BITS ABOUT INDIA

CHRISTIAN HINDUS.

Frontispiece.

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BY

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THIS little book is full of interesting facts about India, its people, its customs, its worship, its private and social life—the very things that really tell most concerning a country, and yet the very things which most writers are apt to overlook. The writer has long been a missionary resident in India, and is thoroughly familiar with the things of which she writes so pleasantly.

EDITOR.

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BITS ABOUT INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

SCENES AT AN INDIAN RAILWAY-STATION.

A FOREIGNER traveling in India cannot fail to be impressed with the crowds of natives of the country to be found at every railway-station. With no proper conception of the value of time, the native is yet impressed with the fact that railway-trains do not wait for tardy passengers, and, consequently, hours before the departure of a train intending travelers may be seen sitting wherever they can find space. At large railway-stations, where the traffic is great, natives traveling as third-class passengers purchase their tickets at a separate window, and by gates well secured are shut off from the platform where other passengers congregate. Thus barred out, we often see huddled together

like frightened sheep a crowd of people waiting for the opening of the window and the appearance of the ticket-agent; then they rush wildly forward, and from many folds of cloth or other mysterious hiding-place bring forth a little heap of treasure —the price of their journey—which they exchange for a railway-ticket. When all have been served, the gates are thrown open, and there is a rush toward the train, the Brahman and the outcast jostling each other in their anxiety to secure a place before the impatient iron horse rushes away, and the poor bewildered creatures run hither and thither, attracted by any open door. If by chance they attempt to enter a first-class carriage, a reception frequently awaits them that speedily turns their feet in another direction. Some of the travelers find the proper place, and, panting with excitement, sink down, glad at last to have found a spot where they may rest; but like driven sheep others follow until the compartment is choked and a railway-guard comes to the rescue. Sometimes in wild attempts to find a seat the precious

moments are consumed; the train glides out of the station, and leaves staring after it with astonished eyes hapless creatures who will sit demurely upon the platform until the coming of another train. They do not make much ado, these patient mortals. "It is our fate," they sigh; and, consoling themselves with the hookah and satisfying their hunger with a few handfuls of parched grain, they quietly wait.

The women, looking timidly out from under their veils and nervously anxious to keep near their male protectors, the ornaments on feet and ankles tinkling musically as they shuffle along, always interest me, and the children with wondering eyes and free, graceful movements are a pretty sight. Sometimes a high-caste woman of wealth is brought to the train in a litter carried by servants, who take their coy burden to the very door of the compartment which has been previously reserved. The husband or some male relative of the lady cautiously lifts the curtain of the litter, and the closely-veiled female glides in, carefully concealing her charms from curious eyes.

Occasionally we see figures enveloped in long white garments, the face entirely covered and only the eyes visible. It is impossible to determine whether these silent creatures groping along and carefully guarded are ancient dames or blooming damsels.

When it was proposed to introduce railways into India, the Brahmans objected to the innovation on the ground that pilgrims to distant shrines might avail themselves of such a mode of conveyance, and thus lose the merit to be acquired from toilsome journeying on foot. Their fears were well founded, for few trains arrive or depart that do not bear pilgrims to some shrine; and at some seasons of the year special trains —called "pilgrim-trains"—are necessary, as the number of travelers is so great that they cannot be conveyed by ordinary trains.

During a *mela*, or religious festival, the scene at a great railway-station defies description. There are crowds of pilgrims, men, women and children, the rich and the poor, the very old and the very young. The same train that brings a swarm of pilgrims also

carries away a multitude. Many have journeyed long distances and are worn and weary. To many it is their first experience of railway-travel, and they feel a sense of relief when they can once more tread the firm earth. When they reach their homes, what tales these travelers will have to tell of the wonders of the railway—of the strange monster of iron and brass, "with wheels instead of feet, which eats coal and drinks water at every stage, breathes fire and smoke, pants like a horse, screams like an elephant and is stronger than either"!

When the lordly Brahman found that his ancient land was not to be exempt from that modern abomination the railway, he proudly declared that he would not be seduced from the ways of his fathers, and for a time he was content to journey by slow stages in carts drawn by oxen. But even he was forced at last to admit that there are advantages in railway-travel; for His Lordship the Brahman, though boasting a descent higher than that of kings, has not always a plethoric purse, and even his mind, supposed to be engrossed in medi-

tation upon things sacred, could grasp the idea that it would certainly be to his advantage, when necessity required him to travel, to make the journey at as small a pecuniary cost as possible. But could he travel with the common herd? Such an idea could not be entertained for a moment. He would condescend to use the railway if government would agree to furnish caste carriages. Perhaps the authorities ought to have been impressed by such a measure of condescension, but they were not, and firmly refused to make the concession. At length these lords of the land yielded to the inevitable, and took their journeys in the same carriage with ordinary mortals. Doubtless the pride of the Brahman was sorely wounded and with a bad grace he submitted to the indignity at the outset, but now he accepts without remonstrance a condition of things which he finds himself powerless to remedy.

Wealthy natives sometimes travel in great state—not infrequently in reserved carriages—and a native prince sometimes aspires to the dignity of a special train. A

railway-train usually makes long halts at the more important cities along the route. At such times I have frequently seen a native gentleman arrayed in flowing robes richly embroidered and turban of vast dimensions alight from a first-class reserved carriage and with haughty mien, not condescending to be interested or amused by anything that was passing around him, walk up and down the platform, never very far from his own carriage and followed by a small army of retainers in nondescript livery. Sometimes thrown gracefully over the shoulders of one of these gentlemen we see a superb Kashmir shawl. Some of these elegant gentry are native princes on their way to Simla or Calcutta to pay their respects to the viceroy; others are making a pilgrimage to some famous shrine. Less important persons of wealth are content with a seat in a first-class carriage.

The great majority of travelers, however, high caste as well as low caste, travel as third-class passengers, and very uncomfortable they look, for the third-class passenger-carriages are often literally packed.

A carriage is divided into several compartments, separated only by an iron grating, and every seat usually holds its full complement of passengers. Into these compartments, when trains arrive, are hurried people of all castes and creeds, women as well as men. A traveler's luggage usually consists of a bundle, which he carries slung over his shoulder; but when the space assigned to each passenger is so limited, it is not easy to find room even for his small possessions. Occasionally we see a railway-carriage with a low upper story, and on the floor, as closely as they can be packed, sit travelers looking through the gratings down upon the world below with as much complaisance as though the situation were comfortable in the extreme.

Whenever a train arrives at a station, from every window, as soon as the train is at rest, heads are thrust and arms extended, each hand grasping a small brass vessel, and on every side are heard clamorous cries for water—cries which become more urgent as the thirsty travelers begin to fear that the train will rush away leaving their

thirst unquenched. Water-carriers are at the stations upon the arrival of every train, their water-bottles slung across their backs, ready to answer these clamorous cries. Venders of sweetmeats and fruit also improve the time while trains are halting to supply travelers, and, as in these days so many are able to read, we see books and tracts offered for sale at the railway-trains, and they find ready purchasers.

Some of the lines of rail are furnished with "zenana-carriages," and in these native ladies travel with some degree of comfort and with the privacy they esteem so desirable. When such accommodation is lacking, high-caste ladies of wealth usually ride in reserved compartments, and there, secure from intrusion, they can look out upon the world of which they know so little, and can enjoy with the fresh delight of children the wonderful things around them.

The husband of a native lady of my acquaintance has employment in one of the offices connected with the government of the North-west Provinces, and accompanies

his superior to Naina-Tal during the hot months. His wife, a clever and cheery little woman, looks forward with pleasant anticipations to these annual flittings. She enjoys the ride in a reserved compartment of a railway-carriage to the foot of the hills; the journey up the mountains to the beautiful town of Naini-Tal is full of delightful excitement for her, and the life in the mountains, so unlike the monotonous life of the plains, is not less agreeable. I saw this lady just before she left her home to spend the summer in the mountains, and in the prospect she seemed as happy as a child.

"How do you spend your time when in the mountains?" I asked.

The little lady took from a niche in the wall her store of books, a large proportion of which were Christian books which she had purchased from a lady who pays her occasional visits to give her instruction. Putting these into my hands, she said,

"I read; and when I am tired, I embroider;" and, going into an inner room, my friend brought from thence for my

inspection several pieces of delicate lace embroidery-work.

Although the fare for third-class passengers is very low, yet, because of the great numbers who avail themselves of this cheap and easy mode of transit, the railway-companies find the sale of third-class tickets one of their chief sources of revenue. The directors of one of the great railway-lines in India met not long since in London for the transaction of business. Upon an examination of the yearly accounts it was found that the receipts had fallen off considerably, and in explanation it was alleged that the year just closed had been declared by the Hindu astrologers as unpropitious for marriages among Hindus, and that in consequence the number of third-class passengers had been much smaller than during previous years. In order to encourage to the fullest possible extent railway-traveling among the masses, many of the lines of rail have reduced the fare for third-class passengers to less than half a cent per mile.

But the natives of India are not the only

travelers by rail: there are European travelers not a few. Some are strangers journeying for pleasure—these are our cold-weather birds of passage—but the larger proportion are those whose homes for a season are here. Some are just entering upon life and service in India, and for such everything is invested with the charm of novelty; others are returning to the lands from whence they came, and, worn with toil or suffering from ill-health, India has lost all attraction for them. When the hot season opens, the tide of travel is toward the mountains or the sea. Anxious mothers take to the mountains little children thin and pale, and after a few months spent in the cool and healthful climate of the Himalayas bring back their little ones with rounded limbs and cheeks rosy with health.

A long railway-journey in the heat of an Indian summer not only is very trying, but travelers sometimes succumb to the heat. A lady recently traveling alone from Bombay to Madras was found dead in the railway-carriage just before the train reached Madras. On his round the ticket-con-

ductor saw the lady lying on one of the seats, apparently asleep, and tapped loudly at the door, but, failing to arouse her, entered the compartment, and found the lady, not asleep, but quite dead. The body and the luggage belonging to the lady were removed from the train and retained at the station. A medical officer was summoned, and an examination proved that the lady had died from heat-apoplexy. The body of the stranger was committed to the grave the same evening.

During the summer of one of the earlier years of our life in India we made a journey to the Himalayas. Stepping from the railway-train at the close of a day of great heat, we saw the door of the compartment adjoining our own thrown open, and a gentleman was found there in a state of insensibility, stricken down by the terrible heat. With the appliances at present in use for reducing the heat in railway-carriages, such cases of prostration are less frequent than formerly they were.

CHAPTER II.

A MORNING IN AN INDIAN BAZAAR.

COME with me this morning into the city, that you may have a glimpse of an Indian bazaar. I will lend you a covered umbrella and a sun-hat, and, if your eyes are sensitive, tinted glasses also, for the glare in this fierce heat is dazzling. We are two miles or more from the city, and at this season of the year much walking is impossible. We must drive, of course, and, as the carriage is at the door, let us go at once.

The long lines of men and women bearing baskets on their heads are on the way to market. The greater number, you see, are women; they carry heavy loads, but maintain an erect, and even a graceful, carriage, and are very picturesque in their costume. Look at that woman in scarlet attire. The one long piece of cloth which

serves the purpose of skirt, jacket and covering for the head is deftly, and even artistically, arranged, leaving only the face exposed, and is kept in place without the aid of needle, pin, hook, string or button. From the right arm, uplifted to steady the basket of golden melons, the drapery falls away, revealing the brown arm covered halfway to the elbow with bracelets—not, indeed, of precious metal, but of shellac, gay in color and ornamented with beads. Her feet are bare, but upon her ankles there are bands and upon her toes rings that make a tinkling sound as she moves along. Some of the women are dressed in blue, some in yellow and some in soiled white garments; but the drapery of all is arranged in the same fashion.

There is a man carrying a large bundle upon his head, but he walks along apparently unconscious of his load, his hands hanging by his side, and so erect in carriage that his perfectly-poised bundle is in no danger of falling.

Here comes a fine carriage drawn by a pair of spirited horses. There are out-

riders in gorgeous livery, and, sitting in state, like a king on his throne, is a fair boy seven or eight years of age, richly dressed and covered with ornaments. That is the cherished son of some wealthy Hindu out for his morning airing.

Just behind the handsome carriage comes creaking along a rude cart with ponderous wooden wheels and drawn by bullocks with large humps between their shoulders. Over the framework which crowns the top a faded red cover is thrown. Under that dingy awning, seated on the bottom of the cart, is a company of women and girls on their way to the Ganges to bathe. They are as merry as children out for a holiday, and as the clumsy vehicle creaks past us we hear ripples of laughter low and musical.

Here comes dashing by us a curious conveyance drawn by a very small native pony. Every inch of space in the vehicle seems appropriated, and hanging over the front and dangling down the sides are a marvelous number of human limbs. You are surprised at the whiteness of the rai-

ment and at the glossy blackness of the shoes. These men are writers in government offices, and they must appear in spotless apparel before their superiors. But you would be astonished could you see the homes from which faultlessly-attired native gentlemen come; many of them are mere mud hovels destitute of furniture, and your fine gentleman sits on the ground to partake of his food, which he conveys to his mouth with the fingers of his right hand. Yet there is some state connected with even so simple a repast, for the wife serves her husband, sitting or standing reverentially behind him, ready to obey his slightest command, and glad, poor soul! to appease her own hunger when her lord and master has satisfied his wants and retired from the scene.

Under that large umbrella made of bamboo splints, with the handle stuck in the ground, sits a shoemaker busily plying his trade, and here comes a customer—a traveler who is glad to have his worn sandals repaired while he rests by the roadside and refreshes himself with his

hookah. There is a well opposite, and the traveler has his own brass vessel and a long strong cord with which to let down his cup into the cool depths below and bring up pure, sweet water with which to quench his thirst.

