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W. B. M. U. TIDINGS.

TWENTY FIVE CENTS PER YEAR.

Vol. 5

Amherst, N. S., July 1898

No. 53

Motto for the Year.

“Workers together with Him.”

Prayer Topic.

For our Home Mission work in these provinces that the laborers may be greatly encouraged and a host won to Christ.

Suggested Programme for July.

Opening Hymn
Prayer
Scripture Reading Psa.—85.
Prayer, by several
Reading “Tidings”
Hymn
Minutes of last meeting
Appointment of Delegates to annual meeting
Report of Treas.
Closing Hymn.

Suggested Programme for August.

Prayer
Hymn
Scripture John 14: 1—17
Minutes of last meeting.
Treasurer's report for the year
Prayer by several
Reading, Tidings.
Appointment of Delegates to the annual meeting at Truro
Prayer, and closing Hymn

According to the Constitution of our Aid Societies, the Treasurer's book should have been audited and all be ready at this meeting for the entrance upon the New Year.

Notice.

Will the Societies who intend paying for Tidings kindly remit the amount when sending their money to the Treasurer, as the account for the year is made up to July 31st.

Mary Smith,
Treasurer

House-building in India.

The readers of the Tidings may be especially interested just now in our new station at Tekkali. I understand that the Sisters are anxious to help in the erection of a mission house there. So it has occurred to me that I would like to give you a little idea of what is involved in the work of fitting up a station with mission buildings. Doubtless there will be many who will be looking for a letter this month, from Miss Newcombe; for it is her turn to write to Tidings. But you must just censure me, if you wish, for taking up the space that she would have occupied. I shall not expect to fill it as well as she would have done, but as she is very busy I offered to write for her. This gives me an opportunity to say what I would like to say about our building-work.

THE SITE:

After deciding to open a station at a certain place, the next thing is to secure land for a compound. This is often anything but an easy matter. The story of how we secured our mission premises at the various stations would in itself be exceedingly interesting, and would give evidence of divine leading and providential openings. The purchase of the property at each station has its own peculiar history. Sometimes it takes several years to get the place that we think God has given us. Hope deferred often makes the heart sick. But, praise His name, we find our Rehoboth (Gen. 26:22) and it is generally one of the choicest spots in the place. Often the very spot that we saw and coveted years before, but supposed we could not get, has fallen into our hands.

In choosing a site for the mission house we generally seek a rising ground just a little outside of the native town. Thus we occupy a conspicuous position where we can be seen—like a city that is set on a hill. We have purer air, if on a higher elevation, and that is a coveted blessing in this land. We are away from the noisome odors and the distracting din of the ordinary native town. Where 10,000 people are huddled together upon a ten-acre lot, and live without proper sanitation or cleanly habits, it is not difficult to realize the fetid atmosphere of such a place. Heathendom is also noisy as you may suppose. "The way of peace have they not known." Quarrelling is a daily and nightly occurrence and is as distracting as a pack of jackals, and a good deal more painful to listen to. Further, much of the religion of the Hindus consists in nightly processions, or festivals. These drum-beating, horn-blowing, processions come as near to one of those barbarous "serenades" that used to greet a newly married

couple in some of the country communities of Nova Scotia, as anything I can think of. The chief difference is these hideous noises are kept up nearly all night. You will by this time have come to appreciate the desirability of having the mission house just a little bit outside the native town. However we must not go too far away. We must be near enough to be accessible.

Our piece of land at Tekkali covers about two acres, cost about \$150, and is situated just in front of the town, so that people coming out from the town and going off by two or three different roads, have to pass just in front of our premises. Three roads leading into and out of the town converge and run into the Main street just before our door.

MATERIAL FOR BUILDING.

