

### Ceylon Mission and Schools.

Mr. Robertson, who was a Missionary in Ceylon for some years, has told some interesting stories about the children in that country, which I think you would like to hear. He says that when the Missionaries first went to Ceylon, and asked the people to send their children to them to school, the parents could not think what the Missionaries wanted them for. Some thought that they were to be reared as slaves, others thought they intended to make them soldiers, others again fancied that their object was to send them from their homes to the interior of the island, and many concluded that they were to be transported to some foreign country. It appeared incredible to them, that men of another nation had travelled thousands of miles to receive, support, and educate the children of persons whom they had never seen, and this from motives of pure benevolence. At last, however, six little boys were intrusted by their parents to the Missionaries. Great Difficulties had to be overcome, even when the people found that their children were not to be reduced to slavery, not to be trained as men of war, not to be transported to a foreign land. When the Batticaloa school was established, the parents would not allow their children to take their food on the Missionary premises, and accommodation for that purpose was provided for them on a piece of land belonging to the Heathen. More than a year passed away before the missionaries ventured to take this establishment within their own enclosure, and then several of the students rolled up their mats, took their books, and hastily departed. Most of them, however, after their friends had had time for consideration, very thankfully returned.

Other difficulties had to be surmounted. There were several excellent wells, and an ample supply of water for the whole district. But the children would not drink it. They whispered that, as these wells had been

used by persons connected with the Mission-school, the water they contained could not be pure enough for Tamuls of good caste. They were seen with uplifted eyebrows and long faces, grouped together in council. At length one of them, somewhat brighter than the rest, hit on a plan of which they all approved. It was decided that they should draw every drop of water from the wells, and give them a thorough cleansing. The buckets went up and down very fast; but, after they had worked all day, the wells were nearly as full as ever. It being then the rainy season, the wells were not to be emptied in a hurry. They then reconsidered the matter, and, at last, came to the conclusion that, as much water having been drawn from the wells as they contained at the commencement of their labour, there could be no doubt that the spring now issued purely.

When the Missionaries went to Ceylon, there were not more than three or four purely Tamul women who knew the Tamul alphabet. Reading and writing were considered unbecoming and dangerous accomplishments in a female. When the proposal was made by the American Missionaries to educate a few little girls, the answer always was, "It is not our custom." The few women in the service of the Mission, who at last did intrust their daughters to the Missionaries, endured severe reproach and persecution: the children themselves, although so young, were half ashamed of their situation. One day, when the head man of a district was present at the Mission-house to see a deed executed, he expected to see a little girl affix her mark and some one write her name opposite thereto; but, to his great surprise, the girl wrote her own name in full. "Well," exclaimed the head-man, "I never saw such a thing before. This is very good. I will now send my own child to read and write." He did so, and several other persons followed his example.