

THE INDIAN'S JEWEL-CASE AND JEWELS.

Several missionaries had penetrated into a sequestered district 'far up country' in the Bengal Presidency. Their object was to carry the glad Gospel tidings to the inhabitants there, whom they believed to be entirely ignorant of the glorious message of divine grace. In one of these remote jungles they found the natives intelligent and communicative, and received from them a kind and somewhat unexpected welcome. The missionaries showed their interest in the temporal affairs of these supposed heathens, by inquiring into the welfare of their families, the state of their fields, and conversing on such and similar subjects, thereby striking chords which they knew would find an echo in their hearts.

Passing from these topics, they spoke of another and a nobler, better life than this short one of earth, and asked their views and sentiments on the all-important subjects of immortality and the hopes thereof.

'Have you ever had any consciousness of *sin*?' they asked.

'We *know* we are sinners,' was the simple answer.

'And have you heard anything of the great love of the sin-hating God to us sinners in the gift of His Son, the one Mediator between God and man?'

'We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' was the prompt but earnest reply, uttered reverently and solemnly.

Greatly surprised to hear such sentiments from men who lived not less than five hundred miles from Calcutta, and who, to their almost certain belief, had been unassisted by any herald of the Gospel, the missionaries eagerly asked how they had become possessed of such sacred and blessed knowledge.

'We read it in some books and tracts that were sent us,' was the chief's reply.

'Will you allow us to see your books?'

'Oh, surely,' again answered the chief; 'I shall go now to my home and fetch them.'

He quitted the assembled little company, but speedily returned without the books, saying, 'My brother has gone to the field, and has carried the key of the jewel-case with him.'

'But what has the jewel-case to do with the books?' asked the missionaries.

'Oh, we keep them in it—they are our treasures—our precious things; and we keep them along with our gold and silver, and jewels.'

Shortly afterwards the Indian returned from the field whither he had gone. And on the jewel-case being opened, the chief lifted from among the golden treasures two small books, which he reverently placed in the missionaries hands. On examining them, they found they were the Gospels of Matthew and Mark in the vernacular tongue. Great, indeed, was the surprise and joy of these devoted men, on this discovery, and heartily did they sympathize in the feelings of these their brethren in Christ in the care bestowed upon this portion of God's word, and the high value and respect they attached to this heavenly jewel. Already its light had chased thick darkness away, already in the Holy Spirit's hand it had introduced those chain-fettered slaves of superstition and ignorance into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. And what shall the end of these things be! Who may tell? These drops from heaven, although as yet in their gathered strength they may appear like a cloud no larger than a man's hand, shall ere long descend in such copious showers, that the wilderness and solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. Then no man shall need to teach his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know Him, from the least even to the greatest. But *till then*, till the 'crown of all the earth' has been added to the many crowns which shall encircle the sacred head of the 'King of kings,' the duty of His people here is to carry the message of peerless love to the world's remotest corner, even until the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the deep. Up, then, and be doing, O fellow-Christian; the time is short, and the work is great.

"We have no time to sport away the hours,
All must be earnest in a world like ours."