

THE Canadian Missionary Link.

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In the Interests of the Baptist Foreign Mission Societies of Canada.

INDIA.

VOL. III., No. 9.] "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising"—Is. lx. 2. [MAY, 1881.]

A Sketch.

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IN a sequestered spot in the suburbs of Chicacole is a small mud cottage, carefully shut in and away from the rude gaze of strangers, and to be reached only by winding paths between mud walls which enclose other similar dwellings..

The village rests beneath the shade of cocoa palms, mango and custard-apple trees, and the little children run to and fro, the women gossip, the men lounge on the raised platforms beneath the eaves of their houses, while the whole atmosphere is hazy with the indolent, dreamy self-abandonment which characterizes life in the Orient. On the pial or raised platform outside the door of the neat little cottage we visit to-day, sits an old man, beneath the shadow of the projecting roof of thatch; by his side is a large volume in Telugu, which bears the marks of constant and careful perusal.

We ask the venerable-looking old man what book he has beside him. To our surprise he tells us it is the Bible. He was sergeant in a native regiment and when he took his pension, his colonel, an English gentleman, gave him this. It was thirty years ago; and he turns to the fly-leaf to show where his name and the date were written by this officer long ago.

Then the old man tells us he has been reading in it ever since. Some years ago a paralytic stroke left him half dead. His left side has been helpless ever since; he cannot move without help, but he gets out here to the door, and reads. He has read this Bible all through many times.

Further conversation shows that he is thoroughly conversant with both Old and New Testaments.

"Do you believe in the Lord Jesus?" we ask.

"Yes," he says, "I believe the Bible is true."

"But have you asked for the forgiveness of your sins, and made Him your Saviour?"

"I do not know whether I have received His Spirit in my heart or not."

"Are you willing to confess His name?"

"I read the Bible to my family every day and we all believe it."

"Yes, but are you willing to become a Christian and renounce caste?"

"Ah, I cannot break caste. What can I, a helpless old man do, if my people turn me out, and I am left alone on the street?"

"Can you not trust the Lord to take care of you?"

"But I can do nothing for myself, I am not able to cook my food, and no one will cook for me if I am a Christian. I could not live, helpless as I am, without some one to take care of me all the time; how can I break caste?"

We find his wife and youngest son, the only child at home, are all conversant with the Scriptures; that they pray to God every day, and know the way of salvation through Christ.

"Will you confess your faith?" we ask. They are willing to say to others what they say to us, but to eat with any but their own people, and thus to cut themselves off from all they love, to be hissed at and scorned by all their relatives and friends and perhaps by their own children—this they are not ready to bear for Christ.

We left them, wondering within ourselves—How many Christians in America, who think they have good hope of heaven, would bear this trial of their faith? How many would leave all, house, friends, support, the very bread for to-morrow's eating, and follow Christ? Would go out from comfortable homes and all that makes life pleasant, to be as dependent on His naked promise, as the birds are? "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"

"They shall part alike."

"As his part is that goeth down to battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."

To the Bible reader these words recall David's sojourn at the court of Achish—his forced removal from that court—the burning of Ziklag by the Amalekites—the abundant weeping of David and his men—the plot of the men against their leader—David's trust in God—the consulting of the Divine oracle—the response—the exhausted men left at the brook Besor—the finding of the half-famished Egyptian—the reveling and drunkenness of the Amalekites—the flight of four hundred on camels—the destruction of the remaining host—the retaking of wives and children—the gaining of vast spoil—the covetous proposal of the victors and the equitable decision of David.