We build with stone or brick. The only wood work in the house is the doors, windows, rafters, roof-lathing, and roof-timber. What a tedious job it is to collect all this material and prepare it for the house! You cannot go down to the brick yard, the stone quarry, and the lumber yard and order just what you need with the assurance that it will be delivered honestly and promptly in two days at your door. Oh no that is the luxury of building in the home-land but it makes us smile as we think of it here. The community is a new one, missionaries have never lived there before, and the natives are suspicious, grossly dishonest, and utterly unused to the promptness and reliability to which we are accustomed. They set their hearts on the hope of making a "big haul" out of us. Often we are at their mercy for they have the monopoly. But not being willing to be cheated right and left, we simply hang up our tools for a time until they see that we will not give in to them and then they come to terms. It is most provoking for they

might have done properly at the start and saved us all this delay and vexatious banter. But that is native style. If he has anything to sell, he will ask three times its value and at last after a lot of talk and delay you get for a proper price that which you should have had without any parley in 5 minutes. We generally know that a certain amount of humbugging delay is a part of the program, and wherever possible we leave some of our native Christians or our own heathen servants to do the bantering, for our time is too precious. A gang of men are called and asked if they will make us 100,000 brick. It may be hours or days before the bargain is finally closed, and the written contract signed. But they are about as unreliable with a written contract before them as if none had been made out. You may count on a full share of humbugging and tedious delay. Months later you get your brick. But you have been pretty smart and have exercised eternal vigilance if you have not been "taken in" somewhere. Another gang of men agree after a time to quarry stone and bring them. They are bought at about 15 cents per cubic yard. Let us go out with tape in hand to measure this pile that has just been laid up so neatly 'four-square.' Pulling aside a few of the top stones you notice that in the centre of the pile is a hole almost large enough to crawl into. Poor fellows! They do not seem to be able to make a pile without deftly covering up some dishonesty. I sigh, and then I remember *apple-packing* in the lovely Christian Annapolis valley. I think of the big apples so nicely packed in rows at the top and bottom, while the centre is filled up with the little No. 3s, and I conclude that somehow dishonesty is not an Indian but a *human* trait, not monopolized by the Hindu, but often found still clinging to the enlightened Anglo-Saxon who professes better things. The plaster stones must be quarried and carted. They must be mixed with charcoal and burned in a kiln of our own. The purchase of this charcoal is in itself quite an undertaking. Twenty Savara men and women come from the hills with the huge baskets loaded with charcoal which they have burned upon the hill-side. The men carry two baskets swung from the end of the bamboo stick that like a great bow lies across the shoulder and bends up and down under its load, while the man hurries along at a rapid walk. The women carry their one basket upon the head. This charcoal must all be measured and after that has been done there is often quite a squabble among them over their several accounts. As they cannot read nor write, and as they are ever ready to suspect one another of cheating, it is not any wonder that where twenty people are working on the shares in this business there would necessarily be plenty of squabbles to which they are quite used. The superintending of the burning of the plaster is a tedious work that never ends till your buildings are all up. Our lumber comes to us as logs. We must search the country for logs and try not to get cheated in this also. Then a gang of sawyers must be employed to saw the stuff up. It takes six men about as long to saw one board as it would take one of our steam mill circular saws to rip up twenty large logs. The missionary must be his own architect and he must plan the sawing of all these beams, planks, boards, scantling etc., so as to put on the roof without any hitch. The masons and carpenters on the house know very little about building, especially about European building, and they combine a surprising innate stupidity with a provoking desire to put in as much time as possible with as little work and as much pay as possible.

But my letter is already too long. You have perhaps by this time an insight into the difficulties we have in building. It is a long tedious work. The man who builds a house in India needs a special amount of grace for the task and it generally takes more out of him physically and spiritually than all the rest of his work for two years put together. Our buildings at Tekkali are begun. Mr. Hardy and I will live there for the present and occupy some small outbuildings that have been put up. The compound is a regular chaos of stones, sand, brick, plaster etc. We hope to see a nice substantial building there within a year if possible. I know you will do all you can to make this possible.

Yours sincerely,

W. V. HIGGINS.

Bimlipatam, May 18, '98.

Suggested Programme for Mission Bands.

Singing Jesus keep me near the cross.

Prayer by leader.

Bible lesson, Romans 10.

Minutes of previous meeting.

Roll call, each answering by repeating a passage of scripture containing the word Christ.

Singing what a friend we have in Jesus

Ask two or three of the older pupils to write a short paper on the climate of India for next month.

Request another to draw a map of the Telegu field, marking the different Mission stations, and naming the missionaries living at each station.

Ask each member of the Band to try and earn five cents for Missions before next meeting stating in what way it has been earned.

Close with the Lord's Prayer, (In conce-.)