

FAMINE SCENES IN INDIA.

Rev. J. Fraser Campbell, D.D., our missionary at Rutlam, writes:

"The distress is increasing and must increase. Yesterday on my way home from our morning service I met a stream of miserable creatures, and finally the extreme emaciation of one little tot brought me to a stand. Immediately I was surrounded, his father showed me that another who was being carried in a basket was still worse, and other people had their own miseries to show. I had them come to the house, began with milk and hot water for the children and had food prepared for all. About forty were fed, and among them was a particularly emaciated man who was recognized as having been here before with a brother, his wife and child, but now he was alone—the rest had died, he said.

"This morning about 6 o'clock when I was dressing I heard a man's voice crying; the sound came from waste ground near our house, and I sent a man to enquire. The word came back that the man's child had died. Later I found that it was the one who was in the basket; it proved that it was still alive, though in the cold of the early morning it had seemed to die. The parents with tears besought me to take the children and bring them up. I did what I suppose you would have done—arranged to take the mother and three children meanwhile and give the man some work. But it is probably too late to save all of the children.

"Meanwhile word came that the carrion birds were at the corpse of a boy in another part of the same ground."

Dr. Margaret McKellar, our medical missionary in Neemuch, in a letter of Feb. 12, just received, says:

"For over 100 years there has not been a like distress, consequently last September the poor people in less favoured districts began flocking into Central India, feeling sure that here they would get food and fodder, but alas! they were doomed to disappointment. It has been with great difficulty that those in authority have driven back outsiders to their respective states to be provided for by their own Rajahs.

"It was while these streams of people were passing to and fro that we started in a small way to give food. From September 11th to December 31st we gave bread or grain to 55,912 souls. At first, we gathered them on our own compound and were able to tell them of the "Bread of Life," as well as give them the bread that perisheth. The congregating of them together in this way was discontinued by order of the Commanding Officer, for fear of bringing infectious diseases so near the British soldiers.

"Since January 1st I have been giving bread and boiled peas from my cart, going to and coming from my dispensaries

to those on the roads, and in this way about 8,000 more have received a little.

"It is sad to see men, women and children winnowing the dust of the streets and following the heavy-laden carts of wheat, in the hope of picking up a few grains to eat; sadder still to see them breaking up excrement on the road for particles of undigested food, which they greedily devour. In the villages round about many are grinding down the barks of certain trees to mix with the flour to make their bread and then only get one meal every second or third day.

"When thousands are on the march, many a mother with her new-born babe found shelter in one of our "mangers" and was fed and cared for until she was strong enough to continue her journey with her people.

"Some 200 souls have been taken in by our mission in Neemuch. Of that number several are children forsaken by their parents in the Bazaar streets or out in the fields, who were picked up by policemen or some of our workers and brought to the orphanage, where they are tenderly cared for by the big girls, who were saved from the famine of three years ago. Others were brought by their parents. The number might have been double or treble what it is had we been willing to buy the children brought to us for sale. Is it not sad that the pangs of hunger so stifle tender parental feelings that for a "mess of pottage" they are willing to sell what should be dearer than life to them? Not a few have been found by wells "sick and helpless and ready to die."

"Saturday as I was coming home from my city dispensary I found a woman lying by a well and saw that she was too weak to come for the food, so I went to her, but before she would touch the food she pleaded for a drink of water. There is no telling how long she may have been there, within two or three yards of the well and scores coming and going for water but no one gave her to drink. I had only boiled grain left, as I had given all the bread away, which when she tasted, she asked for bread. I said if she would stay where she was that I would go and bring her some bread, clothing, and all that was necessary. An hour later Miss Campbell and I returned in the moonlight, with a bottle of milk, bread, a warm blanket, and a bullock cart for her.

"In the meantime she had dragged herself away to the verandah of an empty house where she had been sleeping for some time with her only child a bright-eyed boy of 8 or 9. Both were trying to warm themselves over a fire of sweepings. She was too far gone to taste the bread and milk we had brought for her so the boy got them.

"We got them into the cart, and, as we were ready to start, the bystanders said there was another woman and her child. Sure enough, lying without any covering, was the mother, with her daughter in a