

Many were far gone with consumption and other lung troubles and all showed the unmistakable signs of the famine. They have on an average about ten deaths every day.

On the road both going and coming it was one long sore cry of distress—not always audible as many of them have reached that hopeless condition that they have ceased to cry.

We met two little children, abandoned by their parents, one about three and the other possibly five; but both looking Oh, so old, with the child-like expression gone, shock-headed, naked, with bodies and faces so dried up and pinched and with the corners of the eyes and mouth drawn down into deep seams. They were when I first saw them on the roadway scratching among the dirt for a stray grain of wheat, the horse manure was carefully turned over to see if an undigested grain might not be there—anything that could satisfy the yearning, grinding, aching void. The villagers are cutting the grain in the fields and usually all strangers are allowed to glean after the reapers; but this year none but the village people are allowed to do this and so all that the strangers can get is that which may fall on the roadway as the grain is carried to the village.

A little further on was a mother with her infant in her arms, crying very bitterly. The wee baby was trying to get some nourishment from the dried up breast, both mother and child reduced skeletons. As the wee child lifted up its weary, sad, heavy eyes to me and as the mother laid it at my feet and begged me to take it and so save its life my heart bled for them. A little further on lay her husband dying with the bad mouth disease that accompanies the famine, and on the hill above us lay their boy also dying from pneumonia.

At one point I gave out a banana to a poor woman suffering with fever in addition to hunger. Greedily she took off the skins and with her teeth scraped off all possible nourishment, then threw them down on the ground. At once two wee boys scrambled for these and the one getting them put them into his mouth and chewed them over again. At Damoh when they were feeding the children that had come to them, if a little of the boiled dal—like thick soup—dropped on the ground at once it would be picked up and greedily eaten.

At one point I saw a woman lying under a tree, stopped the gari and asked her to come over. At first she seemed too dazed to understand but when I held up some pice she made an effort by shuffling along to come to me. Such a picture of hopelessness and distress pictured on her every feature—apparently about to die. She could not be more than perhaps 20 or 25 at most, but as in almost every case all the long hair had apparently dropped out and there was the matted short bunch of hair in its place. She had been eating some grass apparently as she was no longer able to move about in search of the offal or dropped grain of the roadway.

These are not exceptional cases but what one sees all the way along that weary road of 68 miles. Even yet I can hear the heart piercing wail and see the pinched, sad expression and especially the old, weary look of the children that so often met me on the way.

At Damoh itself whilst out walking near the place we came across the skull and back bone of a man that had evidently died only the day before. The hyenas every night prowl about for all who are dying or dead and leave their marks in the crunched bones and the skulls. All over the jungle are to be met these memorials of the dread scourge of the past three years in that district. About a week ago a man came to the compound of the missionary; but as he seemed fairly well and did not ask any help the missionary told him to go off. A day or two after he saw some of his boys standing together as if interested in something and went over, to find to his intense sorrow the man he had turned away a short time before. On the Sabbath when I was there a woman came with her two sons—eight or nine years old—and begged the missionary to take them and so save them from the terrible fate that now hung over her and them. As they were fairly strong he refused and on my pleading he said we cannot possibly take all that come and so we must turn those away that can possibly reach and work in the Relief Camps. He however said that it was to him a serious difficulty. In one case two boys were brought, one weak and the other apparently strong; he turned off the strong one and took in the weak one, but he died a few days after being taken in. In about a month the one that was formerly strong returned and begged to be taken in as he too was now too ill to stand the Relief work. He took him in but he too died shortly after. If he had taken in the strong boy at first he might have saved his life.

