

## Missionary World.

LETTER FROM MRS. WILSON,  
INDIA.

MR. EDITOR,—After a few days in Bombay, we went to Wai, by way of Poona, to visit a friend. The journey up the Ghats was delightful. It had been so hot and steamy in Bombay, that the cool pleasant air of the higher country was doubly appreciated. And the mountain scenery was bewitching. There are few peaked hills among the Ghats. Most of them are flat topped, with tower-like pinnacles rising here and there, the sides having the appearance of battlemented walls, so that you are often deceived by the peculiar formation of the rock, into thinking that you have in view some old, deserted Mahratha stronghold. As you rise higher and higher, these fortress-like peaks come more and more into view, and stand out clear and soft against the exquisite Indian evening sky, the rosy light shining about them taking a deeper and richer tint in the intervening valleys. The Ghats are very thickly wooded at the base, and about half way up, making splendid cover for tiger, and other "big game."

We passed Kandala, a sanitarium, where some people go to get rid of fever, and about eight o'clock in the evening reached Poona, where we stopped about an hour and a half, having dinner at the station. From Poona a narrow gauge railway carried us to Wather, which we reached about 1.30 in the morning. Here we were transferred to a big phaeton which carried us and luggage the remaining twenty-one miles to Wai.

Wai is an old Mahratha town lying at the feet of the Mahabeshwar Hills, and, like so many of our towns here, a peculiarly sacred place. It contains many temples, and the proportion of Brahmins to the rest of the population is very great. Mahratha Brahmins we would call them in this part of the country. There, in their own country, they are simply called Brahmins, while all of lower caste are called Mahrathas.

The American Board has carried on mission work in Wai for many years, and at present the station is in charge of two ladies, one of whom is the widow of a former missionary. These ladies generally find the people respectful and kind, and they have received help in various ways, particularly from the younger men. There is a library, and in connection with it a reading room in the town, and when the ladies asked to become members, a battle ensued between the old men and the young men, as to whether the request should be granted or not. The matter was ended by the advanced men saying that they would cease to be members themselves if the ladies were not allowed to join. Their names, therefore, were added to the list of members, and by paying a larger fee than the others, they have the privilege of reading the English papers in their own bungalow, and the old, orthodox Hindus have not the pain of seeing their resort desecrated by the presence of females.

Yet Mahratha women hold a very different position from that of the women of some other races in India. They are not "purdah," and in their own country they go about with a freedom that one does not expect among Indian women. We visited a girls' school in Wai, a government, not a mission school, and were surprised to find so many Brahmani children receiving instruction in the different standards. About sixty girls were present. The teachers were, of course, Brahmins, the head teacher a man, and the second a fine looking woman, who had, I suppose, been herself educated in one of these schools. A *durzi* also was present who taught the girls sewing, and samples of their work were shown us. They learn to make such garments as are worn by themselves, and they spend a good deal of time on a kind of chain stitch embroidery with which they decorate their jackets. Some of the work was beautiful.

I was surprised to hear the children sing, for I had fancied that singing was not considered a respectable accomplishment by high caste women in any part of India. One may live a long life time in India, and always be learning something new about the people and their manners and customs. The girls sang

two and two together, in unison, hymns in praise of some of their gods, or some verse inculcating the practice of different virtues. In one of these songs men are urged to educate, and give woman her proper place in the world. They are reminded that in the olden times, men and women were equals, but that the order of things had changed, and woman had been oppressed during many ages. Now she must again be restored to her original position. Think of that teaching in a heathen school. I have not been able to find how many schools of this description there are in Western India, but they are not numerous.

There is, of course, a mission girls' school in Wai, and there is an understanding that the girls shall not be received from the government to the mission school, nor *vice versa*, without the knowledge and permission of the different teachers. This agreement, the missionary in charge of the school told me, has been faithfully adhered to by the government teacher.

A sister of Sundribai Puar, of anti-opium fame, is living at present at Wai, where her husband is engaged in mission work. She speaks English well, and is a nice companion for the mission ladies. You will be interested to hear that Sundribai Puar, while visiting Ahmednagar lately, on an anti-opium crusade, was the guest of some of the high caste Hindus of the city. Meetings (drawing-room meetings, we would call them) were arranged for her by these friends, and all possible help given to her in the work she has so much at heart. A Christian woman, an outcast, received as an honoured guest by caste Hindus, and aided in helping on a much-needed reform!

