

GOOD AND BAD ASPECTS OF THE FAMINE.

From the Report of the American Madura Mission, we take the following interesting passages:—

The year 1877 will long be remembered by the people of India. It will be called the year of the Great Famine.

The close of 1876 was gloomy enough. The rains had entirely failed; the scarcity of food and consequent high prices were increasing the distress daily. Early in the present year thousands left their homes on account of the famine. They went in every direction; hundreds fell victims to cholera by the way, while in the places of destination, graves are counted by thousands. Although the railroad was bringing into the district great quantities of grain, the scarcity in the out-lying parts of the district was fearful. Robberies and the burning of villages increased rapidly. Government commenced relief works, and established camps, but of course it could not reach anything like all the cases needing help. People who were unable or unwilling to go to the relief works, were reduced to great extremities for food. Many subsisted upon the heart of the aloe, and hundreds lived for days and weeks upon the seeds of the senna. As a consequence, pestilence and disease prevailed, and in August the death-rate was enormous.

In June and July relief was commenced in many villages by a daily dole of food or money to those ineligible to the relief camps. Wells were dug or deepened, and small fields were sown and planted, but blight and insects destroyed the crops. The early rains in August failed, and the prospect was terrible.

From the middle of September until late in December, continuous and abundant rains filled the tanks and kept the rivers in unprecedented floods. Early in December there was an unusual fall of rain, registering in some places over twelve inches in as many hours. The consequent rise of rivers destroyed many lives, broke the banks of numerous tanks, swept away villages, and caused great damage to the standing crops.

In September, when the outlook was the darkest, help from abroad began to come. Large sums of money were distributed through local committees, for support of life, for poor cultivators to enable them to plough and sow, and for houses and clothing. This Mansion House Fund, although coming late, has saved multitudes of lives and done more perhaps than the Government itself, towards preventing a famine the coming year. But for this help, great tracts of land would have remained uncultivated.

These events have had a marked influence upon the work of the year. The distribution of large sums of money by the Missionaries has occupied much of their time during the last two months of the year. Aside from the money received from the Mansion House Relief Fund, money has also been received from friends in America. These latter funds have rendered most valuable assistance to our native people. The Mansion House Funds have been distributed without regard to caste or creed.

Many of the results of the famine will be noticed in the following pages, and yet there are a few incidents that it may be well to group here.

Mr. Noyes writes:—"Of thousands who went for sustenance from and through the Kambam valley, to the coffee estates of the Travancore Hills, comparatively few have returned to their homes. Four hundred and seventy-nine people are reported to have died at one coffee estate."

The weavers have suffered greatly. The leading men of this caste in Madura, together with civilians and residents, raised money, to which Government added, and a relief house was established for this caste alone. Mrs. Capron writes:—"My sympathies have been enlisted for these children, and the allowance of fifty rupees a month from the Famine Relief Fund has been mostly spent among them. This morning a weaver woman came to the Dis-

pensary, with tears running down her cheeks. She sobbed out; "A year ago I had seven children. I do not know where their father is. The fifth child died last night. I carried it out to the burning-ground and there I left it, I had no money to buy fuel for the burning, I have these two left—look at them, and save them to me if you can." Like things have happened in very many families. In many places children have been sold to procure the means for purchasing food. A great many instances are mentioned where men of wealth have given largely towards feeding the starving. Private charity by the poor themselves to the starving about them has been very common.

That the famine has made, and will make, great changes in communities and customs, cannot be doubted. Although too early to estimate the results good and bad, yet some of these are too evident to pass unnoticed. Among the bad results, we find many deaths, many diseases and diseased bodies, habits of thieving, deceiving and begging, loss of manliness, loss of shame and chastity, many separations, of husbands from wives and parents from children, a hardening effect on the minds of nearly all by the sight of so much suffering and death.

A few of the good results are, esteem for the English Government, appreciation of the railroad, regard for Christianity, friendliness towards Christians, disgust of idolatry, embracing of the Christian religion, and a drawing nearer to one another in the work of administering relief—"Madras Times."

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

There are a good number of circles under the Toronto Ladies Board, that the Secretary and Treasurer would both like to hear from. We presume the same is true of many circles under the other Ladies' Boards. It is a great encouragement to the Secretaries to hear from the Local Secretaries, and of course it is always pleasant to the Treasurer to receive hints to meet the calls upon the Societies.

MOVEMENT TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY.

During the last year, between 800 and 900 families, numbering about 6,000 souls, and residing in 60 different villages in North and South Arcot, have renounced their idols, and formally accepted Christianity. We have not included any of them in our statistical table, as we wish to test their motives before calling them Christians. The movement, although principally amongst the Pariah caste, is by no means confined to them. Pastor John states that of the 18 villages he has received, "two are composed of caste people, one including the Monegar and 11 families. These have broken the sacred thread from their bodies, taken off the lingam from their arms, and eaten with me." In one village in South Arcot, seven families, representing three different castes, together with eight families of Pariahs, form a new congregation. Although many of those who have come may desert us when the famine is over, yet a large number will doubtless be firm, and whatever may have been their ruling motive in joining us, we believe it was the Lord only who gave them the mind and the courage to renounce the faith of their fathers, and accept a new religion. This is not the first time that God has made famine a means of subduing men's hearts, and leading them to forsake their dumb idols to serve Him. These people are at first, very ignorant, and Catechists must be sent to teach them. It is a great step gained when men renounce idolatry and declare their intention to become Christians, but unless they are carefully instructed, we cannot hope for any satisfactory results. Our custom, therefore is, on receiving a large number of people, to form them as soon as practicable into a congregation, with a Catechist at their head, and teach them immediately to observe the outward forms of Christianity. In cases where so many come over, one Catechist has charge of two or more villages. His duty is to meet the people in the evening, and instruct them in the fundamental truths of the Bible, and during the day to teach the children. This daily instruction of "line upon line" does not fail to make an impression in time, even on the duller minds, and nearly all of our Christians have been the outgrowth under God's grace of just such instruction.—*Annual Report of the Arcot Mission, "Madras Times."*

A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM!

We saw it stated some time ago that one-third of all that was given for Foreign Missions last year, was given by Sabbath Schools and children. This is a most hopeful and remarkable sign of the times, if true. It speaks well for the broad Christian character of the coming generation of Christian workers and members of our churches. Evidently all the money of many of our Sabbath Schools is not being used to get books and papers for themselves, and to defray the expenses of the "Annual Pic-Nic." Let us hear from more of our children.

THE GOOD A LITTLE MONEY MAY DO.

For \$125, a girl can be clothed, fed and educated for five years. When taken she does not know a letter. At the end of the five years, she will be able to take a "Vernacular Third-Class Government Certificate" to teach.

WOMAN'S BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF WESTERN CONVENTION.

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Fasley, "	13 00
Stratford	1 50
Port Hope,	15 00
Tanipany's Grove, W. M. C.	5 00
Whitby, (town), W. M. C.	4 00
Jagersoll, W. M. C.	11 81
Port Burwell, W. M. C.	5 00
Salford, W. M. C.	10 10
Strathroy, "	18 00
College St.	15 00
Whitby, 6th Concession	15 00
" Unknown "	11 15
Brantford	37 59
Paris	43 00
Theford	12 50
Guelph	29 00
Alexander St.	47 20
Yorkville, Thos. P. Davies, Esq., St. John, N. B.	50 03
Jarvis St.	88 95

\$426 23

EKSKINE BUCHAN,

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Yorkville, July 3rd, 1878.

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