

### Missionary Intelligence.

From the Colonial Church Chronicle for June.

The most pleasing part of a Missionary's work is his intercourse with individuals from among the unbelievers around him. The following illustrations are supplied:

Towards the latter end of 1852, the Missionaries were informed that there was a poor native Christian in the *Bazar*, very ill. They went to see him, and afterwards had him and his family removed to their Compound. They learned from him that he was a native of South India, and a Pariah. He knew English, and could read Tamil. He had been instructed by a former master, an Officer in the Madras army, who also was instrumental in leading him to embrace Christianity. When the Missionaries found him, he was suffering from dropsy and fever; he did not expect he should live long; and showed no unwillingness to die. They were afterwards much pleased and encouraged to see him manifest much patience in the midst of intense pain. The remembrance of his past sins were grievous to him; but his trust in Christ was intelligent and entire. Indeed, he was enabled to rejoice in his sufferings, and to thank God for the peace of conscience which he possessed. Neither was he grateful to God alone, but also to every one who showed him the least kindness. On the day of his death, Mr. Rogers administered to him the Supper of the Lord, from which he derived much strength and refreshment. He soon after fell asleep in Jesus; and on the following day his remains were committed to their long home. The Missionaries' three weeks' acquaintance with this poor man contributed not a little to encourage them to go on in the work in which they were engaged.

Another interesting individual came under the notice of the Missionaries. One afternoon, in the early part of 1853, a most unpromising-looking man, in the dress of a religious beggar, presented himself at the Mission-house as a candidate for baptism. He gave the following account of himself:—His name was Meer Khan; he had been a Mohammedan Fugger; had once visited Mecca; and soon after his return to his native hills, on the border of Kashmir, had started on a second pilgrimage to the same place. He and his companion had reached Peshawar, and were engaged in their devotions in one of the Mosques, when their attention was drawn to an English Officer, not far off, who was addressing some people on the subject of religion. The Fugger went near, and began to hoot and make a noise; Meer Khan at first joined with them, but his attention was soon arrested by what was said; and he accompanied the Officer to his house, to make further inquiries. He repeated these visits every day for nearly a month, and then began to inquire, "What doth hinder me from being baptized?" His instructor advised him to go in search of a Missionary; and the poor man travelled six weary months, until he at length arrived in Kurackee. After careful observation of him, coupled with instruction, he was admitted into the Christian Church by Mr. Rogers. It was most gratifying to observe the love which this man showed for the New Testament; he committed large portions of it to memory—indeed, he took such delight in the sacred volume that, while reading it, he forgot sometimes to cook his food and take his rest. He also showed much zeal in speaking and exhorting Mosulmans to embrace Christianity, and seemed careless of their threats. He soon afterwards left Sindh; but intelligence concerning him was received two years after his baptism, to the effect that he continued steadfast and consistent in his profession.

A third and deeply interesting case was that of Abdoolah. This young man was a native of Umballah, in Sirhind; and when he came under the instruction of the Missionaries, was about 26 years of age. This person began even in boyhood to question the propriety of certain points of Mosulman sacred law. In the hearing of his parents, he one day objected to the law of polygamy as an injustice to the female sex, and also found fault with the right of parents to compel a daughter of 11 or 12 years of age to marry an old man of 60 or 70. His parents rebuked him, saying that God ordered these things to be so. "Then," replied the boy, "God must be unjust." In recording this, it may be remarked that it is a proof of the existence of the moral faculty, and of its existence, too, in the face of the teachings of a false religion. Abdoolah appears to have been of a very meditative turn of mind. When he was about 21 years of age he began to give his attention to the Christian religion; and a year or two afterwards he wrote a pamphlet full of hostility to Christianity. About this time Mr. Seal, who was acquainted with him, suggested to Abdoolah that he ought to read what Christians had to say in behalf of

their faith before he condemned it. He assented to the justice of this; and on Mr. Seal lending him two or three books, he promised to read them. One of these was by the Rev. Murray Mitchell, of Bombay; the scope of it was to prove that Mohammed, even on his own showing possessed no credentials of prophethood. On reading what he considered a monstrous fiction, he flew to the Koran, not doubting but that he would find an overwhelming refutation of Mr. Mitchell's book; but, to his great disappointment, he saw that all the quotations from the Koran were correct, and that Mohammed himself acknowledged that he had not the power of working miracles. Shortly afterwards, he read the Rev. Mr. Pfander's able controversial works; this forced upon him the thought that Mohammedanism was a mere imposture. He was unable any longer to place any trust in his religion; and yet he would not embrace Christianity. "He was about to give himself up to scepticism, when the Providence and Grace of God interferred to save him from such an evil: his wife, whom he tenderly loved, took suddenly ill, and after two days' illness, during which she never spoke, she breathed her last. He now saw that scepticism would not do; that he might die as suddenly as his wife, and then, if a sceptic, he must die without any hope. He resolved that he would give Mohammedanism another chance; and that if it still appeared a false religion he would embrace Christianity. He first resigned the office of Kardar, (a lucrative and respectable situation which he held under Government), and devoted his time to reading. He also wrote twenty-four questions addressed to Mohammedans, asking the learned among them to resolve his doubts; and some months after his wife's death he disinterred her body, and took it with him to his native place, Umballah. In this place he called an assembly of learned Mosulmans, and of his own relatives; he stated to them that he entertained doubts about his religion, and begged them to satisfy his mind on two points—1, that Mohammed worked miracles; 2, that the Christian Scriptures have been altered and abolished. The only reply he received was, that they would kill him. He then made up his mind to become a Christian. He returned to Kurackee in the beginning of 1853; and, after several months' instructions, he was baptized on the Whit-Monday of the same year. His consistent Christian behavior gave much satisfaction to those who knew him best; he showed that he had become a Christian, not in word only, but also in deed and in truth. He accompanied the Missionary in a tour through Sindh, and rendered him invaluable assistance. He is now living in the Punjab.

