

## PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

### IS THERE PROGRESS IN INDIA?

BY MRS. MURRAY MITCHELL.

The question is often put to me by my home friends in their letters, "Do you find much progress in India?" I would answer this as Mr. Bowen answered me when I put the same question to him a few days ago. "There seems to be little," he said, "but there is a great deal." If I shortly describe two very different scenes we witnessed during our visit to Bombay, they may illustrate what I mean, and shew how little in one aspect there seems of result from mission work, and yet in another how much. The first of these occurred just as we arrived. It impressed me painfully, and, I confess, sent a pang of disappointment through my heart. As we drove away from the railway station with our friend, Mr. Mackichan, the first thing we came upon was a crowd of natives engaged in celebrating, with all its wild absurdity, the unholy festival of "the Holi." This, originally, was rather a pretty celebration, accompanied with joyful rites, to welcome the glad return of spring. But in process of time it degenerated into the wretched saturnalia it is now—full of frivolity and tomfoolery, with practices of a most indecent and immoral kind. Respectable women will hardly venture into the streets during the Holi. The first look we got of our dear old Bombay was when it was "mad" over this festival. The crowd was dancing, shouting, singing obscene songs, beating tom-toms, clashing cymbals, and throwing on each other quantities of pink and yellow wash, red powder, and any sort of filth they could lay their hands on. The garments, not only of this multitude, but generally of the common people we passed in the streets, were bespattered with this coloured nastiness, and the faces smeared with red paint, and dusted with red and orange powder in the most revolting way. It looked as if we had stepped back forty years. No wonder if with a chill sense of disappointment, our spirits were stirred within us. Was it really as bad as ever? Was the whole city still given to idolatry?

One would have been apt to say that it was indeed as bad as ever, looking merely on the surface—seeing only the ignorant and the degraded crowd still, as for long ages back, mad upon its idols. This is one picture; but, thank God, there are others.

A few evenings later we availed ourselves of a kind invitation we had to join a gathering of native Christian friends. With very special pleasure we attended this meeting; and nothing could have made the progress there really is so visible to us as the sight we then witnessed. Perhaps I may be allowed to add, that this evening, and one or two others in Calcutta, when we were similarly entertained by our dear Bengali Christian friends, were among the happiest and most interesting we ever spent. Indeed, the welcome accorded to us everywhere has been as surprising to ourselves, from the great cordiality and warmth, as it has been gratifying and delightful. It makes us young again to be here. The invitation to this meeting was issued in the name of "The Native Christian Union of Bombay." This is an association, the name of which sufficiently indicates the object—namely, to promote union and united action among the Christians of western India, of whatever Church or denomination or society. We belong to different denominations, it is true, but we are all baptized into Christ; we eat the same spiritual meat, and we drink the same spiritual drink. We are one, and we wish to manifest our union by common action against a common foe, and by the exercise of brotherly love among ourselves.

This interesting and important association meets quarterly; but this was a special meeting to receive "their oldest living missionary friends," as they kindly said; and also receive from Dr. Mitchell the letters of salutation he was the privileged bearer of from the churches in Japan and China to the brethren of India. The meeting was held in the residence of the Rev. Zani Ali, of the Church Missionary Society, close to dear old "Ambrolie," where Dr. Wilson lived so long, and where he and Mrs. Margaret Wilson sowed some of the first tiny seeds which have grown into so goodly a tree. On going up a lofty flight of stairs, we found an immense hall filled to overflowing with native Christians of all ages—men, women, and children; the verandah was also filled. There were from 300 to 400 present—so I was assured. "Are all these Christians?" we

asked, astonished. "Yes; every one." There was not an outsider present except the missionaries and their families, and some other European guests. At the upper end of the large room there were a punkah and table, and some sofas and easy chairs, while the rest of the room was seated closely with benches and chairs which were crowded with the company. Every Protestant Mission was represented except the Episcopal Methodist brethren who had that evening a "love feast" of their own. A good many young men in long black coats flitted about, attending to everybody. Here and there a gray head was to be seen; and we soon recognized some old friends among both men and women. Naturally those we had known during our missionary life in Bombay would have gray hairs now. There were Mr. and Mrs. Appaji, of the Church Missionary Society; Mr. and Mrs. Vishnupunt, of the American Mission; our own dear Mr. and Mrs. Dhanjibhai, and their nice daughters, Mr. Baba Padmanji, and many others I must not take room to mention. We had met most of them before since our arrival, but still the greetings were full of heart and kindness. Then there were the children of many we had known, now married men and women, with children of their own. There were some nice-looking young Hindoo ladies, intelligent and well educated, some of whom are employed as teachers. All were prettily dressed in native costume—some in coloured silk sarrees, the school girls in simple white, and the men in a kind of dress of their own. The veranda was filled with poor women, who had to bring their babies, not having any one at home to leave them with. We went through them all, giving and receiving hearty greetings. Some little fellows frankly appealed to our sympathies regarding the tea and cakes circulating rapidly within, which were very tempting, and long of reaching the veranda.