The pastor of the church at Wai is a very fine old man, whose influence on the people is, they say, very good. The Christian community is small, but they pay 12 rupees a month towards the pastor's salary (Rs. 20), the mission ladies themselves giving only Rs. 2 of the amount. I mention the sum given by the missionaries towards the salary in order that you may know exactly what the native Christians do themselves. Mission reports of native church work are sometimes rather misleading, for the money reported as raised by the congregation is very often largely given by the missionary or missionaries in charge. The church, which is a school room on week days, is small and very plain, but much more suitable than a handsome, expensive building. At the back of the church are rooms for a catechist and his family, and the pastor lives in a nice, native-built house on the same compound.

After a few days spent at Wai, we went on to Ahmednagar and from there to Mhow where we first learned that Mr. Wilson had been appointed to take Mr. Campbell's place in Rutlam while he shall be away on furlough. So here we are, "settling down," and preparing to go on with the work given us to do.

Yours truly,

MARY CAVEN WILSON.

Rutlam, Feb. 4, 1894.

## MOVING CHRISTWARD.

Mr. Edward of Breslau has been very much encouraged by a visit from a Jewish patriarch who resides in a large town in Poland. By the study of his Bible in private he has been moving Christward during the last twenty years, and has completely broken with Judaism. He is now the leader of a like-minded band of about twenty, most of whom are his own relatives. For some time they have been receiving instruction from one who is well-known to Mr. Edward. The whole company wish now to go to Breslau that they may be received into the Christian church by baptism. They are all supporting themselves by their own industry, but, as they are poor, Mr. Edward hopes that some friends of Israel will supply a few pounds to pay their travelling expenses to and from their home. He regards them as the first-fruits of a movement which, he is persuaded, is influencing whole communities of Jews on the Continent, and which should kindle a hopeful and prayerful interest among all Christians.

Mr. Christie of Safed writes about the young Jew whose declared preference for Christianity caused such a commotion among the Jews in Galilee. He has not yielded to the storm that burst upon him. He is now a successful student at the Protestant College of Beyrout. His family will not pay a farthing of his fees at a Protestant school, though he provides his food. A friend in Beyrout paid his fees last year, and Mr. Christie hopes that some generous friend in Scotland may supply £5 for his fees this year.—JAMES WELLS, in *Free Church Monthly*.

## PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Rev. A. Robertson: Italy is ripe for a great religious reform. No effort should be spared to sustain and extend the work.

Rev. Dr. MacVicar: The work of keeping up and extending French Evangelization should begin with ministers in the form of giving information regarding our mission to their people that they may contribute more liberally to its support.

Inter-Ocean: Just why the fact that a young man is enrolled at a college should be accepted as a justification for his throwing off all the proper restraints of conduct, and as conferring upon him the right to play the rowdy or the blackguard, is not very clear to an orderly mind.

New York Evangelist: It may be all right to reform the saloon, but the work will not be done until you have reformed its patrons, too. Given a crystal pool and a miry one, the lark or the bluebird will take to the first and certain other creatures to the second. It is not wholly a question of one's surroundings, but of nature.

The Interior: The first undraped female figure the Greek sculptor ever produced still retained by its side the bathing jar and the robe in hand, as some sort of an apology for the situation; but the most of the nude figures displayed in the past Columbian Exposition were simply "poor naked wretches" without reason or shame.

Catholic Record: Reverence for God is something different from the love of God and fear of God. Let us ask if Almighty God has not set up any particular sign of reverence that we are to pay Him? What is that, among all religious practices, which He would have us do as a token of inner and outer reverence? It is reverence for His holy Name.

The Interior: One of the most pleasant and hopeful features of the Christian life of to-day is its breadth of fellowship; and nowhere is that wide fraternity better shown than in the work which has for its end and aim the conversion of the world to Christ. Among the reflex benefits of missions is the growth of that practical unity upon which all large success depends.

Hartford Religious Herald: Of all that is being said and done in these times in relation to the poor, the wisest and most efficient are those which teach and aid the poor in taking care of themselves. Other helps are temporary. This looks to permanent relief and creates hopefulness and self-respect and character, without which the condition is hopeless.

The Standard, Chicago: The bill introduced in the legislature of New York making "hazing" among students a criminal offence, is a bill that ought to become law. Where the hazing results in disfigurement, those concerned in it are made liable to a fine of not less than ten dollars nor more than one hundred, or imprisonment for not less than thirty days nor more than a year.

