning since Pearl was born. Beneath this same hill, ascending through the tops of the trees, he could discern the smoke of another village like his own.

A few rods north of his father's door is a large tree where the robins sing. They are not exactly like our Canadian robins; but their shape, carriage and movements all remind you of the robin, and I like to call them robins. The Telugu name for this bird is "Mina." In the evening this tree is a favorite rendezvous for the minas. There seems to be a bird under each leaf and every twig seems bursting with song. The music which they make is not the most charming you ever heard. Indeed, to some it might even be distressing, but it sounds as if the birds were happy, and that was music for Pearl. The branches of this tree hang over the lane of which you have heard before in this letter. Along this lane pass flocks of lean cattle driven to pasture and to water. Ricketty ox carts rattle by, with their axles, for want of oil, creaking, like flocks of wild geese. To make himself heard above the rumble of the cart and the creaking of the axle-trees, the driver sits on the tongue and shouts at the oxen with all his might. This lane is also the great promenade for the villagers during the hot season. Pearl watches them go by in groups. They stroll out upon the bare rich fields to sit on some dike or cradle hill and enjoy the cooling breeze which blows in from the sea.

When Pearl was four years old, a certain book came to a certain house in his village. Its coming and its staying seemed purely accidental. It was not welcome. Probably Pearl knew nothing about the arrival of this book. Much less did he know that it would have anything to do with him. But it was a great day for Pearl when that book found its way into that home so near his own! It was a book sent from God. Its name was "Telugu New Testament." This book was read from cover to cover by a young man who lived in the house where the book had taken up its abode. Before he had read half through the Gospels, the word of God had found its way into his stony heart, and he was a new creature. You will know him, when I tell you his name was Somalingam. Pearl's brothers, Soory and Somalingam, being of the same trade were often together in their work. To make a long story short, Soory also became a disciple of Somalingam's Saviour. A year ago last September he came to Bimlipatnam and was baptized. The next Sunday his wife also was baptized. You have heard about their conversion before through the MESSENGER AND VISITOR. Their conduct was a great grief to Pearl. He felt the disgrace which had come upon them all by this apostasy of his brother. His heart was full of wrath. He joined with his parents and other brothers in heaping bad names, bitter words and all kinds of abuse and defamation upon the turn-coat Soory. He was glad when the angry father spurned the renegade son from his door. For although Soory was married, he lived in his father's house. This custom is very common in India. Thus, after Pearl's brother had found rest for his soul he had no place to lay his head. He was turned out of doors by his own father. However, he who had taught him the way of life had a large place for him in his heart, and a room for him in his house. Somalingam welcomed them to this room with joy. Hither Soory and his wife, Ramahamma, moved their few goods and chattels and settled down much happier than they could have been, if they had been no Christian brother to receive them. If you have to leave a father or a brother for Christ's sake, He will give you another father and another brother. If any one says he does not believe this statement, show him Mark 10:28-31.

It was not far for Pearl to come to see banished apostates in their new home. A strong boy could stand under the tree where the minas sing, and throw a stone upon the tile roof. Many times a day Pearl and Goory ran westward along the lane, and turning to the right sprang up the steps that were built as close to the lane as steps are to the side-walk in a city. This is the house. It is as much better than the place where Pearl was born as a house is better than a barn. Here they stand and look at Soory as if he were a grizzly bear in a cage. Their chief aim is to find something to make fun of when they go back home. But more than once in the history of this world it has come true that "Fools who came to scoff remained to pray." Pearl begins to feel the power of his brother's new life. He sees a change there. He hears a simple story of love and grace that goes home to his heart. Before he knows it his hatred for Christ is gone and a strange love for the truth has taken place. When he returns to his own home, instead of sneering at Soory's gospel, he takes up for it. He opens his mouth before his parents and argues for the truth of Christianity. They are amazed at his impudence. Meanwhile the father dies and his soul passes away into "outer darkness!" Pearl's visits to Soory grow more frequent and his convictions grow stronger. After the father's death, Sambo is the head of the house. One day a neighbor came in and began to slander the religion of Jesus. His name was "Bungarsyaya." We will call him "Blunder." Well, Blunder came in all his heathen glory, and was cutting the Gospel all to pieces. Then Pearl's heart began to burn within him. He opened his mouth and argued with the boaster, declaring that Christ was the only true Saviour. Blunder, seeing his arguments falling to the ground was filled with rage. He sprang at Pearl, boxed his ears and kicked him, and told him if he heard another word out of his mouth, he would cut his head off. When word reached the Mission House, we felt it our duty to protect the boy. If Blunder had taken a man of his size, it would have been bad enough. If ever we are justified in declaring war, it is when a big boy is imposing on a small one. If we should stand off and see this son of Belial persecuting Pearl, we would be as sickly a sight as the great nations of the earth, stand-

