

The Canadian Missionary Link

CANADA.

In the interests of the Baptist Foreign Mission Societies of Canada.

INDIA.

VOL. 11, No. 11.] "*The Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy rising.*"—Is. lx. 3. [JULY, 1889.

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To the Circles of the Woodstock Association Assembled in Conference—Greeting.

(Read also at several of the other Associations.)

Sisters in Christ.—I pray the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God. Amen.

Some of you, my dear sisters having requested me to write you a letter, I will ask you, in imagination, to accompany me as I take my round of visits in Cocanada one afternoon in April. It is Cocanada in the month of April, and not Canada, so we don our thinnest garments, our most transparent hose, and our low white canvas shoes, leaving all superfluities behind, even a handkerchief in the pocket being sometimes a burden. The heat is very great, the thermometer registering 100° in the shade—I cannot tell what it is in the sun. This being the case, the head, which is the most tenderly sensitive to the sun, is protected by a broad-brimmed hat, three-quarters of an inch thick, covered and lined, and if there is a scarf with the ends hanging down behind to protect the neck—so much the better. Besides this, the ubiquitous umbrella with its double cover, must have a place.

Thus apparelled, and having had prayer and a word of exhortation with the Bible women who meet at 1.45, I start out, taking two of the Bible women with me. The palanquin carriage, which has been bought of money saved from my travelling and necessities' expenses, and which now belongs to the Mission, is driven to the door by the coachman, who, with the horse is jointly owned by all the missionaries in the compound. We take a jar—if I remember—and a "pooja" of water, which I must not forget, for a jar may be obtained in any of the zenanas, but not even in the house of the best Brahmin would I drink a cup of water, lest to my unaccustomed lips it should prove a cup of fever, and so as we must get thirsty when singing and talking constantly, with the thermometer above 100°, I take my own thoroughly filtered water to quench my thirst and cool my tongue.

We feel pretty comfortable in the carriage, for it is enclosed with Venetian blinds, and has a top of great thickness and made double so as to allow a passage of air between. Indeed, if it were not for this conveyance, I should be unable to venture out at all in the heat of an

April afternoon. The slats on the shady side were left open to let in the air, and we catch little glimpses of the town as we drive on, first through the compound gate, just outside of which our shopman, who does most of the trading for us on commission, keeps a store. This is about four feet square, and is attended to by his grandmother, who sells curries, onions, tamarinds and limes, potatoes by the quart, and wood by the pound. Next we pass the bathing-tank, where a dozen heads or more are popping in and out of the water. Some of the bathers have left their clothes on shore, some had none to leave, but there they were, enjoying their noonday bath, which seems life to them, but which would be death to us in that blazing sun. Next, the municipal office, where crowds are always gathered, some walking about, some standing, some lying down fast asleep, but all, I presume, waiting for a judgment which they expect shortly. Next, the Rajah's college, where students are trained for senior matriculation.

But we pass on, and there is nothing more worthy of special interest till we reach the market, unless we notice the continually passing crowd of men, women and children; the coolie man with his "kavady," running along, the coolie woman with the bundle of hay on her head, or a pot of foaming toddy, fresh from the palm-tree—but which ferments so quickly in this sun; the child, carrying another child almost as heavy as herself on her hips; the postman, it may be with his jangling mail; the writer or office-clerk, with his flowing robes and superb turban; two tardy school-boys, with their arms around each other's necks—a common fashion—loitering on their way; the jeweled merchant in his gig drawn by a little pony; the fat Brahmin in his push-push bandy, pushed by one lank coolie; the lazy Rajah, lying in his palanquin, accompanied with great *gato* (?) by a dozen men; the wealthy native in his carriage. All these we pass and many more, and our hearts are sad as we think of them without the knowledge of Christ, having no hope and without God in the world, and we sigh but pass on.

(Our work is not here, but in the homes, where, if possible, the ignorance is even deeper and denser. The carriage stops at the market and we alight, I being careful to have my umbrella up as we step out, and we go a little way down one street and are about to enter a "kafir," or respectable Indian house, when a woman who sits in the passage tells us she is too busy to-day. I feel disappointed. However, we pass on to the next house, where we are most welcome. This is a jeweller's house, a very respectable business at home, but not so here, as it is said a jeweller once stole a lump of gold from a Brahmin and all jewellers have been under his curse ever since.