W. T. Stead on Chicago: It would have been cheaper for the city of Chicago to have paid every one of her aldermen \$10,000 a year, if by such payment the city could have secured honest servants, than to have turned a pack of hungry aldermen loose on the city estate with a miserable allowance of \$156 a year, but with practically unrestricted liberty to fill their pockets bartering away the property of the city.

The Standard, Chicago: Mr. Gladstone will be known in history as the enemy of abuses of every sort, whether in church or state, and as the determined advocate of change where the needs and conditions of modern life find ancient institutions no longer tolerable. His magnificent intellectual power has not been more conspicuous than his interest in all that concerns human welfare, and government in the interest of all the people.

## Teacher and Scholar.

April 1st 1894. JACOB'S PREVAILING PRAYER {Gen. xxxii. 9-12, 24-30. GOLDEN TEXT.—I will not let thee go except Thou bless me.—Gen. xxxii. 26.

A score of years, twenty, perhaps more, intervene between the vision at Bethel and the prayer at Peniel. The deceit of which he had made his father the victim, being practised on himself, lengthened to fourteen the seven years he had covenanted to serve for Rachel. Laban found his son's vice so profitable, that opposing Jacob's desire to return, he entered into an arrangement about wages, which, indeed, he often changed (xxxii. 7, 41), but which throughout resulted so favorably to Jacob, that he increased exceedingly in possessions. This great prosperity aroused the displeasure of Laban and his sons. Jacob, aware of this, was commanded of God to return, and having communicated with his wives, planned to go back to Canaan. Advantage was taken of Laban's absence sheepshearing, to set out unknown to him. When made aware of it, pursued Jacob, but was divinely warned against injuring him, and they parted after having made a covenant at Gilead. Jacob now went on to the fords of the Jabbok, a stream which flows into the Jordan. On the way he was encouraged by again meeting angels of God, but thrown into great distress by tidings that Esau was approaching at the head of four hundred men.

I. The Prayer.—Dread of Esau's vengeance, and the feeling of his own utter helplessness, drove Jacob to prayer. Adoration, confession, thanksgiving, as well as petition, turns into a plea that God will deliver him. He adored God as the God of his fathers, and as the God who had appeared to himself, acting on whose command had brought him within reach of his brother's possible vengeance, and whose promise had been given to deal with him. His own utter unworthiness or such mercy and faithfulness is next confessed. Both in his earlier life and also in the years which had passed since Bethel, there had been little to call down favor from God. In that thought the confession merges into thanksgiving. The visible token of the blessing bestowed on him, so undeserving, is seen in the two great bands of followers and possessions, in contrast to the simple staff with which he first set forth. This continued mercy and faithfulness forms an additional plea. Jacob now tells his fear of Esau, and asks deliverance, adding one last direct plea, by reminding God of the promise given to his fathers, and made over to himself. Jacob seeks also to propitiate Esau by making up a present from his flocks and herds which is sent on in several droves, at intervals, so that Esau receiving them as successive presents may, perchance, be appeased.

II. The Double Wrestling.—After despatching the present across the river, Jacob encamped on its banks. Throughout the night, following the common Eastern custom, he sent his household and cattle over the fords. Remaining himself to see the camping ground clear, he is seized by an antagonist, who wrestles with him unprevailing till day-break. Jacob, relying on his physical strength, keeps up the contest, until suddenly his thigh is strained by the touch of the mysterious wrestler. Utterly disabled, Jacob now knows the real character of his opponent. This antagonist discloses one more formidable than Esau standing between him and the land of promise. Jacob must be made to see that all is of grace. This revelation that God has been holding him back from entering the land as the old Jacob, puts an end to his self-confidence. A new contest begins. As his antagonist seeks to go, Jacob hanging in helpless dependence, wrestles in prayer, determined ere he goes to obtain his blessing (Gen. xii. 4). The old self-confidence is gone. Jacob has surrendered himself to God. In this self-surrender he has prevailed, becoming fitted to receive God's blessing.

III. The Gracious Issue.—The blessing Jacob sought connects itself with a new name, which expresses the elevation of his character. The name, which recalled the shrewd craftiness of his past life, is replaced by one which declares him a prince of God, one who has been able to strive with God. Henceforth his relation to God is higher, more intimate than before. He has power with God. As a consequence, in God he will have prevailing power with man. Jacob inquires the name of the person in whom God has manifested Himself. Jacob is to rest content with knowing that he is a manifestation of God. The place is commemorated by a name that means Face of God, since Jacob realizes that through seeing God face to face he has been preserved.