After tea and plenty of talk, Mr. Dhanjibhai gave his address; Dr. Mitchell presented and read the letters from China and Japan, which caused deep interest, and a good deal of emotion; and there were other addresses, Marathi and English, with hymns sung beautifully, and led by the different schools, between each; prayer followed, and we came home with hearts I need not say how profoundly moved and thankful. Here seemed the promised "reaping time of joy" almost begun. And surely we were taught that there is no reason to be cast down, impatient, or distrustful of the promises of our God, although institutions, old and deep-set in the affections and customs and religion of the people, should alter more slowly than ideas do among the educated and enlightened. Both in Bombay and Calcutta the native Church is steadily growing in numbers, influence, position, visibility, and unitedness; and everywhere over India many are being added to it of such as shall be saved.

Outside the Church, the progress is not less marked. Mind is not only awake, but marvellously active. Religion is admitted to be all-important, and many seem truly in earnest, feeling after God. But Christianity, alas, is not recognized as the sole guide to heaven. It is admitted to be good, if not, perhaps, the best; but it is not the only one. Meantime the conflict between rival systems of thought increases continually.

The same thing is true of the Parsees. There is much excitement among them at present, caused a good deal by the case of the dear Parsee girl who came out from home with the hope of being baptized and living among the Lord's people. Doubtless your readers know her touching story. She had to be given back to her friends, as she was not of age; and I would, in passing, beg every one to pray for her, that she may be enabled to remain faithful to the end; and also that God would yet open a door of escape for her, so that she may be enabled to profess Christ openly. Although the Parsees are greatly roused, yet there does seem to be less bitterness in their dealings with Christians than there was when the first encroachment was made on their ranks some forty years ago.

I do not think it is true that the mists of superstition and prejudice are growing thinner. The Indian mind is getting imbued with Christian thought and Christian principles. Progress is a fact; and let those who love India rejoice. The day breaks, and the shadows are beginning to flee away.

HE that would see our religion in its native simplicity, purity and glory, must study the character of our Lord and Saviour.

## PROFESSOR WILLIAM JAMES ON TEMPERANCE.

Professor William James, of Harvard College, who has served as assistant professor of physiology, and who has been lately chosen to a Chair of the same grade in the department of philosophy, is regarded as one of the most scholarly and impartial of the younger professors of the University. He has recently spoken to the students upon the use of alcoholic liquors. He considered the arguments for and against moderate drinking, and concluded that, without reference to the moral aspects of the question, the evidence was in favour of total abstinence. This evidence he regards as of two kinds: the observation by physiologists of the effects of alcohol on men and animals; and, secondly, generalizations from experience.

The following is a synopsis of Professor James's address:

*First.*—What is the result of the physiological or scientific analysis? It should be noted that the experiments from which our conclusions are drawn were made on absolutely healthy persons; and, therefore, in the present state of society they are not capable of direct application to individual cases. Is alcohol a food? It was said a few years ago, by eminent French scientists, that no alcohol was destroyed in the body; and this statement was heralded by the teetotalers as proving that, since alcohol is no food, it must be a poison. Now, however, such men as Anstie and Park have shewn conclusively that about one and one-half ounces per day will be destroyed in the system, and that only the excess above this amount appears in the breath, perspiration, or urine. Taken in addition to the usual quantity of food, alcohol increases the weight of the body; and, if less than the usual quantity of food is taken, alcohol will make up the deficiency and prevent a loss of weight. Alcohol would seem, then, to be a food; but experiments shew that it rather takes the place of food by diminishing the demand for it, this diminution resulting from a diminution in the activity of the vital forces or oxydizing of the tissues. This effect, however, is not desirable, as it is not consistent with a state of perfect health, though, when one is living on an insufficient diet, the use of alcohol as a "saving food" may be the least hurtful alternative. The effect of alcohol upon the heart is to increase temporarily the pulsation; but afterward the increase is compensated, so that, on the whole, there is little change. The use of the spirit dilates the blood vessels of the surface, and, since it is from the surface that the sensations of warmth are derived, alcohol seems to warm the body; but the thermometer will shew that the temperature of the interior of the body has fallen, for the cold air has chilled the blood as it circulated over the surface. The feeling of warmth, therefore, is illusory. The effect upon the muscular strength, though there is a seeming increase of activity and vigour, is likewise illusory. Alcohol is the worst of stimulants for the muscles. Liebig's extract of beef is the best and coffee comes next. The reason for craving alcohol is that it is an anæsthetic, even in moderate quantities. It obliterates a part of the field of consciousness and abolishes collateral trains of thought. The association of ideas is less vigorous, and thus are brushed from the mind all the cobwebs of unpleasant memories. The single idea, therefore, is strongly enforced, and the speaker thinks he is giving utterance to something of unusual brightness or sublimity. Experience shews, however, that the work of authors and others done under the excitement of alcoholic stimulus does not stand the test of sober after-judgment. Any task requiring more than half an hour for its accomplishment cannot be done so well under the influence of alcohol as without it. As a rule, then, never take alcohol before or during work; but, if at all, when the labour is finished at night, as an anæsthetic to help sound sleep. Never take it into an empty stomach. So far the effects of alcohol are chiefly deleterious; but, on the other hand, it has the good effect of aiding digestion. Yet, since its action here is strictly that of a flavour to satisfy the nerves of taste (these are seldom entirely satisfied by the substantial food of a dinner, and, hence, the importance of flavours as an aid to digestion is very great), the result desired may be more safely secured by the use of other flavours—as, for example, fruits.

The second kind of evidence, the results of experience, bearing on the subject under discussion is very conflicting. Whole nations that use alcohol for many