

## MISSION TO THE BHEELS.

LETTER FROM REV. DR. BUCHANAN.

MEGHNAGER, BHEEL COUNTRY,  
Dec. 10th, 1895.

DEAR SISTER KIT,—After the meeting of Council in July, at which Mr. Russell and myself were appointed to go and see the Bheel Country and report, the tour was taken. In it we covered about 160 miles among them and gained some little idea of their greatness and the need of the gospel, as well as increased desire to have the gospel given to them.

Those days spent among them called forth yearnings and desires such as could only be told into the ear of Him who wept over a lost world. Looking at them as we drove along, talking with them by the way, chatting with them by the cheery watchfire, telling of the wondrous Love, everywhere, every way, the one voice seemed to say "come over and help us."

Then the question came, "Who is to go"? "Whom shall we send"? Though I felt my own heart stirred, can you wonder, with all the struggles at opening up Ujjain, the tedious waiting for land, the disappointment at the smooth false promises of lying pandits; then the land obtained, the bungalow built, trees and garden set out; the daily service upon Ujjain's 35,000 rich and poor alike in the time of sickness, till almost every face seemed familiar; the completion of the new two story hospital through the sympathetic support and help of private friends; the interest of more than one mohullah in the city awakened till they were all but ready to take up their cross and follow Christ; the gathering together of the despised lepers, many of whom, though not yet baptised boldly confess the name of the Lord Jesus and can give an intelligent reason for the hope that is in them; and the little grave made in soil not yet the property of the Mission: with such things binding our hearts to Ujjain and the work there, can you wonder that I kept my counsel from Mr. Russell and only sent the smallest hint to my dear wife (who has been brave beyond description in the battle only suggested above) of the work that was to be done for these wild hill people.

While I was being drawn by means of the natural channel of seeing and hearing, Mrs. Buchanan was being worked upon in a specially supernatural way. Before I had returned she had met and faced the whole question; and had surrendered Ujjain, rendered dear by many joys and sorrows, to go forth to this new work of the jungle. She had again heard and answered the call.

Though Mrs. Buchanan and myself after my return conversed very fully with one another on the whole question and felt almost as if the appointment had taken place, we kept our counsel even from those with whom we are most intimate, committing the whole matter to the great King

and Head of the church, asking that He would be pleased to guide the Council to the praise and glory of His own name and to the salvation of these people. Of course the fact that we are expecting to take furlough so soon, appeared to us as one reason why we should not be appointed to this beloved work in the meantime.

Thus the meeting of Council drew on. When the subject of the allocation of missionaries came up, it was unanimously decided, that the missionary for the Bheels be first appointed. After a season of special prayer, consideration of the question in all its aspects, and many kind remarks by the missionaries, it was decided by a unanimous vote, that we be appointed to the Bhil work, and by the blessing of God here we are.

Jan. 2nd, 1896, is now the date upon us; we have been busy looking out a location for the Mission, getting acquainted with the people, and telling them by act and word of the great love of Christ shed abroad in our own hearts. I am happy to tell you, that the people in the near neighbourhood are beginning to confide in us.

Yesterday Mr. Campbell and myself were down at Jhabua, the capital of the state, looking at a site for bungalow. On the way home, in the wild jungle, infested with jackals, hyenas and leopards, if not tigers, we saw some object in the road, at which the horses we were riding, seemed nervous. We found out it was a poor old woman, unable to move. She would probably have perished with the cold night air, or been eaten by some wild animal; there was only one thing to do, take her to some place of warmth and safety.

The poor Bhil woman (for so she turned out to be, she was unable to converse with us at the time) was mounted on one of my horses, and Mr. Campbell and I, one on either side, held her on as we led the ponies towards camp. We intended leaving her at one of the Bhil houses as we went along, but as it was a rather wild section and night, we did not come across one.

On we came to the camp, where there was a gathering of Bhils for a magic lantern service. The poor old woman was placed beside the fire, some clothing put on her, a drink of warm barley soup, part of Mary's dinner, given her, and soon she was able to speak and tell who she was.

When the magic lantern meeting was over, the Bhils crowded around her quite interested in the whole story, and soon we knew, that we had brought home to camp the aged sister of the Patel of the village of Piplia. (The Patel is the head man of a village.) She is a poor feeble old creature. I sent word this morning to the village about her; but in the struggle for enough to eat, there is not much regard paid to this old woman.

She becomes it seems our first orphan. A boy from the same village is asking to be received with our own orphans. We hope to take him, but will not do so without his father's consent least the people should fear we were kidnapping.

The prospects are very bright for good work if we are careful, kind, and faithful.