But look at that woman stepping away from the well, a large brass vessel filled with water poised upon her head. Rebekah at the well, so long ago, must have presented to Abraham's trusted servant just such a picture as this woman furnishes us with to-day. On that broad platform of masonry around the well, where so many women are now waiting to fill their water-jars, travelers often sit to rest, as the Saviour, weary with his journey, sat by Sychar's well and conversed with the woman of Samaria.

Close beside the well is a temple. Look at those women pressing into it. One of the number leads by the hand a pretty little girl. The brass cup which the mother carries is filled with water from the Ganges, which she will pour over the idol, and the garland of fragrant white blossoms in the

EASTERN WOMEN CARRYING WATER.

hand of the little maiden will be presented to the temple-divinity.

There is a poor leper sitting by the wayside begging. He holds up to view his maimed hands and utters piteous cries, but it will not be a kindness to bestow alms upon him. For such afflicted ones there is an asylum outside the city where all their needs are supplied, where they are nursed in sickness, and where, also, they are instructed by those who have a care for their souls as well as for their bodies. Yet this man prefers to beg; he likes the freedom of such a life, and perhaps finds his calling profitable.

A blind man led by a small boy is following our carriage, and now a wretched-looking woman with a puny babe in her arms rushes toward us. For the blind man as well as for the leper there is a refuge where his physical wants will be supplied, but this life is his choice; and the woman with that miserable infant is a professional beggar, and I question if she would esteem it a blessing could her afflicted child be made perfectly whole, since she gains a

livelihood by the public exhibition of its deformities.

But here we are in the city. And what a tumult! All the roads leading to the market-place are thronged with people. Those women with large wicker baskets filled with water-jars upon their heads have come from villages where potters ply their trade. Those men bearing boxes upon their heads are starting out for a day's peddling; they will go from bungalow to bungalow, offering for sale a strange assortment of articles—writing-paper and hair-brushes, castor-oil and ribbons, corn-flour and shoe-blacking. The postmen collecting mail-matter from the letter-boxes are all mounted on bicycles—a great saving of time and of strength. There is no lack of policemen, but activity is not one of their distinguishing virtues. Their gay livery, however, furnishes a cheerful bit of color —scarlet turban, blue blouse and orange trousers.

Here is a wedding-procession. The bridegroom is but a child, yet he looks very grave sitting under his gilded canopy,

as if he fully appreciated the dignity of his position. The wail that is borne to our ears is from a funeral-train; for here, as in other lands, joy and sorrow meet.

The shops are open. Here are native tailors quite at home in the use of sewing-machines—imported, of course, from Europe. Here is a money-changer, his heaps of small coin and shells on a low table before him. Look at that cloth-merchant sitting cross-legged on the floor, his customer seated opposite him and the cloth he is displaying spread out between them. The merchant has about his neck a massive gold chain, though his raiment is scanty. The pretty little boy in gold-embroidered tunic and wearing so many and such costly ornaments is the merchant's son, and the father is evidently very proud of his darling.

In this shop close at hand I have an errand. A servant has entered just before us; he has returned a glass dish that has been sent to his master on inspection. The merchant, rising to serve us, finds it necessary to remove this article. "Why does he

SCENE IN AN ORIENTAL BAZAAR.

pour water over his hands?" you ask? Listen to his explanation:

"I am a Brahman, and by the rules of my caste am defiled by touching anything that has come in contact with a person of inferior caste."

"But you are an intelligent man, and know that real purity is not lost by such outward contact."

"I know—I know," our high-caste friend replies; "but if I do not observe these ceremonies, I shall be put out of caste, and that would be a calamity indeed. But there is less bondage to caste than there was a few years ago, when I began my career as a merchant. My father was very angry then because my stock in trade included some articles regarded by the Brahmans as unclean, but I knew there was no help for it if I would compete successfully with other business-men. Now no one thinks or speaks of such things."

The shop just beyond this one is kept by a Moslem. That pleasant-faced young lad seated on a mat outside the door and swaying backward and forward, an open

book before him, is reading the Koran. I often see him here in the morning, his tongue moving just as glibly as at present. His father is engaged in his devotions, his face toward Mecca. You perhaps wonder why he does not choose a less public place for such a service. He is like the hypocrites of old: he prays to be seen of men; and, though apparently so devout, he has a keen eye to business, and will not allow his prayers to interfere with his chance of securing a customer. We will not disturb him, however, but will make our purchases elsewhere. But no! He sees that we are about to retire, and beckons us to enter. Intent upon driving a shrewd bargain as we shall find him, it will be difficult to realize that he has just risen from his knees.

I must call at a banking-house not far from this shop, but I will not detain you long. "Do I call this a banking-house?" Yes, a long-established and very prosperous one. The men sitting cross-legged against the wall, with low desks before them and great books across their knees,

are members of one family. The head of the establishment—without whose advice and approval no important venture is made—is an old man, the father of several sons, all engaged with him in business, as are also some of the grandsons. They dwell together as one family, though they number several generations. Sad to say, they are all devout Hindus—at least, outwardly so. Yet how much real devotion or sincerity there may be in their worship it is not so easy to tell.

Let us now turn our steps toward the market. A troublesome woman who sometimes brings fruit to the bungalow for sale has followed us.

"Buy my lichees," she says; "they are very sweet."

"So you said when I purchased from you a few days ago, but they were so sour they could not be eaten."

Coming nearer, taking the basket from her head and placing it on the ground, she holds up before us a handful of lichees, saying in a very persuasive tone,

"If these be not sweet, may the son of

my heart be taken away at a stroke!" Then, after a pause, she adds, "Buy; and if you find the fruit not fresh and sweet, you may give me a hundred blows with your shoe."

This last, she thinks, will assuredly impress us with the truth of her assertion; for to receive a castigation with a shoe is regarded as a great indignity. Yet we know the arts of her trade too well to rate very highly even such extravagant asseverations as this; so we are not persuaded to buy her lichees.

Now a man confronts us.

"My fruit is really excellent," he says, in a very earnest tone and manner.

While we stop to examine it another hawker, equally anxious to serve us, presses up and says,

"My fruit is quite as good, and much cheaper."

Now a woman's shrill voice calls out, "Buy my fruit because I am old and poor;" and rising up from the midst of her baskets is an old woman who shows us her white locks.

"Will you not take pity upon my old age and feebleness?" she cries out.

Let us purchase our supplies from this woman, and then retreat from such a babel; for it is growing late, and the heat is becoming very oppressive. We will now close the sliding-doors of the carriage and drive home with as little delay as possible. We have had glimpses enough of the scenes in an Indian bazaar to give us a fair conception of what it is like.

CHAPTER III.

WAYSIDE SCENES IN INDIA.

THE year in India is divided into three seasons—the cold season, the hot season and the rainy season. In North India, during the hot season, "the winds blow flames." All work outside and all business in which Europeans are engaged, whether in offices, in schools or in shops, is transacted, as far as possible, in the morning, or in the evening after the heat of the day has somewhat abated. Day after day and week after week the sun rides through a brazen sky. The earth is parched and there is no beauty to delight the eye. But when the rainy season comes, the whole face of nature is changed, and as if by magic the bare brown earth is covered with a mantle of green, flowers burst into bloom and everything is instinct with life. At this season

the husbandmen are busy in their fields, preparing the ground and sowing the seed.

Some of the hills not far from our bungalow are covered with luxuriant vines bearing a large coarse cucumber which is much relished by the people. Every morning we see the busy owners of these fields filling large baskets with cucumbers for the market. In every such field we see just what is mentioned in Scripture—"a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." A few light poles are stuck into the ground and tied together with coarse twine or bark, and the whole is covered with a roof of straw. Such a lodge has an occupant by night as well as by day until the produce of the field has all been secured. When the watcher, relieved from his vigils, lies down to sleep, he wraps himself from head to foot in a sheet or blanket, until he looks like a mummy; when he wakens, he shakes himself free from his covering, and his toilet is made. Sometimes the wife comes to cook food for her husband and her sons, but frequently they prepare their own food. As many of these fields are close to the roadside, passers-by

frequently stop to purchase, and the monotony of the day's vigil is thus relieved.

In the fields in which cucumbers are now growing wheat and other grains will soon be sown. The cold season in India is the season of fruit and flowers. The gardens produce vegetables in variety and abundance; in the fields rich stores of grain are ripening. At this season, in all the fields, lodges may be seen. To the little perch under the thatch the watcher climbs, and here the owner of the field, relieved by some member of his family or a trusted servant, spends his time day and night until the ripening grain is gathered. The lodge is then abandoned, but the store of precious grain is guarded until the oxen have trodden out the corn and the last measure has been removed from the field. During the time of threshing and winnowing the owner sleeps in the midst of his "heap of corn," as did Boaz.

As we have passed such fields after nightfall we have seen the glow of little fires by which food was being prepared, and around which the owners of the grain

sat in groups, chatting and smoking the hookah.

Some of the roads in this part of India are bordered by mango trees. These trees are the property of government, and each year the unripe fruit is sold upon the trees to persons who watch the fruit until it matures. The mango is prized not only by natives of India, but by Europeans also, and therefore finds ready sale. From April until July, while the fruit is ripening under these trees by the road side we see booths made sometimes of the branches of trees and sometimes like the lodges now in the fields. Under many of the trees, as the branches are low and widespreading and the foliage heavy, there is only the rude cot upon which the guardian of the trees sits by day and on which he rests at night. Sometimes, under one of these great trees, an entire family take up their abode while the fruit is ripening. The father watches sharply the boys and the birds whose covetous eyes are upon the fruit which he hopes in due time to turn into silver. The mother prepares the food—not a difficult matter,

though the mouths may be many. A little range of mud is easily made, and a handful of twigs, which the children gather, cooks the *dàl;* the mother kneads thin cakes for bread, which are quickly baked on the coals, and the meal is ready. The father and the sons are served sitting upon the ground and using only their fingers to convey the food to the mouth; when their hunger has been appeased, the other members of the family cluster eagerly around. In these frugal households there is no surplus, and soon the last morsel has disappeared. With a little water and the fine earth at her feet the mother then scours the vessels that have been used and carefully stows them away. This work done, she sits idly upon the ground, plays with her children or lazily turns her spinning-wheel. The little ones sport under the trees or wander away to visit children living under neighboring trees. In this idle way these poor people are quite content to pass their time.

The fruit so carefully guarded is sold as it ripens. Passing travelers make small purchases, giving with their price such

items of news as they have picked up by the way. Men come with empty baskets, which after much bargaining they carry away on their heads filled with luscious fruit, which they sell from house to house or carry at once to the public market. Servants come to buy fresh fruit for the table of their masters. This is the reaping-time, and the owners of the fruit find pleasant occupation in counting their gains. It is an anxious, patience-trying time as well, for the crow—which gains a livelihood by pilfering, which it pursues as a lawful calling—seems as fond of the rich golden fruit of the mango tree as does man himself, and quite as determined to have its full share; so that through all the day, and even into the night, the shrill voices of the guardians of the richly-laden trees are mingled with the shriller cries of the impudent crows. Not infrequently the birds become so bold that they pay little heed to the hoarsest shouting; then smooth stones sent from a sling with skillful hand are freely used.

Under a mango tree close to the road-

side, and not far from our bungalow, lived a man for two or three months watching the fruit on the boughs above him. This man did not enjoy the luxury of a bed, but when he slept he spread on the ground a mat or a strip of coarse cloth. His wife brought his food and spent a part of each day under the tree, busy with her little spinning-wheel.

An Oriental knows nothing of the value of time, and idly waits weeks, and even months, for the grain in the fields to mature or the fruit on the trees to ripen, taking little more note of time than do the birds singing in the branches above him. A servant, when sent on an errand, will not mind waiting a whole day for an answer, provided he can find near at hand a bazaar where he may purchase a few handfuls of parched grain with which to satisfy his hunger.

Through the grounds of a gentleman whose home is in a pretty village at the foot of a low range of mountains in the North of India flows a stream which during the rains is wide and deep, but whose bed

during the hot season is often quite dry. One day, after a very heavy shower, the gentleman, walking through his grounds, found the bed of the stream full and the water tumbling and dashing over the rocks at a furious rate. By the side of the stream sat several boys.

"What are you doing here?" asked the gentleman.

"Waiting for the brook to run dry, so that we can pass over," answered one of the boys; and in a few hours the bed of the stream was again empty, and the boys passed over dry-shod.

At no great distance from our house is one of the branch post-offices of the city. On the ground in front of this office a mat is spread, and upon it sits a man day after day, by his side a reed pen and an inkstand of curious shape, and between two stones, fluttering in the wind, a sheet of paper. This man is a public scribe. The mat on which he sits with his feet drawn up close to his body is his place of business, and the writing-materials about him are his advertisement. Only a small proportion

of the people of India can read or write; and when a person wishes to send tidings to a friend or to an absent member of his household, he is glad to employ one of these scribes. Sitting on the mat in front of this functionary, he delivers his message, and the scribe writes to his dictation, sometimes suggesting a topic if the person is at a loss for a subject. Passers-by frequently stop and, sitting down by the parties, listen to what is said; for family matters are public property in the East. When the letter is finished, it is directed and sealed, a small price is paid to the scribe for the service rendered, and the man goes on his way much relieved that so important a task has been completed, and probably wondering how that bit of paper with its curious signs can convey his thoughts to a person so far away. When the letter reaches its destination, the receiver will probably be unable to read it; it is therefore carried to a scribe, or to some acquaintance who has learned to write, and in this way the person interested becomes acquainted with its contents.

In India, as in other countries where the railway has been introduced, the mails are carried by this means, but in such parts of the country as have not yet been penetrated by the railway, and especially in the mountainous regions, letters are often carried by runners. One man carries the mail-matter entrusted to him a certain number of miles, where it is delivered to a second carrier, and so on, until it reaches its destination. The runners wait at each stage until they receive the return-mail, which is carried in the same manner. Sometimes one man runs alone, and sometimes several run together if there is a large amount of mail-matter or if the road to be traversed is one of peculiar danger. Each carrier is supplied with a long pole, at one end of which are suspended the sealed mail-bags and to the opposite end of which are attached several brass rings, which make a tinkling sound as the runner hurries along, thus announcing his approach. This sound is also supposed to frighten away wild animals. The low and marshy lands of India are infested with serpents, while in the forests and the moun-

tainous regions are found bears, tigers, and even wild elephants. When the mail-carriers are seen approaching, travelers on the road step aside to let them pass; for all understand that these men must not be hindered in their journey.

