

A PREACHING TOUR IN INDIA.

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Mhow, April 23, 1894.

DEAR FRIENDS:—I have taken you with us on our trip through the district as far as Nalchi, a large village sixteen miles from Dhar. We reached it in the early afternoon, hot and tired after a long dusty drive, and encamped in a grove of mango trees. Hungry too we were for we had not eaten since early morning.

CAMPING TROUBLES.

Collecting wood and lighting a fire in our camps in Muskoka, used to take but a few moments, not so here in India. No dry branches are left ungathered, and no tree can be felled without permission from Government. Even when we are encamped in the midst of the woods our firewood must be brought from the nearest village. I sent three times into Nalchi before I could get enough wood to cook our dinner, and then the poor stuff we did get was only brought after I had sent a strong letter to the head man of the village. The people of India move slowly, eat seldom, and with but little preparation, and they find it hard to understand the rush of the westerner and his needs regarding food.

We met with another difficulty here which I am thankful to say is not frequent in thirsty India; Nalchi, though with from three to five thousand inhabitants, has no well. All the water is brought from a neighboring jhil or lake. With such difficulties in getting wood and water you can well understand that to get eggs, milk, &c., was well nigh impossible.

PREACHING WITH OUR LANTERN.

Though poor in this world's goods, the village of Nalchi is rich in souls and we gathered a large company at our Magic Lantern talk that evening.

We took up our stand on the verandah of the village school master, who is a Brahmin, as we were quickly made aware by the many little superiorities which our high caste friends always assume, and which we find it advisable to more or less respect. For a wonder he had two English chairs which were brought out in honor of the sahibs. I might mention by the way that this is but one of a thousand things which show the gradual undermining influence of English customs among the people of India.

In front of the house was a large square, a good quarter of which was comfortably filled by our audience of men, women and children. On the opposite side of the square, beyond hearing but within sight of the pictures, sat the village aristocracy, the Mahratta Brahmin officials, who as usual chose to take only what suited them from the evening's entertainment. Poor mortals, surely in their case shall the words of Scripture prove true "The first shall be last."

Our pictures, our story and our singing were the same here as elsewhere; man's sin, God's love, and Christ's redemption.

You will gather from what I have told you of this and other meetings what a work of faith is that of the Missionary, especially in his District work. We sow in all seasons and beside all waters; we have personal dealings with but very few of those who hear us, we table no results, we deliver the message and leave the rest to God.

A WONDERFUL OLD RUIN.

About six miles beyond Nalchi is perhaps the most historical and famous ruin in Central India, the ancient Mohammedan Capital of Mandu. The city is more than twenty miles in circumference and is surrounded with a high wall now in the last stages of delapidation. For seven or

eight miles however before we reached the city gates we had many evidences that we were approaching a place of interest. Massive tombs, beautiful summer houses, and here and there ruins of once palatial residences lined the roadside. One was immediately struck even in their decay, with the beauty of their architecture; the grand domes, that puzzling problem to the modern architect, seem here to have almost reached perfection as far as eye and ear could judge. We were struck also with the durability of everything; the masonry seemed harder than stone, the brick domes might have been carved out of the living rock, the stone door frames even to their stone hinges seemed as perfect as the day in which they were quarried, the beautiful blue enamel work shone as brilliantly as though it had not endured the winds and rains of centuries.

Only one enemy seemed to have conquered; here and there the roots of tiny seedlings had found their way into crevices which human eye failed to discern, and noble Imli trees of at times twenty and thirty feet in girth, standing in the middle of some grandee's residence, attested the final superiority of nature.

It would be going far beyond the scope and purpose of this letter however were I to tell you half the wonderful things we saw in Mandu; its magnificent triple gateway, its beautiful mosques and its spacious palaces. Each is worthy of more space and better description than I could give you. The Jumna Ma-jid or Grand Mosque, which once re-echoed to the prayers of the Badshahs, stands almost entire with its long flight of steps, its spacious domed entrance and its pillared halls. In the latter we counted nearly three hundred pillars; its alcoves were a solid piece of black marble which set off in beautiful contrast the grand throne of the same stone, only white.

The Cherwa Masjid immediately behind the Jumna Masjid, though smaller, is still grander and is in a more perfect state of preservation. It has the appearance of being an immense solid dome of white marble beautifully carved both within and without and with lattices of stone lace work for windows. It is really the tomb of the old Badshah, Mohammed Mori, whose remains, with those of his wife, brother and sister lie buried beneath the mosaic floor. Though probably a tyrant in life he has been deified in death and his tomb is a centre of pilgrimage to the followers of the Prophet.

The other two buildings of interest are the Jahaz Mahal and the Hindole Mahal, both palaces situated on the edge of a beautiful artificial lake. Wind, weather, and the hand of man have played havoc with both of these, though the main walls and pillars will probably stand for centuries.

Here we saw some of the beautiful masonry, most beautiful masonry I have seen in India, or in fact the world; the stones in the walls of the stairway were so neatly cut and so closely set together that even were the cement removed the blade of a knife could hardly penetrate between them. The pointing of the arches, the polish of the door frames, the beautiful carving of the pillars and buttresses all showed the skill of first class workmanship. We descended below the Hindole Mahal to a set of underground rooms, well built, but dark, though they evidently were once living apartments. From these again we descended a dark and narrow stairway to a well of the clearest water roofed over by a dome, the centre of which remained open to the light. Almost on a level with the water we saw the beginning of a lower set of underground rooms; the guide explained to us that these were very