At Indore we resolved after hearing the appeals from these missionaries to take up some of the children on our own responsibility. 20 in the Boarding School for Girls and a similar number for the College Home and the congregation also resolved to take up 15 for the Industrial Home of Mrs. Johory, 45 in all. At Damoh Miss Franklin brought before me first 40 boys who had been entirely abandoned by their parents, and said I do not know what to do

with them if you can not take them in charge. They were of all ages from three to perhaps twelve, all bearing the unmistakable marks of the famine and all appealing so earnestly for food and protection—especially the poor wee fellow of about three or four that I felt I could not leave them. Miss Franklin then took me over to the other side of the compound where were about 50 more nearly all girls, who had gathered there and been fed by the missionaries and Pandita Ramabai who is there looking after the poor widows. They had been sleeping outside, were almost naked, and again by their distress so strongly appealed to me that I felt we must do what we could for them. One wee little girlie of three looked up so sadly to me and begged for a little bread as I came near. To think of one so sad and so young without any mother's love or father's care led me to ask what can we do? I waited till the next day but at last decided we must take double of the number we had at first planned for, and so arranged to take 40 boys and 50 girls, even though it would involve a monthly expenditure of about Rs. 350; feeling confident that there were many loving hearts that would gladly join us in saving these dear little lives for Jesus. I felt that surely we will be as zealous as the bad women of this country who are to be found on the outskirts of every Relief Camp gathering up the girls that are pretty to train for the horrid immoral lives they have led. Children can be bought in numbers for twopence a head or a cent each. We however take none but those entirely abandoned by their parents, and as far as possible none who are strong enough to work in the Relief Camps.

At first when the Children are taken in they are very hard to manage as they want more food than can be given them with safety, are very dirty, hopeless and without any confidence in you; but this gradually breaks down and in a few months they begin to laugh—the first sign that they have got over the famine troubles.

I am too tired to attempt anything but a simple statement of the facts as seen on that sad journey. The plague does not seem at all so terrible for we feel that it is apparently unpreventable but in this terrible painful slow death that is preventable one feels especially moved to cry to those able to give to come to the rescue.

I was proud of my dear Home-land to-day when I saw that already it had raised \$40,000. Well done Canada: but you will yet do better. I to-day was also cheered to learn that some kind hearts had sent out \$1,400 for the carrying on the work in connection with the Mission. Our faith in the Church was not misplaced when we agreed to take ninety in place of the forty-five children, and possibly we may yet be able to do more. Whatever money is put into our funds for the sufferers from the famine will be used in the best way possible so as to really help them. The children we can best help now. The natives are to-day crying out to the Government to help and also to the people of other countries, whilst they are doing almost nothing. Some of them would rather have the children die than fall into the hands of the missionaries, and some of the wretched Baboos in charge of the relief works much more freely help them, the bad women, to get the pretty girls for immoral purposes, than help the missionaries in their errand of mercy; but the work grows, and the opportunities are as yet unlimited of reaching and saving these poor neglected abandoned suffering children, and of training them in harmony with the Gospel of our loving Jesus. But more again,

Yours faithfully,

J. WILKIE.

## LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

The April number of *The Quiver* just to hand, is one of more than ordinary interest. The opening article "Young Women's Christian Association" by the Right Honorable Lord Kinnaird, which is profusely illustrated, cannot help but be instructive. To those interested in missionary work, the illustrated article, "The Gods of the South Seas" by F. M. Holmes, will be read with pleasure. Another timely article, "He Made the Stars also," by C. Ray Woods, will be most interesting and instructive even to the unscientific.

The March number of *Sunday Hours* for boys and girls, is just received, being if anything more attractive than its predecessors. Besides the regular continued stories, there is a very pleasing account of Christian Endeavor work in Australia; "Friends Indeed," being an article on Sunday afternoon work in East London, and "Children's Hymns, something about their authors," by the Rev. Dr. Green.

*The Strand Musical Magazine* for March opens with a short biography of Bach, by Cecile Hatzfeld, and also an interesting article on "Voice Production," by Edmund Hollard. The musical selections are varied and twelve in number. The song, "A dream Within My Heart," by Clifton Bingham, music by Alma Keith, is very pleasing and should be popular.