A few years ago, when we were traveling in the Himalayas, we saw one day coming down the steep mountain-path a company of post-carriers; they were moving along with the trotting gait peculiar to this class of persons. Each carrier was armed with a pole, from one end of which were suspended the mail-bags, while the brass rings on the opposite end kept up a tinkling sound which the wind bore back to us long after the carriers had passed. On another occasion when in the Himalayas, looking out after nightfall from the veranda of the rest-house where we were spending the night, we saw far up the mountain-side the glimmer of a torch. We had that day passed over the same road, and knew that the path was narrow and dangerous. We watched the flickering light as it moved toward us. Sometimes we lost sight of it

as the bearer followed some curve in the mountain-path, then the light gleamed out lower down the mountain and nearer us, until at length it passed the bungalow and was lost in the darkness beyond. It was the torch of the post-carrier hastening on his way with his precious burden—letters of business, of sympathy, of love, which will go out on their errands, some of them across seas and to the ends of the earth.

When traveling through the Valley of Kashmir our tents on one occasion were pitched for the night on a grassy spot under some large lime trees and not far from the roadside. Just at nightfall we saw a man hastening along the road, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left. He did not carry the pole with which the bearers of the mail are usually armed, but slung over his shoulder was a gun.

"Where are you going in such haste?" was asked, but the man returned no answer.

Some one standing by said,

"That is one of the maharajah's postmen carrying tidings from Srinagar, the capital,

to Jama, where the maharajah lives; and these men must not be detained even to answer questions, for the king's business requires haste."

Thus we get glimpses of some of the common wayside scenes in India.

CHAPTER IV.

LEPERS IN INDIA.

LEPROSY in India is painfully prevalent, and is found both in the mountains and in the plains. It is said that there are in India at least one hundred and twenty-five thousand sufferers from leprosy, and some authorities place the number much higher. The condition of no class of persons is so deplorable as is that of the lepers. Not only are they the victims of a loathsome and incurable disease, their life a living death, but they are outcasts, homeless and helpless. When this terrible malady makes its appearance in a member of a household, the afflicted one is cast out by his friends. In the selfish creed of the Hindus there is no place for compassion. "How shall mortals pity those with whom the gods are angry?" they coldly question;

ORIENTAL LEPERS RECEIVING ALMS.

and so from the home where he has been loved and honored the leper goes a hopeless, friendless outcast. Henceforth no door opens to welcome him and no voice falls upon his ear in accents of kindness. Unable to toil, he begs, sitting by the wayside, and sleeps where night overtakes him. To satisfy his hunger he gladly takes such food as is thrown to him. No fear of defilement now, for who so vile as he? And so the months and the years drag wearily on, the awful disease doing its deadly work, until the maimed and scarred stump that remains scarcely seems the tenement of a human soul.

The people of India provide asylums and hospitals for animals, but to relieve the sufferings of their stricken fellow-creatures they feel no responsibility. Yet, though the inhabitants of this land are thus indifferent to the woes of their countrymen, the children of Christian England have been moved to pity, and all over the land there are now asylums for lepers. Many of these asylums, though receiving grants-in-aid from government, are under

the superintendence of Christian missionaries, who, while dispensing the bounty put into their hands for the physical relief of the sufferers, have also a care for their immortal souls. Some of the most devoted missionaries that India has known have been especially interested in the lepers. During the last decade the work has been greatly extended, and has produced most gratifying results. Lepers as a class are accessible, and receive the glad tidings with peculiar joy.

The little town of Almora, hidden away in the Himalayas, has a large asylum for lepers—one of the oldest in India. On the terraced mountain-sides are rows of pleasant barracks where they dwell, and to those who are able to labor a little plot of land is given for a garden. From this asylum there has been a large ingathering of converts. At one time, when there were sheltered within this home one hundred and thirty-six lepers, eighty of the number were professing Christians. As all the lepers, Christian and non-Christian, receive like treatment, there can be no selfish

motive to induce them to profess a faith which they do not possess.

Not long since we paid a visit to Almora, and one morning saw the poor lepers in their homes. The older and more infirm members of this sad community were sitting idly in the pleasant sunshine; others were busy in their little gardens, while some of the women were trying to sew, and looked up with a patient smile as we watched their efforts to draw the needle in and out with their poor maimed hands. It was our privilege on a Sabbath during our visit to worship in the little chapel where daily for prayers and Christian instruction, as well as for special religious services on the Sabbath, the lepers assemble.

It was a lovely afternoon when we were borne over the hills along shady paths to the asylum-grounds. As we reached the crest of a hill, looking across a glen to a hillside opposite, we saw among the trees the long lines of neat barracks provided for the lepers. Higher up the hill, and standing a little apart, was the house occupied by the superintendent, a Christian native,

who, with his wife, has long assisted in the care of these lepers.

Surrounded by trees was the pretty chapel, and on the clear air was borne to us the sound of a bell calling together the worshipers. When we reached the chapel, we found waiting to receive us the veteran missionary, the Rev. J. H. Budden, who for more than thirty years has labored to make brighter the lives of these suffering ones and to point them to the Saviour.

The congregation was already assembled when we entered the sanctuary, the lepers seated in rows upon the neatly matted floor. Through the open doors and windows the sunlight streamed and the pure, fragrant mountain-air was wafted in. The birds chirped musically outside and the wind whistled softly through the pines. It was a sad congregation—all lepers with the exception of the faithful shepherd of the flock, the native superintendent and his family and the one visitor. The women were wrapped in the sheet-like covering commonly worn by the women of the country, and this friendly garment served

in some measure to hide from curious eyes the ravages of the dreadful disease which was slowly consuming them. The faces of some of the men were so marred that it was painful to look upon them. Some had lost their hands, others were crippled in their feet.

The congregation was a reverent one; the heads of the worshipers bowed low in prayer. A psalm was read responsively, and in this part of the service the congregation joined heartily. In the singing, too, they evidently took delight, and attentively they listened as the word was expounded. A solemn communion service followed, the lepers alone partaking. At the close of the service a collection-plate was passed, and no one could look unmoved upon the offerings cast into the treasury of the Lord—small, indeed, as man's eye regarded them, but, bestowed out of their deep poverty, they were in the eyes of the Master, like the mite of the poor widow, greater than the gifts of the rich.

Near us sat an old man, a leper and blind; by his side was a young man whose fair face

showed no trace of the foul disease which had made him in his youth a despised outcast. When the offerings were being made, this young man lifted from the floor, where they had been placed during the service, some copper coins, and put them into the hand of the blind man, that he might present his own offerings.

At the conclusion of the service, we passed down the aisle between the rows of worshipers, and then out again into the sunshine, with thankful hearts for bodies physically whole.

The late Rev. James Vaughan, who was greatly interested in the lepers in Calcutta, says, in an account of his work, "After prayerful, patient, persevering work among them, one convert rewarded our efforts. Very soon others laid hold on Christ, and the leper asylum contained a leper church, as these interesting converts fitted up, at their own expense, one end of their ward as a church; and I can truly say that some of the happiest moments of my life have been spent in ministering to those poor sufferers in that little sanctuary. No service

could be more solemnly interesting than the administration of the Lord's Supper to that little band of maimed believers. Some had no hands, others no feet, several were blind; but to see them kneeling upon their clean mats around the table, to see the spirit of devotion which actuated them, whilst every now and then a tear of grateful love fell from their eyes, was a sight to do one good. Many a time have I returned from such a service blessing God that he ever led me to engage in so hallowed a work. Before I left Calcutta it had been my happiness to have baptized upward of forty of these poor people. Brighter specimens of Christian faith and love and devotion I never witnessed than I have seen among these forty."

One case mentioned is that of a woman of high caste and good family. She had been a devoted Hindu, and for many years led the life of a pilgrim. An outcast, under the power of the terrible disease, she found a home in the leper asylum in Calcutta, and there found Jesus. After her conversion she learned to read, and her Bible became

her constant companion. Day by day her face shone with the beauty of holiness while her body was literally decaying, but the disease which was eating out her life left her face untouched, and that was "bright and comely" to the end. Though a great sufferer, no murmuring word escaped her lips, and she passed away rejoicing in the love and faithfulness of that Saviour who would present her faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Mr. Vaughan tells of another leper, who after his conversion became a veritable missionary to his afflicted companions. Unable to leave his bed, his couch of suffering was both "his throne and his pulpit," for the whole leper community gradually learned to look up to him as their leader and teacher. The Christian members of the flock gathered about him morning and evening for their devotions, and listened with reverent attention while he opened to them the Scriptures. And, thus glorifying God and proving a blessing to all about him, he lay for three years before death set free the rejoicing soul from the suffering body.

The leper asylum in Sabathu, a town in the lower Himalayas, was for many years in the care of the late Dr. John Newton of the American Presbyterian mission. To all who sought his aid the faithful missionary-physician gave not only his ready sympathy, but all the help in his power, shrinking from no duty, however unpleasant to the flesh, and while seeking to relieve physical sufferings labored earnestly to lead the sufferers to the Saviour. But this devoted servant of the Lord—"fitted for his post both by nature and grace"—has been called to his heavenly home. One of the last acts of his life was to write to a friend from his dying-bed, pleading for the poor sufferers for whom he had so long and so lovingly cared. After the death of Dr. Newton, Mrs. Newton, while she remained in India, carried on the work as far as possible in accordance with Dr. Newton's views.

Among those cared for in this asylum have been some most interesting cases. Mrs. Newton mentions an old woman, Nánáki by name, who was admitted into the asylum, though not a leper. A son of her

husband by another wife was smitten with the plague of leprosy ; and when he turned to the leper asylum for a home, Nánáki begged to come also ; and, as she was old and infirm, her request was granted. When she had been about a year in the asylum, she asked for and received baptism, and from that time lived a beautiful and consistent life, kind and helpful to those more feeble than herself. She was especially devoted to a very old man who was both blind and deaf, and to a young man so crippled by disease as to be unable to use any part of his body except his hands and his arms. The last days of Nánáki were very happy, her faith in her Redeemer undimmed by doubt or by fear. She said to Mrs. Newton a short time before her death,

"I am going now."

"You are not afraid to go to Jesus? You are happy?" Mrs. Newton asked, bending over Nánáki's cot.

"No, not afraid—quite happy," she answered, with a smile. "Very happy," she added a few moments later, the smile still on her face.

The poor cripple missed her sadly, and the blind man refused food from any other hand, and soon followed Nánáki to the grave.

The Saviour when he was upon the earth touched the leper, and beneath the touch of that almighty hand the flesh of the loathsome leper "came again like unto the flesh of a little child" and he was clean. The ascended Saviour has the same heart of compassion as when he walked the earth. We know that he looks down from heaven with infinite pity upon the lepers to-day, just as he used to look upon the lepers of Palestine. He is glad to have his disciples treat these afflicted ones just as he would do if he were here again. Surely no work can be more Christlike than what we have just been witnessing in this leper asylum in India. These poor people have immortal souls and they need a Saviour. The fact that they are outcast from men, even from their own homes, makes their case all the more needy, and renders all the more Christlike the beautiful, self-forgetful efforts of missionaries in their behalf.

Is it not a glorious privilege, then, to point these afflicted ones for whom life has lost all its earthly joy to that fountain which the Saviour by his death has opened for sin and uncleanness, and in which they may wash and be clean?

CHAPTER V.

INDIAN POTTERS.

THE art of making vessels of baked clay is a very ancient art, and frequent allusion is made to it in the Bible. The prophet Jeremiah says, "Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make it." Passing, on one occasion, in one of our large cities, through a narrow street occupied almost exclusively by potters, I saw what helped me to understand not only this passage, but much more that is said in the Bible about the potter and the clay.

Anxious to learn in what manner the vessels in daily use in our households are made, we entered one of the houses close

by the roadside. Here the potter had already kneaded the clay, and his wheel was in rapid motion. The potter's wheel—doubtless the same in kind as that mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah—is the instrument in use by the Hindus of the present day. A strong pivot is fixed firmly in the ground, and upon this the wheel is made to revolve. This wheel is of stone, several inches in thickness and two or three feet in diameter. The potter, wearing no clothing except a cloth about the loins, sat down upon the ground beside his wheel, in the centre of which had already been placed the mass of clay to be moulded. The wheel was set in motion by the potter's hand, assisted by a small stick, and, once in motion, it continued to revolve for several minutes. While thus revolving, with his naked hands the potter fashioned vessel after vessel with wonderful rapidity, only pausing occasionally to put his wheel into swifter motion. Some of the vessels were very light and thin, making it difficult to understand how they retained their shape in the plastic clay. Now the potter made without pattern or mould,

guided only by his own unerring taste, bottles for water with swelling bowls and long, slender necks, then a vessel with wide mouth and ornamental rim; now a little vessel to be used as a lamp, then a broad plate or platter. "As it seemed good to the potter," out of the plastic clay he formed vessel after vessel in great variety. Some of these were "marred" in his hands, but no loss was involved, for of the same clay other vessels were fashioned.

In a shed facing the open court where the potter sat at his wheel was a heap of blue clay which had been collected from the bottoms of tanks in and about the city; this was used for the finer kinds of pottery. Near this heap of clay, sitting on the ground, was a woman withered and old, her head resting upon her knees, while from her thin lips moans frequently escaped.

"What is the matter?" we asked, touched by her evident distress.

"My husband is dead," she answered, in a piping voice, "and only this boy is left," pointing with one bony finger to the young man before the wheel, "to earn bread for

the household. He is but a child, and is not cunning with his hands to make all sorts of vessels, like his father. What shall we do?" and the low wailing sound continued.