ing with folded arms, while the unspeakable Turk dips his infernal sword into the innocent blood of fathers and mothers and boys and girls, in poor crushed Armenia. Therefore, this Blunder is summoned to appear before the Sub-Magistrate. The Sub-Magistrate brings him up to the Mission House. After confessing his guilt, imploring our mercy, and promising never to touch Pearl again, he is forgiven and set free. This action secures for Pearl liberty of conscience and of speech, the same liberty which the meanest coolie on the street has a right to, under the sceptre of Victoria. In spite of all its faults, thank God for the British Empire in India!

One of the first things to learn in the Goldsmith trade is to learn how to cheat. You must learn how to make a piece of jewelry look like solid gold, when it is half alloy. This cheating is the goldsmith's chief source of profit. When Soory became a new creature, he gave up cheating. When Soory became a new creature, his business also met with a change of heart. This was an amazing thing to Pearl. Who knows but that this change was the first thing to produce conviction in his breast? Anyway, his frequent visits to his Christian brother spoiled him forever as a sharp Hindu goldsmith. His mother and eldest brother, Sambo, watched his work and were enraged because he would not cheat. They said he was taking the rice out of their mouths, and was not worth his salt, because he would not cheat. But the hand of God was upon him. The fear of God was before his eyes, and there was little room for the fear of man. All their wrath and threats could not budge him. Therefore they determined to send him off to a distant city, named Rajamundry, where he could see the world and learn some sense. On his way to the train, he passed through Bimli. Soory was here too, then. He had come in to be near Somalingam and help take care of him during his sickness. Pearl came to Soory and told him that he would neither go to Rajamundry nor go back to his mother's house. He was determined to stay with the brother, whose new religion had won his heart. But there was one thing in the way. Pearl had been started for Rajamundry in charge of a friend of Sambo's. This friend said if he let Pearl stay with Soory, Sambo would always blame him. He said he would take the boy back to Sambo, and then his responsibility would cease. This seemed fair to Pearl. Therefore he went with his guardian, assuring his brother that he would soon be back again. When Sambo saw the young rebel and heard that he wanted to go and live with Soory, he was very angry. He would not let Pearl come into the house unless he would promise to obey henceforth and have nothing to do with Soory. This Pearl refused to do. "Then," said Sambo, "if you ever dare to darken my door again, I will cut off your head!" Pearl left him, and slept that night at Somalingam's house. The next morning, he arose early, came to Bimli and took up his abode with Soory. He has been with him ever since, helping him at the goldsmith trade and earning an honest living. His home is with Soory and Somalingam, in Polepilly. On Saturday, he came with them to the Mission House, and yesterday he was baptized, received into the church and sat down with us to the Lord's Supper. He is writing an essay on the Atonement to be read at the next meeting of the Bimli Bible Institute. If you believe in prayer and praise, praise God for what He has done for Pearl, and pray that he may wax strong in spirit and be great in the sight of the Lord!

Sincerely yours,  
L. D. MORSE.

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