

THE YEAR'S WORK IN MHOW.

BY REV. NORMAN H. RUSSELL.

The past year, 1896-97, has been one of great encouragement in the work in Mhow. The Lord's hand has been with us, and his blessing has been on every department.

It has, however, not been without its changes. Dr. Thompson whose cheering presence has been such a help to us for the past year left us in October for his new field of labor in Ujjain. In November we were privileged to welcome Miss Leyden as an addition to the Mhow Staff.

Then on the 24th December, Dr. Smith and family arrived, a welcome Christmas gift, not only to Mhow but to the whole Mission. Their arrival was saddened by the illness and subsequent death of dear wee Jessie. She was with us long enough to win her way to our hearts, and her grave is another of the bitteresses whereby the measure of Christ's sufferings is filled up for India's redemption.

In February Miss Ross and Mr. Frank H. Russell bade farewell to their loved work and people here to open up the new mission in Dhar. The partings were very sad, though brightened by many fond expressions of regard. The new missionaries in stepping into their places were right royally welcomed and already a bond of sympathy has been established between them and this people.

I. WORK AMONG NATIVE CHRISTIANS.

Classes.

The training and development of our native Church has always been held the most important department of our work in Mhow. Seven of our workers availed themselves of this opportunity. The work and results of these classes will be treated elsewhere by Mr. Wilson, and as in the previous year our men were again successful in winning first place, it being shared however in the case of the senior class by another.

In addition to these extra classes were held as often as possible, for the study, chiefly of the Word. An hour and a half was spent every Saturday morning, first, in the study of the Sabbath School lesson, and second, in hearing reports and dealing with all points of difficulty connected with the work. A class for adult Christians is also held every Sunday morning in connection with the Sunday School.

Congregation.

Our Christian community has grown quietly but steadily. We have had more baptisms than in any previous year, 13 being from among non-Christians, and 5 Christians, 18 in all. We also had one addition from the Roman Catholics. Nine have joined our Church by profession of faith, and 12 by certificate. The number of members now on our roll when purged to the end of 1896 is 66, showing a net increase of 12 during the year.

We have had seven deaths in our midst, also a larger number than chronicled in any previous year.

The regular weekly services have been most faithfully attended, and the Church records show about 80 per cent. of the members in attendance on the Lord's Supper. The Christians have themselves held meetings for prayer both in the Church and the homes of the sick. The week of prayer was observed by our people in the last week of the year, and was a means of great blessing to all, especially stirring us all to watchfulness and prayer.

Choirs.

A large number of the congregation assemble every Saturday morning for an hour to learn to sing the native hymns under the most efficient training of Miss Calder, through whose efforts the singing in our native Church has become something we are proud of.

Session.

The Session has had very frequent meetings, as all applicants for baptism, enquirers and others have appeared before the Session as a whole, and the elders, Dr. Thompson, Mr. Drew and Mr. Anketell, have shared equally with the Missionary the care and responsibility of dealing with enquiring souls. We have had several cases of discipline, all of which have been dealt with firmly but lovingly. The Session has also received Nanu a Christian from Berwai of some 3 or 4 years' standing as a student under its care with a view to engaging in Evangelistic work.

The Deacons' Court has taken charge of its work of caring for the poor, providing for Church expenses, and for the support of the congregation's evangelist. All the members now give regularly, and encouragingly to the support of the Church. Two new members have been elected to this court, one of them being a convert from the Berwai district who is now employed by the congregation as a Bible reader.

Enquirers.

The list of baptisms might have been considerably swelled this year had we baptised all who asked for it, or even those who gave a credible testimony. But it has been thought better by the Session not to make haste in dealing with enquirers, so their names have been entered in the enquirers' roll, and they have been commended to the care of the nearest catechist for instruction and help. In this way they are visited once a month, and taught in the Word.

All enquirers and Christians however in the Holkar State have been subject to constant persecution, their water supply being stopped, and employment often being refused. Twenty-four names are now on the roll as regular enquirers, from whom let us hope much fruit will be gathered in during the coming year.