Entering another of the low houses, we found the father busy at his wheel and the women of the household employed in kneading clay for future use. A low cot was drawn forward, and upon this we were invited to sit while we watched the potter at his work. Here, as before, we were delighted and surprised at the graceful shape of the articles fashioned by the hands of the potter. This beauty of form is seen in pottery made in all parts of India, though fashioned in a manner so primitive.

The vessels, as they were moulded, were placed upon a slab of wood or stone or upon the smooth ground in the sun to harden. The furnace in which they were afterward baked was simply a slight excavation in the earth, in which the vessels were placed, layer after layer, with dry sticks, straw, or any other fuel at hand, and all burned together.

While making a tour in the district our tents were on one occasion pitched in the vicinity of a village the inhabitants of which were chiefly potters. While there encamped I one day directed my steps toward a group of women engaged in kneading clay for the skillful hands of the potter. The women smiled a welcome at my approach, but did not pause in their work. A woman who was holding a child in her arms brought a low stool for me, and then waited for me to speak.

As I questioned the women concerning their employment, they were pleased to give me the desired information about the mysteries of their craft, and answered as readily when questioned about their home-life. It was a story of hard and unremitting toil.

"Have you a school in your village?" I asked.

"No, no!" was answered. "How can we learn? We have no leisure for that, but must toil from morning until evening for our bread."

"We know only our work," answered

one woman, wearily, as she patiently kneaded the clay.

Sitting in the midst of the group and looking across the road, where, aided by rapidly-revolving wheels, two or three potters were fashioning vessels diverse in form, of the same lump making one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor, the words of the prophet Jeremiah came to my mind: "Behold as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." Unpromising soil seemed the hearts of these poor ignorant women into which to drop seeds of divine truth, but such hearts the Master could, we know, make fit to receive impressions for good even as the plastic clay took shape in the hands of the potter. Thus the words of the ancient prophet came with new inspiration to our hearts as we thought of our work. Yes, the Master can take even this unpromising clay, and from it make vessels unto high honor for himself.

The pottery made in India is very brittle. About the house of the potter and in the vicinity of wells where the women of a

village go out in the morning and evening to draw water, carrying upon their heads or shoulders the vessels they have brought to be filled, and also around ordinary dwellings, may always be found fragments of broken pottery. In an Eastern house, where nothing is suffered to go to waste, these "shreds" of pottery are used for various household purposes. The Lord by his prophet Isaiah describes under the figure of a potter's vessel shivered to atoms the punishment that should be visited upon his rebellious children: "Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." Thus we are taught something of the mighty power of the Lord, before whom the strongest of earth are as easily broken to pieces as brittle pottery.

The things which we see about us daily as we mingle with the people of this land, whose customs and habits, dress, household furniture and implements of husbandry, have remained unchanged from century to century, help us to appreciate and to see in many of the allusions of Scripture a force and a beauty hitherto but imperfectly understood.

CHAPTER VI.

SOME ANIMALS IN INDIA.

THE ELEPHANT.

I REMEMBER, upon our arrival in India, feeling somewhat disappointed that no elephants were to be seen. We made the long railway-journey from Bombay to one of the cities of the Panjab without seeing a single elephant. The animal, however, is common in India, and is found in a wild state in many parts of the country. It is one of the most sagacious of creatures, and marvelous are the stories told of elephant-life in India, Burmah and Ceylon. An English gentleman who spent eight years in Ceylon tells us in an interesting volume describing life in that beautiful island that he has seen an elephant doing the work of three teams in a field. Fastened to the elephant was a pair of heavy

harrows, and attached to these were a pair of lighter harrows, and behind these was a roller. The same writer tells us of another elephant, a large and very fine animal, employed by her owner in building a dam across a stream. The timbers for this dam were about fifteen feet long and from fourteen to eighteen inches in diameter. These the elephant carried in her mouth, shifting her hold along the log before she raised it until she obtained the exact balance, steadying it with her trunk. In this way she carried all the logs to the spot and laid them across the stream in parallel lines. She then arranged two logs, about eighteen feet long and two feet in diameter, close to the edge, on the bank of the stream, and when the work was completed showed evident pleasure at the approval of her keeper.

It is said that in ascending or descending the precipitous sides of mountains an elephant always describes a zigzag, and thus lessens the abruptness of the inclination. When traversing dense jungles, the sensitive trunk of the elephant feels the way;

and when precipices are feared, the trunk lowered on the ground keeps the animal advised of danger.

The Rev. François Lacroix, one of the famous missionaries of India, and father of the late Mrs. Mullens of Calcutta, used to tell his children the following story, which shortly after the incident took place he had heard from a gentleman who witnessed the occurrence:

"At Ghyretty, the country-house of the governor of the French settlement of Chandernagore, there was a little elephant exceedingly tame and treated as a pet. He was allowed to roam all over the house, and was accustomed to come into the dining-room after dinner to seek contributions from guests. One day, when a large party were seated at dessert, the elephant came round, and, putting his little trunk between the guests, asked from them gifts of fruit. One gentleman refused to give anything, and, as the animal would not leave him, at length, greatly annoyed, he took his fork and gave the elephant a smart stab in the trunk with the prongs.

The elephant went off and finished his rounds, but, shortly after, he went into the garden, tore off the bough of a tree which was swarming with black ants, returned to the room and shook the bough over the gentleman's head. In a moment he was covered with the ants, which bite severely. They filled his hair, crept down his neck, crawled up his sleeves. He brushed some off, stamped, swore and did his best to get rid of the plague, but he could not manage it, and was obliged to undress and get into a bath to free himself from his tormentors, while the remainder of the guests laughed at the occurrence and petted the elephant more fondly than before."

Many years ago the town of Tinnevelly, in Southern India, was visited by a terrible hurricane which caused the loss of many lives and threw down more than a hundred thousand trees. Among the trees blown down in the garden of one of the missionaries of Tinnevelly was a large mango tree which yielded most delicious fruit. Anxious, if possible, to preserve his favorite tree, the owner, with the combined efforts of about

fifty men, tried to raise it to an upright position, but in vain. Belonging to one of the temples of Tinnevelly was a very large and powerful elephant. This animal the missionary borrowed, and what the combined efforts of fifty men had failed to accomplish the elephant succeeded in doing, and for many years afterward the tree thus lifted to its place flourished and yielded fruit as before.

Mrs. Mault, the wife of a devoted missionary who labored for more than a third of a century in Nagercoil, a town twelve miles from Cape Comorin, tells the following story of her own experience: The *dewan*, or prime minister, of the rajah of Travancore sent an elephant with his keeper to Nagercoil to pile timber, and by the hand of the keeper sent to Mrs. Mault a letter asking her to see the elephant fed every day, as he could not depend upon the honesty of the keeper. The elephant was accordingly brought daily before the raised veranda of the house, and the man, standing before him, showed the rice allowed for his meal. One afternoon Mrs. Mault com-

plained that the quantity was less than usual, and charged the keeper with filching it. The man, looking up, earnestly protested against the accusation, and, not being believed, said, "What, madam! Would I rob my own dear child?" at the same time raising his hands, as natives do, to give energy to his protestations. At this moment the elephant quietly put his trunk round the man's waist, untied the bulky cloth which the Hindus wear as a kind of girdle, and let out upon the ground before Mrs. Mault the rice which his paternal keeper had stolen from his meal.

There is in Nagercoil a very large church furnishing accommodation for an audience of two thousand persons. The stones for this spacious edifice were brought from the neighboring mountains, and the timbers from the adjacent forests. The missionaries engaged in the superintendence of the work found difficulty in procuring means for the conveyance of the necessary materials. While this problem was waiting for solution, "I saw," said the Rev. Richard Knill, "a huge elephant feeding near a temple with

a keeper by his side. I said to the man, 'Whose elephant is this?' The reply was, 'He belongs to the goddess who lives in the temple.'—'What does the goddess do with an elephant.'—'She rides upon him twice a year at the processions,' answered the keeper. I thought if we could get this elephant to draw the material for our chapel the animal would serve a new master and be employed in a better work than carrying an idol. I mentioned it to Mr. Meade, and through the resident the matter was laid before the queen. Her Majesty said, 'They may have the elephant, but they must feed the animal and pay the keeper.' We readily consented, and had the gratification of seeing the monster daily engaged in drawing stones and timber for the house of the Lord." In this beautiful sanctuary, built in the year 1818, we saw assembled, in the summer of 1878, one of the most interesting Christian congregations that we have ever had the good-fortune to witness brought together in any land.

The trunk of the elephant is furnished at the end with a finger-like appendage; with

this the animal can take up very small objects.

One afternoon a wealthy native came to call upon us; he rode to the house on an elephant. While he was paying the visit the elephant with his keeper roamed about the yard, the elephant improving the time by gathering some choice morsels from the lawn. These, when gathered, the sagacious animal held firmly in the finger at the end of his trunk; then, raising one of his huge feet, he brushed the dainty morsel free from dust before carrying it to his mouth. "By his trunk an elephant can raise a piece of artillery or pick up a pin, kill a man or brush off a fly, carry food to the mouth or pump up water, which he carries to his mouth or showers over his body."

Once, when on a visit to a friend, we were taken to spend the day at a deserted city where there were some fine old palaces, and for part of our journey elephants were provided. When we reached our destination the elephants were turned into a large yard surrounded with a high wall. Mosquitoes were very numerous, and caused

the elephants much annoyance, but they soon managed to rid themselves of their tormentors. One of the elephants filled his trunk with fine dust, and with this he pow-

ROYAL ELEPHANT AND TRAPPINGS.

dered his body, repeating the process until he was covered with a thick coat of dust. The other elephants followed his example.

Elephants are much used in India in the processions of native princes, and on all

occasions when it is deemed desirable to make a show of wealth or of state. In some parts of India, on festive occasions, the head, ears and trunk of the elephant are elaborately painted.

The elephant eats hay, vegetables and fruit and takes kindly to the most dainty dishes. The emperor Akbar kept a great number of elephants, and these royal beasts had each a daily allowance of two hundred pounds of solid food, besides a dessert of rice, sugar, milk, and, in their season, three hundred sugar-canes. When a rich native had a quarrel with one whom he did not wish openly to oppose, but upon whom he desired to bring disaster, he would sometimes, under pretence of great friendship, make him a present of an elephant. The poor man dared not refuse the proffered gift, nor dared he dispose of it after it came into his possession, and to feed his costly present soon impoverished him.

Elephants are fond of thickly-wooded mountain-glens and like to be in the vicinity of rivers or pools, as they delight in wallowing in mud and water. They are

capital swimmers, being able to make their way across the broadest rivers, floating with the head and the back below the water and the trunk raised above it.

THE CAMEL.

The Arabs call the camel "Job's beast," and declare that it is "a monument of God's mercy." "Ships of the desert" camels are also called, and the name is a very appropriate one, for without these useful animals the desert would be impassable to man. No other creature can endure such severe and long-continued hardships, such rough usage and such scanty fare. Camels have long, ungainly-looking legs; the soles of their large feet are furnished with pads or cushions which prevent them from sinking into the sand. The camel is very surefooted, and because of his cushioned feet moves along very quietly. The head of the camel is long, the ears are small and the eyes are prominent, so that he can distinguish objects at a great distance. His neck is long, slender and flexible, and his sense of smell very acute.

THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

When traveling with a caravan and apparently exhausted by long marching and scanty fare, it is said that he will scent water from a great distance, and, breaking away, will run with unerring instinct to a spring which has escaped the notice of all other animals.

The stomach of the camel is so constructed that he can carry a supply of water sufficient for many days. The stomach is like "a chain of water-tanks or a long bag divided into compartments," and on extended journeys across the desert the camel has the power of expanding these compartments so as to make them capable of holding a large amount of water.

The camel is a very temperate animal. The patient creature is quite content if he receives once in twenty-four hours a pound of dates, beans or barley, while he regards as a luxury a few thistles or a mouthful of some thorny plant. There are found in this country trees covered with thorns soft and juicy, and I have seen camels snap at these in passing. At evening-time camels often pass our door laden with fresh boughs,

the leaves of which furnish their evening meal.

The camel not only carries a supply of

A LOADED CAMEL.

water, but he carries a supply of food as well; upon this, however, he does not draw as long as supplies are forthcoming from

other sources. The hump of the camel is his food-pouch; and when he is healthy and abundantly fed it is well stored with fat. Without this reserve supply he could not continue his long and fatiguing marches when other supplies are cut off. This gives to the long-suffering animal nourishment without food. When the fat is exhausted, the skin falls to one side like an empty bag.

The nostrils of a camel are so formed that they can be closed at will to exclude the drifting sand of the desert. The camel is an animal of great strength, a full-grown, healthy one carrying with apparent ease five or six hundred pounds. These "ships of the desert" are often the only means of exchanging the products of different parts of the country, and, as they carry such heavy burdens and are contented with scanty fare, they furnish a very cheap means of transport. In one part of India extensive salt lakes exist, and from the waters of these lakes large quantities of salt are manufactured. Before railroads had penetrated to this part of the country

camels were used to carry away the salt, bringing back sugar in exchange.

Though usually so patient, the camel is sometimes obstinate, and even savage. When loaded unequally or too heavily, he utters a shrill cry. On one occasion, when on a journey, quite near the travelers' bungalow where we took shelter for the night were a great number of camels, and often through the night we heard the camels' harsh, shrill cries, their protest against the heavy burdens which were being laid upon them. Camels are frequently used to carry tents, and I have seen a tent and all its furniture upon the back of a camel—a curious load. These useful animals are also made to draw vehicles, but, as they travel slowly—less than three miles an hour—are not much used by Europeans for this purpose. The heavier and tougher animals are employed in carrying burdens; the lighter and more agile ones are trained for the saddle. Every day we see camels pass our bungalow, their long, lank bodies almost concealed from view by a gay saddle-cloth, while their

riders are gorgeous in scarlet turban, orange trousers and blue tunic.

