

Our Contributors.

Why I am Gladly with Dr. Wilkie.

BY ANNIE ROSS.

(A dear friend has asked me in all seriousness, "How is it that you are standing with Dr. Wilkie?" It gives me great pleasure to give what will be, I think, an intelligible and satisfactory answer.)

The first time we had a real conversation, I felt "Here is a man of God, and one who has the thoughts of God concerning His own work." Though that conviction has been strongly assailed, it has grown only deeper and stronger through the tempests of the years that have followed; and it has been singularly strengthened by God Himself, in His Providential management of things. Some of these things I can pass on to others.

The story of the building of the College is well known, but it must be partially repeated here. Dr. Wilkie raised \$10,000 in Canada to build it, and the British Government of India undertook, if the building were of stipulated dimensions, to supply another \$10,000, as they wanted a Christian College in Indore.

The site cost no money. It was presented to him by the Maharajah. It is interesting to see how Dr. Wilkie has the power to draw the confidence and affection of the great as well as the humble among the native peoples.

As the College walls were rising above the ground, the \$10,000 raised in Canada was drawing to an end. Application was made to The Government for the \$10,000 promised. But a strange thing happened. The Government, though not denying the obligation, pleaded an actual inability to fulfil it. The depreciation in the value of silver, which was at that time embarrassing many lands, was a more serious matter in India than anywhere else, owing especially to the fact that almost all her money is silver. This so affected Government revenues that the financial position was very difficult indeed, and the \$10,000 promised was not given.

What could the missionary do? He felt that to leave the Christian College half built would, first, be such an exhibition of failure in the sight of the heathen as would make preaching about the greatness and resources of the Christian's God to appear an absurdity in their eyes. Second, to leave it in that condition would be simply to throw away the \$10,000 contributed by friends in Canada, as an unroofed building, in that land of deluges and storms would go completely to destruction in a very short time.

News of the situation was sent home; but the Church had undertaken no financial responsibilities, and did nothing. Information of the situation was given in the church papers, but no one rose up to help. There was only one hope of supply left; but there was one, and a great one. The missionary said, "Lord, be Thou mine Helper," and he gathered his workmen together.

Now His workmen were all Christians, humble men of his own congregation. He told them that the money was now done, and he did not know from whence further supplies would come. But he said, "Our God can send them and we will pray to Him to prove to us that He hears our cry.

If you come next Monday morning and work as usual, you shall receive your wages when the money comes in."

They were all back on Monday. Saturday night came, and there was no money. Next Saturday night came, and there was no money. Next Saturday night came, and there was no money. The heathen around got word of the situation, and began to twit the Christian workmen that they were making fools and martyrs of themselves, that they would never get their wages. Some of these men had faith to say strongly, "We are praying to our God, and He will send it." You see the congregation at Indore has had strong spiritual gymnastics. Is it any wonder that it has developed into a living church when so exercised and so fed with God's promises during those months of walking by faith. Before the third Saturday night, in answer to the prayer of faith, money came in, and the men who had trusted God went home with their wages paid in full.

Only once after that were they kept waiting three weeks for their wages, though several times it was two weeks.

Now for the other side of the story, which has been for me such a seal upon Dr. Wilkie and his work. It has certified him as a man whose prayers God hears, and has answered through me. I feel strong in the 7th verse of the 118th Psalm. In the light of that verse those who help Dr. Wilkie have a strong Ally.

During those months of testing in India, I knew of the difficulty but felt such utter inability to help that I did not retain the matter in mind. My heart was with the work and the workers, but it was a heart full of other cares, and that had forgotten the help that real prayer and expressed sympathy can be to the tired ones.

One day a little girl came to my kitchen door, and said that her grandmother wanted to speak to me. I went with the child, and found two dear, Christian old ladies standing on the other side of the wire fence that bounded our orchard. One of them handed me a ten dollar bill which she had just received for a quilt knitted for the missions. The other had bought the quilt, offering \$9, for it, but adding, "If you will give the money to Dr. Wilkie, I will make it ten." So the bill was joyfully handed to me to be forwarded to India.

About a half an hour later, another member of the congregation came in. She spent the afternoon with me, and just as she was going away she opened her purse and said,

"I have lately been trying to give the tenth of all I receive to the Lord, and I have this that is ready to go to some good cause and so handed me a five dollar bill. I said: 'I have just received \$10 for Mr. Wilkie, and I shall be sending it out to him. Would you like this to go with it?'"

She was much pleased; and now the \$10 had become \$15.

I was very much pleased too, there began a song to sound up in my heart. "There is prayer in India, and God is giving answer here. There is a sweet sacredness in the consciousness of being made the channel for God's answer.

In the evening I went over to tell the good news to one who had bought the quilt, and stipulated were the money should go. Before I left she opened her purse

again, and handed me a two dollar bill, saying,

"I want help in this thing too, You see I have the quilt for the \$10, I gave before. I am giving this of my own." Now the \$15 had become \$17.

The song, "There is prayer in India, and God is giving the answer here," sounded clearer still as I went home in the dim twilight of that summer evening. The desire to have more to do with the answer than to be merely a channel came up very strongly. I wondered if I could not put \$3 more to make the \$17 up to \$20: but looking calmly at things that needed to be looked at, I decided that it was better not.

The next morning as usual I drove the children to school, calling at the post office on the return trip. To my surprise I was handed a registered letter and in it was a ten dollar bill, a present from a friend in England that we had never seen. It seemed to come straight from God. I had been wishing for \$3, and here He had sent me \$10. But on reading the letter, it appeared that the money was not mine; it had been sent to my children. So we took counsel together, and decided to divide it. Five dollars was added to the \$17, making it \$22; and this was sent out to Mr. Wilkie as soon as possible.

When the answer to that letter came from India, how happy we all were. It had reached them just in time to pay the wages then over-due, and exactly enough to do it. Before the next Saturday night, \$200 more reached them from Galt, from some friend of the cause whom Mr. Wilkie had never met, so relieving the pressure for a little while.

That was my first experience of this kind, and none of those that followed it were quite like it. Never before, and never since did money come pouring into my hands in this way, entirely unsolicited, and for an object not, at the time laid on my heart. The thought of it makes me pray, when I hear people speak against Dr. Wilkie, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Dear Christian people would not speak against him if they knew. But there has been a heedlessness in "taking up a reproach" against one whom God has honored and used above many—a heedlessness that needs to be soon confessed and forgiven.

That was my first experience of that kind, but similar experiences have followed. Again and again, in connection with Dr. Wilkie and his work, has God answered special prayer that I knew nothing about, making me in some way the channel of the answer. Truly I feel on very safe ground in standing by Dr. Wilkie.

Dr. Wilkie may have faults. Most strong men have strong faults. But when God has great work to do, it is not faultlessness he looks for, but faith. A man that has a working faith in his Master, and in the reliability of the promises, is an instrument by whom God can work wonders, even though he should be as faulty as Peter, as liable to quarrel with a brother as Barnabas or Paul.

What the church should have done long ago was to have given Dr. Wilkie his field to himself. It will be well for onlookers at least to suspend judgement until God has shown whether this man is one by whom He can bless India or not.

My own expectation is that the new mission will prove, not only the opening of "fountains in the midst of the valleys" of dark India, but also of "rivers in the high places" of our great church in Canada. My expectation is that through this new mission