Before concluding this sketch, mention maybe made of a strange character, who made his appearance in Kurackee about two years ago. His name was Mohammed Baqir; he was nephew of Mirza Ibraheem, one of the advisers of Yar Mahomed, of Herat. Lt. Eldred Pottinger had given Mirza Ibraheem a Persian Testament, and it had fallen into Mohammed Baqir's hands, when he was on a visit to his uncle. He was much pleased with what he read of it. After this he led a kind of hermit's life; and one day he imagined that a messenger from Heaven appeared to him in a flame of fire, informing him that he was chosen by God to abolish all false religions, and to be a second John the Baptist. He collected 1,000 or 2,000 followers. These, however, soon left him; when he came to Kurackee he had only one disciple. He requested to be baptized, but the Missionary did not feel justified in acceding to his desire. When he afterwards determined upon returning to Cabul, the Missionary advised him to go to Mr. Pfander at Agra, at the same time giving him a letter of introduction to that Missionary. Information has lately been received that he is at present under Mr. Pfander's care, and that he is going on satisfactorily.

It is to be trusted that a perusal of these facts concerning the Sindh Missions will have the effect of leading Christian people to pray continually that God's Spirit may accompany the Missionaries in their labors, and vouchsafe them success.

### Selections.

#### THE INUNDATIONS IN FRANCE.

FRANCE.—(From our Correspondent.)—Paris, June 9, 1856.—It is, indeed, difficult to exaggerate the deplorable catastrophe which has taken place—the amount of present misery inflicted, or the disastrous consequences entailed throughout the year. I have seen it stated broadly that the ravages of the Rhone and Saone, in the South, extend over a district of some 300 miles long, by 40 or 50 broad, and that in the simple Arondissement of Arles alone, the damage done can-

not be estimated at less than £500,000 sterling. Some idea, therefore, may be formed of the vastness of the ruin and desolation which has been completed throughout the long course of such rivers as the Rhone and the Loire.

Town and country have equally suffered; for, besides what is mentioned above, there is to be taken into consideration the inundation of such cities as Tour and Lyons, and the complete disappearance of whole villages with hundreds of isolated habitations. At Lyons, the details of the irruption of the water are peculiarly afflicting, on account of the nature of the territory invaded, and the masses of population exposed to suffering. The river appears to have first broken in upon the immense plain above the city on the left bank, cultivated like a garden, and dotted all over with the earth-built cottages of the peasantry, and across which lines of densely-inhabited Faubourgs lead to the town itself. A stone rampart bounds the usual bed of the river, and a second dike of earth, eight or ten feet high, protects the plain, at a distance of three or four times the ordinary width of the Rhone.

"It is inconceivable," says one account, "how the river could have supplied a mass of water so enormous as to surmount both these obstacles." The phenomenon, so unusual, of falls of snow on the mountains in May, combined with rains unprecedented in the month of June, can alone explain so extraordinary an overflow. The nights of Friday and Saturday were spent in heightening and strengthening the second barrier; but in vain, for the next day the dike suddenly gave way, and the flood precipitated itself upon the plain with incredible fury, sweeping all before it. In the same way, lower down, the strong embankments which connect the different fortified points of the city, gradually yielded before the prodigious weight of water which pressed against it, and the deluge broke upon the town itself, as it had already upon the country. In the quarters of Guilloire and Brotteux, thickly peopled by the laboring classes, houses of three and four stories came tumbling down; and now "lakes are standing, out of which rise the crumbling walls of habitations, through the breaches of which may be seen the furniture and devastated interiors."

One can readily enough believe the *Moniteur*, when it tells us that the Emperor, arriving in the midst of such a scene of desolation, was hailed as a second Providence by the wretched inhabitants. Mounting his horse, Louis Napoleon at once proceeded to visit the sufferers. The water frequently came up to his saddle bow; his attendants followed him, some on boats, some on horseback. "The Emperor was visibly affected, when contemplating the disasters around him. Tears filled his eyes, and frequently overflowed and trickled down his cheeks. No words can express what passed between the Sovereign of France and this poor desolated population. Women and children clung to his horse, in front of which hung a large leathern bag, full of gold, out of which he distributed largely with his own hand, and with great gentleness, to the unfortunates around him." After organizing relief and subscriptions on a large scale, the Emperor left for Valence, and visited all the towns as far as Arles. At Avignon he reached the upper part of the city in a boat, and ascended to the ruins of the old papal palace, in order to witness and judge of the whole extent of the ravages. The ordinary communications, as well as those by railroad, being everywhere closed, he proceeded for many miles in a boat, through the fields and villages, distributing succor to the inhabitants, often prisoners, as at Tarascon, in the upper floors of their cottages. At Arles, where he ascended the tower of Arimes, the whole territory between the city and the sea lay under water. The spectacles around Lyons, now that the waters are falling, is described as most pitiable:—"On every side men and women are busy amongst the ruins seeking to extract from beneath them and save the remains of furniture, clothes and linen; every moment the soaked walls of the mud houses crumble, and literally melt away. Piles of frippery of all sorts, hung out to dry upon the last posts left standing, or spread on the mud banks appearing above the surface, give a heart-rending aspect to the scene." The Petites Sœurs des Pauvres and the Capuchins, although both washed out of their own habitations, are rendering effective services in the work of charity.

Some particular incidents in the surrounding country are most affecting:

"I have just witnessed," writes a member of the Conseil General of Bordeaux, "the most desolating spectacle I ever beheld. The entire hamlet of Besodun has disappeared. At 6 in the evening the inhabitants heard the walls and framework of their houses.