Often we see strings of camels. In the nostril of each camel is a ring; through this ring a rope is passed, and the opposite end of the rope is tied to the camel in front. In this way a great number of animals are kept together, and they move along with almost noiseless tread.

The baby-camels are as dull and awkward as their elders, and seem as subdued, as if with their great far-seeing eyes they had caught glimpses of the deserts they must cross, and had already felt the weight of the burdens they must carry.

This animal, so useful in life, is useful also after he is dead. Out of his hair, which is of a pale-brown color, the Arab makes carpets, tent-cloths, sacks for grain and garments for himself. Some of the cloth made of camel's hair is soft and fine, but it is usually coarse and rough. From the hair of the camel brushes are also made for the painter. Of his hide belts, sandals, ropes, thongs and large water-bottles are manufactured.

THE TIGER.

In no other country are tigers so numerous, so large and so bloodthirsty as in India and the adjacent islands. The average height of this beast is from three to four feet and his average length from six to nine feet, though tigers are sometimes found fifteen feet in length from head to tip of tail. The tiger is a magnificent-looking animal, and so strong and fierce that the elephant alone is able to withstand him; but, though relentless when he is attacked, he is nevertheless a cowardly animal and retreats on the approach of a foe unless wounded or provoked. He is found both in the mountains and in the plains of India. When the hot season approaches he seeks the neighborhood of streams, where he can be concealed in thickets of long grass or brushwood.

An Indian officer, learning on one occasion that a path to a spring had been monopolized by tigers, resolved upon their destruction. He therefore caused a support to be placed in the branches of a tree

that hung just above the path, and, taking his station there, with his gun succeeded in killing several of the savage creatures.

A death from an encounter with a tiger has been reported from the town of Jamalpore. The scarcity of water in the jungle at the foot of the hills had driven a number of tigers into the plains, and several of these animals had been seen prowling about near the large railway-shops of the town. A woodcutter was carried away in open daylight, and several other persons were mauled. A fitter in one of the shops sat up near his bungalow to watch for a tiger which had been several times seen; for two nights he watched in vain, but the third night he shot at and wounded the animal. The tiger, it appeared, charged the man, who took refuge in his bungalow, whence he again fired, and again he wounded the animal. What then transpired is not certainly known, but the tiger and the man were found lying dead together. It is supposed that the man, thinking the tiger dead after his second shot, approached it incautiously, was attacked and killed.

TIGERS.

In one of the beautiful valleys of this country, two thousand feet above the sea, tigers as well as wild elephants abound. Over the mountain-pass which leads to this valley a road has been made. There are a few dwellings along the route, but this low mountain-range is for the most part the habitat of wild beasts, and tigers sometimes come down to the streams by the roadside to drink. In passing over this mountain-range after nightfall the natives of the country always carry torches.

The roar of the tiger is terrific. It is said that on the approach of a tiger, monkeys betake themselves for safety to the nearest tree. They are then out of the reach of the tiger, but not beyond his influence, for the monster, as if understanding his power, immediately begins to roar with all the strength of his lungs, and at the awful sound the little creatures are seized with trembling, until, losing their hold, they tumble from their perches upon the ground, and are quickly snapped up by the expectant animal.

A man-eating tiger is the scourge of a neighborhood, and through his depredations

whole villages are sometimes deserted, the inhabitants fleeing in dread for their lives. The tiger throws himself upon his victim with a bound, springing a distance of fifteen or twenty feet.

That a creature so savage as to be alike a terror to man and beast should be hunted is but natural. Tiger-hunting in India is a favorite and most exciting diversion; in this sport elephants in great numbers are often employed. On entering a jungle the presence of a tiger is soon made known by the conduct of the elephants, who are able to scent the enemy from a considerable distance, and who give expression to their displeasure by a peculiar sound called "trumpeting." A tiger, when made aware of the presence of a foe, will often lie quite still, hidden by the long grass, and then spring with a deafening roar upon his pursuers. So terrible is this sound that the elephants will sometimes retreat, but they speedily recover their coolness and courage and return to the attack. The tiger will sometimes spring upon the elephant, and the huge creature, shaking himself free from his ene-

my, rushes upon him, and not infrequently fastens him to the ground with his tusks.

THE LEOPARD.

In India there are several species of the leopard. One is in color a pale yellow, and is covered with clusters of small black spots; another species is a yellowish brown in color and without spots; still another is a dull black; and a fourth is a light gray, and is called the snow-leopard, as it is found only in very high altitudes and in the snowy region. Cat-like, the leopard springs upon its prey with a quick and noiseless bound. It will attack and destroy dogs, sheep and goats, monkeys, pea-fowls, and occasionally cattle and ponies. Children are sometimes carried off by leopards; and when emboldened by hunger, they will even attack men.

A gentleman was riding over one of the mountain-paths in the Himalayas one bright moonlight evening, when, as he turned a corner, he saw a huge leopard about to spring upon him. Raising himself in his saddle, he shouted with all his might, and the leopard, affrighted, leaped over a bank

and disappeared. While watching their grain at night people are sometimes attacked by leopards. A lady spending a

A LEOPARD.

season in the mountains was on her way to the house of a friend early one evening, accompanied by a favorite dog, when a leopard sprang across the path, snapped up the dog and was off in a twinkling.

A species of leopard very small and cat-like is called the hunting-leopard, because he can be trained for the chase. The leopard, when trained, is kept chained to a low

cot, and on this cot he is carried, chained and hooded, to the field. When the hunter comes within view of a herd of antelopes, the leopard is unchained and the hood is removed. As soon as the leopard catches sight of the prey he moves cautiously forward until he has approached near enough to spring, when he makes five or six bounds and leaps upon his unsuspecting victim, strangles him and drinks his blood. The hunter then approaches, and, securing a ladleful of blood, with this entices the leopard away from his prey, when he is again hooded and chained to his cot.

While visiting a friend residing in a state under the rule of a native prince we saw a number of these hunting-leopards, each chained to a little cot. Releasing one of the number, the keeper held high above his head a ladle which contained a small piece of meat. The leopard poised himself a moment, then sprang lightly and noiselessly into the air to secure the tempting morsel. This he did repeatedly, never missing his aim and always springing with the same graceful, swift and airy motion.

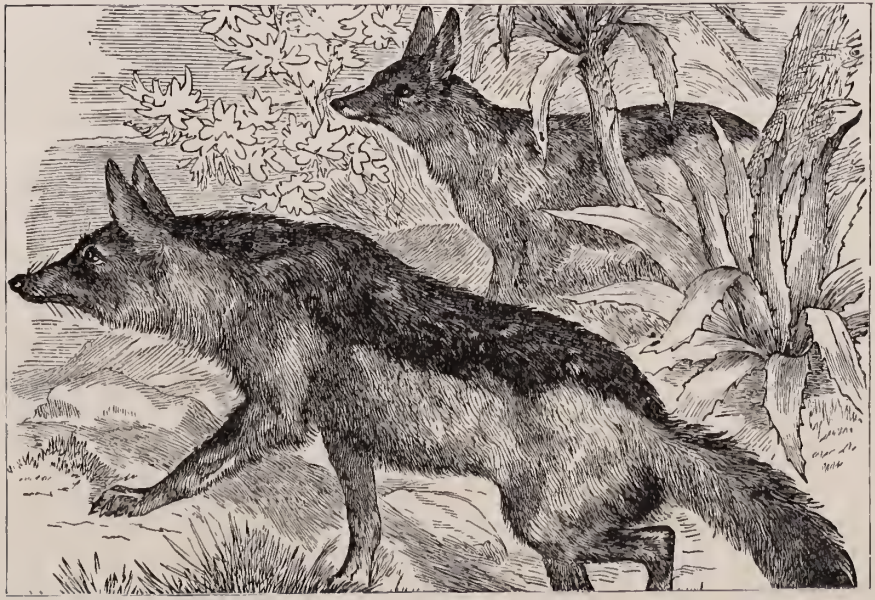
THE JACKAL.

Of the jackal little can be said to his credit. He has no beauty to recommend him, and except in his capacity of scavenger he seems a bane rather than a blessing. The jackal has the head of a wolf, a pointed nose and a tail like that of a fox. Jackals abound in Asia, and, as they move in packs and are fond of the darkness, they make night hideous with their cry, which is the most dismal that can be imagined—a sound between a wail and a bark. The first shriek is usually a signal for a general chorus. The first note is sometimes heard in the distance while the answering yell bursts forth from several points at once. In the wildest storms this dismal sound is sometimes to be heard above the uproar caused by the howling of the wind.

The jackal burrows in the ground or finds a home in the vicinity of some old ruin, and comes forth at night in quest of food. He is not dainty in his choice, and, though preferring flesh, he eats wild fruits, is fond of grapes and relishes the coffee-bean, re-

morselessly destroying what has cost much care and labor.

Jackals prowl around villages and are bold and thievish. They visit poultry-yards and commit great depredations among the feathered inhabitants. Lizards are greedily snapped up by these voracious animals; the timid hare does not escape them, and a pack headed by a bold leader will sometimes hunt down a deer. When a jackal has secured his prey, he hides it in the nearest jungle, and then comes forth to see if anything more powerful than himself is in sight. Finding the coast clear, he returns to the booty, bringing with him his companions, and carries away the prize to a place of safety, to be enjoyed at leisure. If fresh game cannot be secured, jackals feast upon carrion-flesh, and will not devour anything that has not once possessed animal life. They follow caravans, *melas* and armies and devour the dead, even scratching the earth from shallow graves. They will approach so near human habitations that the native infant children—who usually sleep in the open air during the hot season—have been car-



JACKALS.

ried off by them from the arms of their mothers. Sick people who lie helpless and friendless in the streets or who have been left on the banks of the Ganges to die are sometimes devoured by these animals.

It is supposed that in many passages in the Bible where foxes are mentioned the jackal is the animal to which the allusion is made.

CHAPTER VII.

SOME INDIAN PESTS.

THE CROW.

WHEN we landed in India we were welcomed by the cawing of a crow, and through the years that have followed we have never lost sight of this impudent and audacious bird. Its shrill cry is often the last sound we hear at night and the first in the morning.

The neck and a part of the wings of the crow are gray; the rest of the body is a bluish black and very glossy. It advances on the ground by hopping, and turns its head from side to side in a very coquettish manner.

The crow is a very wise bird, very persevering, and knows what to do in an emergency. Although so much at home under the burning sun of the tropics, it is said to be equally so in the intense cold of the

Arctic regions. It builds its nest in tall trees, but seems too much occupied in pilfering and in mischief to rear a family. Some fine old trees in our compound have given a home at night to many generations of crows. A beautiful tamarind tree with its wide-spreading leafy branches shelters a multitude of these clamorous birds. All day long they are flying hither and thither, but at night they return in flocks, looking like a swiftly-moving black cloud, screaming and chattering as they fly, as if striving which first should reach a place of shelter and rest. When settled on their perches, they caw and scream to one another from tree to tree, as if asking the news of the day—what adventures have been met with, what dangers encountered and averted and what success in foraging. With the first flash of dawn the crows are awake. "Good-mornings" are quickly exchanged, the work of the day is marked out, and then, with much fuss and flutter, they soar away like a great army, but at length separate into companies; and the work of the day is begun.

Crows are remorseless thieves and make great havoc. Visiting the fields of the farmer, they devour the freshly-sown seeds in such quantities that the helpless husbandman, when planting his fields, is forced to make allowance for their depredations. They are bold, and it is not easy to fight them. The report of a gun will startle them for a moment. They will wheel round and round, caw most impudently, and then defiantly proceed to carry on their work of destruction.

The crow takes a particular delight in hiding anything that is bright and shining. A lady was one morning giving directions to a servant, when a crow darted through the open door and carried away a silver fork from the breakfast-table. On another occasion a nurse sitting in the garden with her charge was startled by seeing a large knife covered with blood drop at her feet. The mystery was soon solved, for the cook came rushing from the kitchen in search of his property. He had been engaged in chopping meat, and, turning from his work for a moment, a waiting crow had taken ad-

vantage of the interruption and darted off with his knife, dropping it in its flight.

In India breakfast is usually served at a late hour, but before entering upon the work of the day a cup of tea and a slice of toast are provided. If taken to the veranda that the freshness of the early morning may be enjoyed, the crows immediately cluster around; and if for a moment the head be turned, a watching crow takes advantage of the opportunity to secure a breakfast. The baker brings the bread to the house in a basket carried on his head. If not carefully covered, the crows help themselves to a breakfast-roll or a bun. Fruit-venders also carry their baskets of fruit upon their heads, and as they pass along crows often wheel in the air above them, watching for a chance to abstract a banana or a guava. On account of the excessive heat in India food is not prepared in the principal dwelling, but in a little house apart, and as the cook passes to and fro, he has interested spectators in the crows, who follow his flittings, hoping by hook or crook to secure a dinner.

A gentleman once saw a crow hopping

GETTING A BREAKFAST.

back and forth before a chained dog to which a bone had been thrown. By many little devices the crow tried to attract the attention of the dog, but for wise reasons the dog refused to be diverted. The crow at length flew away, but soon returned with a companion. The first crow took his station on the ground in front of the dog, as before, hopping about and cawing in a very familiar, sociable way. The second crow commenced wheeling in the air in an apparently aimless way, but suddenly swooped down and with his strong beak struck the unsuspecting dog with great force upon the spine. The dog, starting with surprise and pain, lifted his paws and his jaws for a moment from his precious bone. That moment was the golden opportunity for which Mistress Crow had evidently been watching, and, seizing the bone, she flew away with the prize, followed by her companion, cawing in victory, while the poor dog was left with a smarting back and breakfastless.

We saw one evening a little native boy wearily climbing a tree in the yard.

"What are you going to do?" was asked of the boy.

"Get my cap," he answered, "which a crow has just snatched from my head and carried to the top of this tree. Don't you see it away up there among the branches?"

We often see crows standing on the backs of cows, buffaloes or goats. These animals suffer much annoyance from the presence of ticks and other insects. They are not able to rid themselves of these pests, and the crows—not from any benevolent motives, I am afraid—with their sharp eyes find these troublesome visitors and transfer them from the backs of their friends to their own stomachs. So there is at least one little bit of good that crows do, although even this is done selfishly; they give comfort to the poor suffering beasts by relieving them of the most troublesome annoyances. Perhaps some people in the United States would not object if crows could be taught to pick off the mosquitoes in the summer days that are so persistent in their malicious work.

THE WHITE ANT.

Ants seem a "feeble folk," yet the white ant is one of the greatest annoyances of life in India. It not only destroys what is placed upon the ground, but devours the very houses in which we live. In the construction of an Indian house but little wood is used because of this small but terrible enemy. The floors are made of cement, but even through this the soft white ant makes its way. The walls of the houses in some parts of India are built chiefly of clay and are made very thick to exclude the heat. Such houses have an outer facing of sun-dried bricks. Though so rudely built, these houses, when plastered and whitewashed, are quite neat in appearance. The roofs of many of them are covered with a very thick thatch. To this thatch the white ant will force its way through the clay walls and will eat great holes, filling the spaces with honeycombed masses of clay. This is quickly dissolved by the rain, and not infrequently falls in streams of mud into the rooms below. Walls of very old houses be-

come so perforated by these little insects as to be unsafe. The great beams of the house which bind it together and upon which the roof rests are sometimes completely riddled by the white ants. The outside of such beams is usually painted; this painted surface the wise little creatures do not disturb, so that a beam may appear fair upon the outside, while within it is a network of clay and the tougher fibres of the wood. For this reason it is necessary occasionally to examine the beams of a house to know that they are sound and safe.

Not long ago the timbers supporting a large room in the house of a friend gave way. The lady was ill at the time, and was greatly alarmed when she heard the terrible crash which shook all the building. She thought of her husband and her dear little children, and feared that they had perished, for the room into which the timbers had fallen was one in constant use; but at the time it was quite empty, so no one was injured, though most of the furniture was broken and ruined. The white ants had destroyed the beams, eating out the heart

of them and leaving only the shell, thus weakening them, until the weight resting upon them was more than they could bear.

If a box containing clothing, books, stores, or anything softer than stone or metal, be left upon the floor of the dwelling, in one night the contents will sometimes be ruined. Bookcases are not placed quite against the wall of a room, but at a little distance from it; and so of every other article of furniture.

The white ant will destroy the bark of the largest tree if left undisturbed. Plants in the garden do not escape. We see a promising rose tree drooping, and an examination reveals the white ants at the root. When these remorseless insects mark an object for destruction, they spread over it a thin covering of clay, beneath which is a network of arches in which they pass and repass each other. As fast as the contents of a bookcase or a chest are destroyed these wonderful creatures fill the interstices with clay. Opening a case in the library one day, I took from one of the shelves a volume the covers of which

were in perfect condition, but the leaves between had entirely disappeared, and the space had been filled with clay.

A lady in India received from her friends at home a box of valuable clothing; after examining and admiring the beautiful things she replaced them. Opening the box some time after to take from it a needed article, she was surprised to find the top of it covered with clay. Upon examination, the lady found the entire box filled with the network of clay, which the white ants had left in exchange for the goodly garments, which they had altogether destroyed.

Having occasion one morning to call at a printing-establishment in the city, we found the managers standing disconsolately over some boxes which had just been opened, and from which they had expected to take out a supply of paper for work waiting to be done; but the white ants had been there before them, and had left only clay and tatters.

When an article is placed some distance from the wall, these household pests, in order to reach it, will sometimes build out

little pipes of clay, thus preparing a covered-way to the article they intend to destroy. In this manner pictures are often ruined. The use of the clay and the building of these bridges, besides other shrewd and cunning things these ants do, illustrate their wonderful instinct.

As regards housekeeping in India, it is emphatically true that "eternal vigilance is the price of" safety.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MELA, OR RELIGIOUS FAIR, IN INDIA.

ALLAHABAD, the city that was for many years our home, stands at the junction of two great rivers, the Ganges and the Jumna. The name signifies "city of God," and was bestowed upon it by Akbar, one of the great Mogul emperors. Here he built a fine fort; over this fort the British flag now floats, and British soldiers keep watch and ward where once the troops of the proud Mohammedan emperor were the guardians, and English matrons and maidens dwell beneath the roofs that once sheltered the dark-eyed beauties of Akbar's royal household. During the terrible mutiny of 1857 many of the European residents of Allahabad took refuge in the fort, and there found shelter until peace was restored.

To the Hindu, Allahabad is known as Prayag, and, being situated at the junction of two sacred rivers, is regarded as one of the sacred cities of India. At the confluence of these two rivers is a wide sandy plain, and here, during the cold season of every year, is held a great religious fair. Even before the time appointed for this important festival all the roads leading to Allahabad are more or less crowded with pilgrims. They come from all parts of this vast empire—the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay, men, women and children.

Formerly the great majority of pilgrims arrived on foot, but now that a network of railroads is spread over India, touching many of the important cities, a large proportion of the strangers take advantage of the cheap and easy means of transport thus afforded.

SCENES AT THE FAIR.

On one occasion we drove down to the grounds on one of the great days of the fair. The roads were full of people, many

on foot, some riding small ponies, others—chiefly women and children—in large carts drawn by the beautiful white oxen of the country. These carts were usually covered with a gay cloth, and through openings the inmates peeped curiously out. Many wealthy and ease-loving Hindu gentlemen were in palanquins borne on the shoulders of men. Now a handsome English carriage swept by with outriders in gorgeous livery, and with all the pomp and parade so pleasant to the people of the Orient. Here was an old woman, bent and withered, leaning on her staff. Such a pilgrim a missionary once met on her way to the Ganges; from the end of a stick resting upon one of her shoulders was suspended a small red bag.

"What are you carrying, my friend?" asked the missionary.

"My husband, sir," was the somewhat startling answer.

The poor woman's husband had died so far from the sacred stream that the body could not be committed to its keeping. It had, therefore, been consumed by fire and

the ashes sacredly preserved, to be cast into the river on some future occasion.

None of the pilgrims came to the fair empty-handed, for the numerous priests in attendance do not serve for naught.

Among the pilgrims was a man slowly and painfully measuring his length along the ground. He bowed himself to the earth, then rose again, placed his feet where his forehead had touched the ground, and then once more prostrated himself. This he had perhaps continued for weeks—possibly for months—and he expected to acquire great merit because of his self-inflicted torture.

We reached, at length, a point beyond which carriages could not advance. It was difficult to make our way even with an escort. We climbed to an eminence and looked down upon the plain between the two great rivers. What crowds of people! and what prodigality of color! Had there been a shower of rainbows? How perfectly in keeping with the dazzling sunlight, the intense blue of the sky and the soft air seemed these brilliant hues! Not a

AKBAR'S FORT, ALLAHABAD.

cloud flitted across the sky, but the atmosphere was charged with a fine white dust. The ubiquitous crow was there, for these festivals furnish rare opportunities for the exercise of the thieving propensities for which this bird is distinguished. Now a bevy of brilliant-plumaged paraquets went scudding by with noisy demonstration; then a vulture rose noiselessly into the air. On the right was Akbar's fort, the sun lighting up its gray walls and turrets.

The view from the fort is very beautiful. On one side is the Ganges; on the other side, rushing to meet this stream, is the clearer Jumna. Native villages are scattered here and there, and, half hidden by leafy trees, their poverty is not apparent. Here, tall columns rise; there, the swelling domes of some ancient tombs. On one side is the graceful spire of a Christian church; on the other are the minarets of a mosque or the glittering pinnacles of a heathen temple.

Through the kindness of a friend we were provided with an elephant on which to make a tour of the grounds. Obedient to

the command of his keeper, who sat astride his huge neck, the great creature kneeled, and remained almost motionless while a ladder was placed against his sides and we mounted to our place. Slowly the elephant rose when the order was given, and moved majestically forward. A policeman made a passage for us through the crowd, and our wise and patient elephant seemed almost human in his care not to injure those in the throng who pressed against him.

The fair-ground was a world in itself. A new city of straw huts had sprung up as if by magic; and though this is a religious gathering, yet it is also a place where the native dealer is ready to drive a hard bargain. There were shops for the sale of fruit, of grain and of vegetables. Cloth-merchants were there, dealers in brass and copper utensils, ivory carvings, native jewelry, such ornaments as the women in Eastern lands prize—bracelets for the arms, rings for the ears, the nose, and even the toes, bands for the ankles, ornaments for the head and circlets for the neck. Idols were temptingly displayed, great ones and

small, of stone, of brass, of marble, and even of clay, fantastically painted. There were fragrant flowers for offerings, and the pigments of which the Hindus in their worship make much use, as also other things which I cannot enumerate.

Many of the strangers live on the grounds during their sojourn at the fair. Some have the protection of a straw hut, but many are without shelter. We saw one woman composedly kneading dough in a wooden bowl; this dough she made into thin cakes, which she baked on a fire of coals and then distributed to her household.

One part of the grounds was devoted to the fakirs, or religious mendicants, twenty thousand of whom were said to be present. With long matted hair and with bodies nearly destitute of clothing and covered with ashes, they seemed to possess little claim to sanctity. Among this class were men torturing themselves in various ways. Several were standing on pointed nails driven through boards; others were sitting in a circle of fire; others, standing on one foot, and others, again, with an arm uplifted, mo-

tionless and rigid from having been kept long in one position. These men were all supposed to be above the influence of bodily pain, and won from the admiring spectators not only praise, but gifts, to which they were by no means indifferent.

Beggars also abounded; not only were the very poor there, but the maimed, the halt, the blind and the loathsome leper. The enterprising, money-loving Parsee—the Jew of the land—was there with a theatre, a temporary structure remarkable chiefly for its size. The venture had not proved a success, we were told; the play did not "draw." And what wonder? for the assembled multitudes, chiefly strangers, did not lack for amusement: the whole outside world was to them a theatre.

Not far from this playhouse were the white tents of the missionaries of two or three denominations, and there, by both the foreign missionary and the native helpers, Christ was preached. Tracts, religious books and the Holy Scriptures in the languages of the people were distributed or sold, and many who did not care to listen to

the words of the preachers took home words of truth to be read and pondered amid less exciting scenes. By these means much seed was sown, and some, we doubt not, fell into good ground.

Pennants were streaming from all parts of the grounds. Each had its own device and was the standard of a priest, around which his followers rallied. Bands of music were playing, and everything wore a festive look. A large and gay umbrella borne by obsequious attendants marked the passage through the throng of some person of distinction. Elephants were going and returning, some bearing mere spectators like ourselves; on others, in haughty state, sat nearly nude fakirs.

As we approached the water's edge we saw a man lying dead; a little group had gathered about the prostrate form, but the crowd, unheeding, rushed on. Near the point where the pilgrims went down to bathe was a great company of barbers; four hundred men of this craft were said to be in attendance. Their presence on these occasions is considered essential, for the

devout Hindu is shaved before immersing his body in the sacred waters. This is an important part of the ceremony. The heads of the males are shaved, and I have been told, also, the heads of widows. From the head of a wife it is considered sufficient to sever a lock or two. To receive the full benefit of this pious act the hair thus shorn from the body should be cast into the sacred waters, but there has been a complaint that, instead, it is sold to traders who deal in human hair, and who export it to Calcutta and Bombay, and thence to Europe. When the pilgrim has bathed, he pays a visit to the chief places of sanctity, and as an indispensable part of the ceremony makes offerings to the priests.

Turning back from the water's edge, we encountered a procession of fakirs. There is said to be much rivalry among those holy men, and in such a procession due regard is paid to *precedence*. Gayly-caparisoned elephants, camels and horses led the procession, while pennons floated out, grotesque in design and gorgeous in color. The great cavalcade filed past amid

the clang of native instruments of music. The noise of the surging crowd was like the sound of the sea. On rushed the throng, leaping, dancing, shouting.

When such multitudes come together from great distances to take part in such religious festivals, and when these festivals are held in all parts of India, we can form some faint idea of the hold which the religions of the country have upon the popular mind. But India, as well as all other heathen lands, shall yet own allegiance to the one true God; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

CHAPTER IX.

A GLIMPSE OF TENT-LIFE IN INDIA.

AS the inhabitants of those lands where for nearly half the year winter holds rigorous sway note with peculiar pleasure the signs of returning spring, so do we dwellers in this fervid clime welcome the coming of the delightful cold season. Kept prisoners for long months by the excessive heat, joyfully do we throw open our doors to the pleasant breezes, and delicious is the sense of freedom when we can venture abroad even at noonday.

Neither during the summer months, nor yet during the rainy season, can the missionary leave his home to preach to the people in the distant villages, as there are no hospitable abodes where he may be sure of a welcome. When he makes a tour in the district, he must carry his house with

him; and, as his portable dwelling is but a canvas tent, it affords little protection against the fierce heat of an Indian summer or the heavy rains of the monsoon season. The missionary, therefore, seeks, as far as is consistent with other duties, to utilize the cold season in visiting villages in the district in order to carry the gospel to those who will not come to him.

First in order comes the work of preparation. Tents are brought out, rents are repaired, missing ropes and pegs are supplied, and the whole is made into suitable packages. Folding beds, tables and chairs are examined as to their ability to maintain an upright position when required to do so; boxes are stored with necessary provisions. and everything is made ready for housekeeping in a very primitive style. Nor are books omitted. When all things have been prepared, carts are brought—great, ungainly vehicles with ponderous wooden wheels and drawn by bullocks not unlike the kine of the Egyptian monarch's dream, very "ill-favored and lean-fleshed."

Upon two such primitive carts our pos-

sessions were piled one lovely day in the month of December—a miscellaneous collection, tents, furniture, boxes, bundles and baskets. The carts, with the servants, were despatched in the morning. We followed several hours later in a closed conveyance of a fashion peculiar to India and drawn by one horse. We crossed in our journey the fine railway-bridge which spans the river Jumna, a massive structure measuring three thousand two hundred and seventy-eight feet between abutments—one of the triumphs of engineering skill in India. The river crossed, we drove nine miles over a good road through a beautiful country, through meadows green as in summer-time at home. There were fields of wheat, and also of pulse, of which there are several varieties. We saw beds of the poppy, and also of the castor-oil plant, which here grow in perfection.

So slowly had the carts crept along that we arrived at our destination before our encampment was in readiness. A fine mango-grove had been selected as our camping-ground, and every one was busy.

A man whose special vocation it was swept the ground; this he did with a handful of bamboo splints tied together. The water-carrier sallied forth with his water-bottle slung over his shoulder to obtain a supply of water. The cook selected a convenient place for his base of operations, and with a small instrument resembling a trowel began loosening the earth; over this loosened earth the water-carrier, upon his return, poured water from the mouth of the leather "bottle." The moist earth was then moulded into shape, and soon a number of little semicircular walls were built up, and a range for the cook was shortly in readiness. The tents were speedily pitched, the furniture was arranged and books and maps were in their places.

The road from a large native town passed near the grove in which we were encamped, and we heard constantly the hum of human voices. Some of the passers-by stopped to ask what *sahib*, or European, had come among them. Women bearing heavy loads of wood upon their heads came to the encampment. The cook bargained for a sup-

WOMEN WITH WATER-JARS.

ply of fuel, and while he counted out the price the tired woman sat down on the ground for a moment's rest.

Carts laden with women and children went creaking by; they had been to the Ganges, which flowed by the town, to bathe, and as they returned to their homes they were chanting a hymn in honor of their gods. Other carts went by laden with grain or cotton on their way to the railway-station; then a train of bullocks followed with panniers heavily laden. Many of these animals wore around the neck a string of little bells, which tinkled not unmusically. Women with water-jars poised upon their heads trooped along, the ornaments encircling their ankles tinkling as they moved. On a rude bier a dead man was carried to the Ganges, followed by a little company of mourners.

Late in the afternoon the missionary and his helpers went to the large town not far from the encampment to carry the glad tidings to the people, and soon a company gathered about the speakers. Some listened quietly, others were disposed to

cavil; some treated lightly the sacred message, and a few appeared much interested. Portions of Scripture and books and tracts in the languages of the people were offered for sale, the price asked not representing the value of the book, but enough to give it some worth in the eyes of the purchaser. The people are fond of music, and are pleased when singing is introduced.

Night after night in some village at a convenient distance from the encampment such meetings were held. At these evening gatherings the missionary frequently makes use of a sciopticon or a superior magic-lantern to attract the people. Sitting about in the darkness, the work of the day over, they are pleased to see flash through the gloom upon a white wall or a screen a picture Oriental in scene and brilliant in color—the prodigal son, the ten virgins, the raising of the widow's son, the giving of the law or the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness—and they listen not only patiently, but with marked interest, to the story it represents. Not infrequently, under cover of the darkness, great numbers of

women join the audience, while to the children and the young people these object-lessons are always a peculiar attraction. Carrying the picture in memory, they naturally link with it the words of the preacher.

Two large villages not far removed from our encampment enjoy the distinction of being known as "bazaar-towns." In each of these villages a market is held two days in the week. These market-days are important occasions to the people. Those living in the country and in the smaller villages bring at these times such articles as they have for sale—grain of various kinds, sugar-cane, cotton, thread spun by the women of the households, coarse cloth, spices, tobacco. The potter comes with his wares, and the vessels moulded by his skillful hand are of various designs, and many of them are exceedingly graceful in shape. The ironmonger also is there, and the dealer in bright brass.

The open square where the market is held is indeed a lively spot during the hours of traffic. Those who bring mer-

chandise for sale are usually purchasers as well. Long before you reach the spot you hear the buzz of the multitude, and upon a nearer approach the sound becomes almost deafening.

These occasions when the people from the country and the surrounding villages are gathered together furnish excellent opportunities for preaching the gospel. Even in the midst of so much confusion and shrewd bargaining there are always many at leisure—mere lookers-on, or those who, having transacted the business for which they have come, are at liberty to seek a new interest. At such times books find ready purchasers. One man selects for himself a book, attracted by its title; another is pleased with a book or a tract handsomely illustrated, and remembers a bright-eyed boy at home who would prize such a volume; and thus into many homes are carried words of truth.

What glorious nights we had, the moon shining in splendor! and when her face was hidden, the heavens were radiant with starry glory. But the nights were far from

silent. Jackals were abroad, making the darkness hideous with their cries; owls hooted in the branches above us, and other feathery denizens of the gloom made riot, while dogs without masters—homeless curs, lank and ill-favored—prowled about, intent on plunder. With the dawn these unwelcome visitants vanished, save the dogs, and they were always present.

Early in the morning of each day the missionary and his helpers went forth to sow the good seed—perhaps to a distant village; and wherever they could find an audience, whether under the shade of a tree by the roadside or in the village itself, they were ready to speak. In this way the morning hours were spent until the increasing heat warned them that it was time to seek the shelter of their tents. Breakfast and worship followed. The hours during the heat of the day were devoted to study, to reading, writing, translating or the entertainment of visitors, who came, some from curiosity to see how Europeans live, some to purchase books or to inquire more closely concerning the things which they had

heard. Then, as the day wore to its close, the missionary and his helpers again went forth to perform their labors of love; and thus day after day passed.

When the wife of a missionary accompanies her husband, she is sometimes able to take with her the wife of a native helper, and in her company visits the homes of the villagers and tries to tell the women who gather about her of the Lord who loves them and who died to save them. Unaccustomed as are the women in the country to the sight of Europeans, it is less difficult to gain access to them if accompanied by one of their own people.

Occasionally, in the early morning, I rode out beyond the town to the river's bank, where were two or three temples. About one of these I usually found a group of well-dressed women and a troop of bright-eyed little maidens, daughters come with their mothers to worship. Each one brought an offering—a handful of rice, a little flour, a few copper coins or a wreath of fragrant white blossoms. If I stopped to talk with the women, they listened atten-

tively; but the priest showed his displeasure by frowning darkly.

A conspicuous object in the middle of one of the roads not far from our encampment was a great well surrounded by a wide platform of masonry; women were constantly going to or returning from this well. With a water-jar poised upon one shoulder or resting upon her head, her *chadar*—a sheet-like covering—wrapped gracefully about her head, her anklets and the ornaments upon her unshod feet tinkling as she walked along,—such a woman made a truly Oriental picture, a bit of Bible history illustrated. On the platform of this well, tired travelers sat to rest.

Passing a house one day, I heard from within the sound of weeping, and stopped to inquire the cause.

"It is nothing," was answered. "A bride is going to the home of her husband."

On such occasions the bride loudly laments and clings to the friends she is about to leave, while they tenderly console her. The bride weeps—not only because her grief is so great, but because it is the

GOING TO THE WELL.

custom to do so; and if she failed to make a show of grief, she would be regarded as lacking in natural affection.

One morning in my ride I came upon a very large and fine tank, and close beside it was a temple ornamented with handsome stone carvings. From the swelling dome of the temple a young tree was growing. Some seed wafted by the wind or carried by a bird in the air had found lodgment there, and the roots of the young tree, feeling their way through the crevices, were gradually accomplishing the ruin of the shrine. I dismounted and entered the temple to examine the interior, and no objection was made when I crossed the threshold into the sacred place where the hideous idol was enshrined. The loungers about said to me in explanation,

"Few worship here now, and the temple is falling into decay. It was built," they added, "by a wealthy banker, who had also made the great tank beside it."

This man had long since died, and no one cared to keep in repair what had cost so much treasure, as, since both temple and

tank bore the name of the dead banker, to him would accrue all the merit.

A missionary usually spends several days in one encampment. During one morning two or three villages may be visited, and the word there be preached. Other villages are visited in the afternoon and evening, and so from day to day the work goes on until the missionary and his helpers have preached once, and perhaps two or three times, in all the villages that can be reached from the encampment. In this way much seed is sown, and some of it bears fruit.

During our first cold season in India it was our privilege to accompany two of our missionaries on an itineration. For some days our tents were pitched in a grove near several villages, none of which had before been visited by a Christian missionary. One of the villagers, at that time knowing nothing of Jesus, has been for several years a most useful preacher, finding his highest happiness in making known to his countrymen the Saviour he has found.

Sitting in our tent at night, alone, but not lonely, there sometimes broke upon my ears

the sweet sound of Christian hymns sung by the helpers—precious words of truth set to native airs. It was a delightful sound, and I thought how different would be the condition of India, socially, physically and morally, as well as spiritually, were her heathen songs exchanged for the praises of Immanuel.

CHAPTER X.

EASTERN CUSTOMS.

SINCE we have lived among a people whose manners and customs resemble so nearly the manners and customs of the East when the Bible was written, the Bible has seemed to us a new book, and its parables and illustrations have had a deeper and clearer signification.

In the part of India in which we live the grain ripens during the cold season and is cut in March—not with machines cunningly made and in eager haste, as in some countries, but with sickles. The reapers are often women, and the work is performed in a most leisurely manner; for in the season of harvest there is little fear of storms, one bright day following another with scarce a cloud to dim the brightness of the glowing sun. Near our house a field of grain be-

longing to some villager has ripened. We have watched the reapers at their work, and now the store of gathered grain is laid upon the threshing-floor and is being trodden out by oxen, the patient animals driven in a circle over this floor. The Israelites were commanded not to muzzle the ox while treading out the corn, but in India the muzzle is often used. As the work of threshing the grain goes on the entire mass is occasionally turned; when the grain has been sufficiently trodden, it is tossed against the wind. By this process the straw and the chaff are blown away, while the grain falls to the ground. I have often seen the husbandman standing with a shallow basket filled with grain waiting patiently for a favoring breeze.

Water for household purposes is brought in a leathern "bottle." Just such "bottles" are now in use in India as are mentioned in the Bible; they are made of the skins of animals, the skin of the goat being most frequently used. The water is poured into the skin at the aperture in the neck. The "bottle" is then securely tied and slung across the back of the water-carrier. In a country

EASTERN WATER MERCHANT.

where the heat is so intense as in India the services of no class of men are in greater demand than are those of the water-bearer, who is held in high regard by the people, his name, (*bihishti*) signifying "of or belonging to Paradise." In some cities the water-carrier, as he passes along the street bending beneath his load, strikes a small brass cup, which he carries poised upon one of his fingers, with a bit of metal, which is fastened to another finger, thus producing a tinkling sound by which he attracts attention to his precious store.

Sometimes wealthy Hindus, in order to lay up for themselves a large store of merit, plant a grove, build a rest-house for wayfarers or dig a well on a public road. A traveler in India usually carries with him a small brass vessel and a long, strong cord, with which he can draw water from a public well to quench his thirst. Without such provision he is in just the condition in which the woman of Samaria found the Saviour when she said to him, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep."

Frequently a wealthy and devout Hindu

will employ a Brahman or Brahmans to give water to thirsty travelers as they journey. We often see such men on much-frequented roads, protected from the sun by a thatched hut and surrounded by jars filled with water. For such a service Brahmans are employed, because of the bondage of caste by which the natives of India are enthralled. As a Brahman is a man of the highest caste, all can take water from his hands, but on no account would His Lordship come in contact with a person of inferior caste. Should such a man ask water from him, the Brahman would pour it from his own vessel into the cup of the traveler or into the man's joined hands as he knelt before him, at the same time holding himself at a distance lest even his garments should be defiled.

When traveling in the Himalayas, we have seen the skins of animals used as receptacles for grain. The skins employed for this purpose are those of large animals, as the buffalo, while the skins of goats or of kids are used for flour.

We often see two women grinding at a

mill. Two circular stones are placed upon the ground, one above another. In the upper one there is a handle. The women sit opposite each other, with one hand keeping the upper stone in motion, and with the other putting the grain into a small aperture in the centre of the stone. This work is very laborious, and is regarded as menial; it is, therefore, performed by servants, except in the households of the poor. It is usually the first work of the day, and therefore the earliest sound we hear in the morning is often the sound of the grinding.

In the first chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah is an enumeration of ornaments corresponding very nearly with the ornaments in use by the women of India at the present time. Very fond are Indian ladies of the tinkling ornaments about their feet, the chains, the bracelets, the earrings, the rings and the nose-jewels, the glasses and the veils. I have seen the young daughters in wealthy families almost covered with jewels, and very proud were the little maidens of their ornaments.

In Genesis we read that as the patriarch

WOMEN AT THE MILL.

Abraham sat in his tent door in the heat of the day he lifted his eyes and saw two men standing by his side. He knew not that they were angels sent unto him with glad tidings, but, with true Eastern politeness, he welcomed them cordially, entreating them to tarry until they had refreshed themselves. His first act of hospitality toward his stranger-guests was to offer them water with which to wash their feet. This custom still prevails in India. One day, while visiting the ladies of a native household, a friend of the family arrived. She was hospitably welcomed by the inmates of the zenana, one of whom ran at once and brought water, which was poured over her feet.

Nothing is more common in India than to see persons carrying their beds. A company of travelers passing through a part of the country where there are strangers will sometimes, when night overtakes them, spread under a tree by the roadside the mats they have brought with them, and, wrapping themselves in the garments with which they have been girded by day, will

HINDU BURIAL.

sleep undisturbed until the morning, when, again girding themselves for travel, rolling together the mat upon which they have slept and securing it in the same bundle with their other scanty possessions, they will continue their journey.

The road passing in front of our bungalow leads to the Ganges. When the doors are thrown open, a sound of bitter wailing is sometimes borne to our ears, and, looking out, we see a funeral procession on its way to the sacred river. The body, wrapped in a new cloth, is laid upon a bed or a rude bier made of bamboo, over which have been spread straw and a piece of new cloth. Four men carry the bier to the river or place of burning, and repeat, as they move rapidly along, "Ram is true! Ram is true!" Following the bier are the friends of the deceased making bitter lamentations.

These sad funeral processions often bring to mind the New-Testament account of the company that gathered around the widow of Nain when with breaking heart she followed her only son to his burial. In India, when a body is taken to the river or

to the place of burning, the procession halts at least once on the journey to perform some idolatrous ceremonies. That funeral procession at Nain was stopped by the Lord himself, his heart full of compassion for the mourner so stricken. He touched the bier and spoke to the young man whose ears death had stopped: the voice divine gave life to the dead—gave back to the mourning mother her son. When she passed outside the city gate, followed by a great company of sympathizing friends, her heart was desolate, her last earthly treasure torn from her grasp; when she passed through the gate of the city on her return-journey, she was once more a happy, rejoicing mother, and the sounds of lamentation were changed to shouts of rejoicing.

CHAPTER XI.

SOME SUPERSTITIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA.

THE life of a Hindu, from its beginning to its close, is hedged about with restrictions innumerable. Caste throws about him fetters from whose bondage he feels there is no escape. If born a Brahman, he accepts his position as his right. He does not even, as the Pharisee, thank God that he is not as other men; for is not he himself God? He goes through life, from the cradle to the grave, with a haughty disregard for those beneath him; their sorrows and their sufferings move him not. His world is another world from that in which the common herd live and move; his highest ambition is to keep himself from pollution with the unhallowed creatures about him, and to exact from them the deference due a being so exalted.

WORSHIPING A BRAHMAN.

A man of low caste has never an aspiration above the scale of his birth. Have not the gods so decreed it? and what is he, that he should rebel against fate? He will worship, as becomes one of his low estate, the lordly Brahman, and perchance in some future birth he may be other than the despised creature he is at present.

The Hindu is in bondage to the grossest superstitions. Superstition enters into the warp and the woof of his daily life. He is met on the very threshold of existence by this intolerant master, and to the end of life must serve him with rigor. Soon after the birth of a child the family priest or astrologer is called and the horoscope of the child is cast, and thus is forged the first link in the chain which will bind hand and foot its unresisting victim.

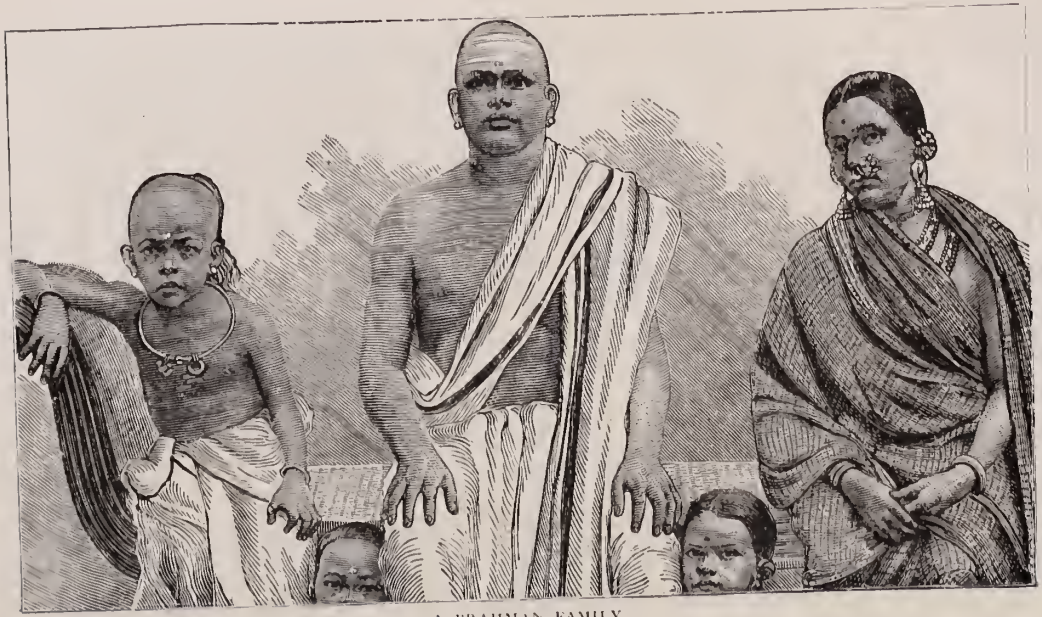
A Hindu is not free, in the more important matters of life, to act as inclination or judgment may dictate, nor is he less a slave to superstition and cunningly-devised fables in minor matters. No orthodox Hindu sets out upon a journey until he has first consulted a priest to ascertain if the time pro-

posed be auspicious. Should the decision be adverse, he tarries at home until he can go forth assured that his journey will be a prosperous one.

When a father desires to arrange a marriage for his daughter, and the friends and relatives have made choice of a person whom they regard as suitable, the family priest is consulted, and a copy of the horo scope of the intended bridegroom is pu into his hands. The priest gravely compares this with the horoscope of the bride expectant. Should he find that the stars of the horoscope of the intended bridegroom are more powerful than are those of the girl's horoscope, he declares that the marriage will be auspicious; if otherwise, no matter how great may be the disappointment of the parties concerned, he does not hesitate to communicate the unwelcome intelligence.

When a Hindu leaves his home on some errand of business or of pleasure and is obliged to turn back, he regards that as an ill omen and patiently busies himself at home for a time before he again sets out.

The morning must be an anxious time to a credulous Hindu, for upon the sights that meet his eyes, the sounds that greet his ears, the creatures that cross his pathway, depends the success or the failure of the day's undertakings. Eyes and ears are therefore alert. If on the street, intent on business, or at home, occupied with his accustomed duties, he hears a person sneeze, he for a moment halts in his walk or pauses in his work. Failing to do this, he could not hope for success. To meet in the morning a person of bad reputation portends evil. If, therefore, during the day a Hindu meets with misfortune, he exclaims, "Alas! what wretch's face did my eyes fall upon as I went forth this morning?" The cry of a jackal, heard at dawn, conveys to the Hindu the assurance that a death has just occurred. The monkey is regarded by the Hindus as sacred, yet it is esteemed a misfortune to hear the name of this animal mentioned in the morning, as that portends hunger, and by a Hindu a full stomach is regarded as one of the supreme delights of existence. A merchant will not sell



A BRAHMAN FAMILY.

to his most valued friend the smallest article on credit should that friend chance to be his first customer in the morning; to do this would be to invite ill-luck for the entire day. He therefore insists that his first sale in the morning shall be a cash sale; he is then ready to serve his friend, waiting his pleasure for payment.

If a snake or a jackal or a cat chance to cross the path of a Hindu, he is disturbed; for evil, he is sure, will betide him. To meet a person afflicted with blindness or a leper or one deformed or a widow also augurs misfortune. When a Hindu hears a crow cawing in a withered tree, he sighs, "Now I know that some evil is about to befall me." A fox crosses his path, and his heart is light; for this is a harbinger of good. He sees a lizard light on a passer-by and run nimbly up his body, and he moves forward with spirits elated, for this little creature is to him a messenger of blessing. He hears a bride cry as she is leaving the home of her parents for the home of her husband: this is an auspicious omen. A Brahman passes him bearing a vessel filled with

water from the Ganges, and he feels that he has received a benediction. As he is leaving his door in the morning the music of a temple-gong strikes on his ear, and his heart is glad; for a day thus ushered in is sure to be a successful day.

An owl hoots in the night, and terror seizes the Hindu; for the owl is a bird of ill-omen—a sure harbinger of death—and with affrighted cries the unwelcome visitor is put to flight. The Hindu fancies that this bird waits and watches to do him evil; a child's name is, therefore, never mentioned at night, lest an owl should hear it, and this hateful bird would, it is thought, repeat it every night, and the child, the innocent victim of its evil influence, would pine away and die. The word *sámp*, "a snake," is never spoken by a Hindu at night; to do this would, according to his superstition, bring the dreaded creature near. The word "wolf" for the same reason, is only pronounced in the daytime.

The Hindustani word *bujhánd* means "to extinguish." The Hindus use it in reference to fire, but not in reference to a lamp,

though it applies equally to both. To apply it to the latter would, they are taught to believe, bring upon a family the direst of evils —the death of the husband and father, the lamp or light of the household.

One Hindu woman never says to another, "Your child looks well and strong." The child may be in perfect health, plump and full of happy life, but the visitor, if she would please the mother, says, "Your child seems languid and looks thin and ill." To speak of the beauty or the fine condition of a child would make the mother tremble and fill her heart with fear lest the evil eye, cast upon her darling, should bring disaster.

Upon entering a house or when sitting down, a Hindu removes his shoes; but should one shoe, as it is laid aside, fall upon the other, he does not suffer it to remain thus, because this would impel him to travel, and to prevent such a necessity the offending shoe is instantly removed.

The greatest festival of the Bengalee Hindus is held in honor of their goddess Doorga; she is supposed to return to her

THE GODDESS DOORGA.

father's house at this time with her three children. Wealthy Hindus have a representation of the goddess in clay, and carry

ORIENTAL PUTTING OFF HIS SHOES.

out the whole of the ceremony in grand style. It lasts but one or two days, after which the idols are cast into the river. From

the water, or *through* the water, the goddess is supposed to go back to her husband, who is believed to live beyond the Himalayas.

As the Hindu goes on his way or tarries at home his spirits rise and fall as shadow and sunshine chase each other. Every hour of his life he is beset with fears or elated by hopes.

To the peace which the heart of the Christian knows because his mind is stayed upon his God—a God who cares for him and who orders all his steps—the heart of the Hindu is a stranger.

CHAPTER XII.

A GLIMPSE OF HOME-LIFE.

BUT a short distance from our home lives a Hindu family to whom I pay occasional visits. A door in the wall close by the roadside opens into a court in the centre of which is a small temple, its dome supported by slender pillars. In this temple, on a slightly-elevated platform, is an idol which is usually decked with floral offerings. There is a well quite near the temple, and here the worshipers bathe.

Passing through this court, the visitor enters a long, low passage. When I paid a recent visit to our Hindu neighbors, at the end of this passage I found a calf tied, and in a small court adjoining this entrance the mother-cow was secured. Close beside her, stretched on a bed, was a man, and on the floor beside him, his hookah. A door

from the small court opened into a larger court, where the female members of the family were assembled. This court was surrounded by apartments occupied by the various members of the household—low unattractive rooms with no light except that admitted through the door opening into the court. In the shelter of the verandas which shaded these cell-like rooms the women belonging to the household pass the day; the rooms are used at night. They also serve as a place of deposit for all matters of value. The floor of the court was of earth, smooth and hard; above was the clear blue sky. Tall trees rich in foliage flung their broad shadows on the court, and the rustling of the leaves in the soft summer air was almost as musical as the carol of the birds singing in the branches.

"But where is the furniture of the house?" I am sure you would ask. You peer into one or two of the rooms and see only low, rude beds. On the ground, in a corner of one of the rooms, is a mat, and upon this is a small pillow. A large chest fastened with a curious lock occupies another corner,

and near the door are a few brass vessels, some of which are really graceful in shape.

On a low bed is stretched the mother of the family suffering from fever, and on the floor, within reach of her outstretched hands, is a hookah.

Quite near the place where the mother lies is a small room gay with paint and tinsel. A lamp is burning there, and before the entrance hangs a faded curtain. An old man enters and draws down the curtain, and soon from the place proceeds a low, monotonous chant. This little room is sacred to the idol worshiped by the household, and the gray old man is the family priest. No one notices him; alone he performs his devotions, and then silently retires.

Close beside the little room devoted to the idol is a low sheltered place in which are placed several large brass vessels filled with water; here the women of the household bathe. Hung under the verandas are two or three cages, each containing a light-green parrot. In one part of the court-yard a servant is busy scouring the brass

vessels that have been used in the preparation of food, and from which the food has been eaten. In a corner, under one of the verandas, is the mill by which is ground all the "corn" consumed by the family. In India the grinding of the corn is a part of the daily task in every household; and this was doubtless the custom in Bible-times, for in Deuteronomy we find this injunction: "No man shall take the upper or the nether millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man's life to pledge." On the ground, beside the mill, are two or three finely-woven baskets in which to put the meal as it is ground. There are also wooden bowls or troughs for kneading the dough. Spread out on a bed in the sunshine is a quantity of pulse, which forms an article of food among the people of all classes. Scattered about on the verandas are mats made of coarse grass; on these the women sit. In niches in the walls are little vessels of clay filled with oil; these are the lamps in use. Some of these little vessels are placed in sockets on a light standard which can be carried wherever a light is required.

What a cheerless home! There is no gathering of the family at meals, so a table is not required. Food is prepared by servants or by the female members of the household; and when the father, brothers and sons have satisfied their hunger—which they do sitting on the ground and eating with their fingers from the brass vessel or vessels in which the food is served—the women of the household may partake.

"But this is a very poor family," you will say. By no means. It is a family of good position and of abundant means. The young bride of one of the sons of the great household was recently brought to the home of her husband, and she came laden with jewels; jewels flashed from her neck, sparkled in her hair and glittered on her brow. There was a large ring in her nose. The ornaments in her ears were so heavy that they were supported by chains of gold, which were fastened in her hair. Her arms were laden with bracelets; heavy bands of silver encircled her ankles, and the rings on her toes were like little bells and made a tinkling sound as she moved. Her dress

was of gay silk embroidered with gold. In honor of the occasion the female members of the household were all richly dressed and adorned with jewels. The bridegroom was the mother's favorite son, and she seemed very proud of the bride he had brought home. This son had been educated in a mission school, and was glad to have his wife taught; the little bride was eager to learn, and made commendable progress. Two or three of the sisters, encouraged by her example, desired also to learn, and thus several very promising pupils were secured.

A DINNER-PARTY IN INDIA.

The guests are all men. They have not met in a large, pleasant room handsomely furnished, but in an open court, with only the cloudless, starry sky above them. They are not clad in well-fitting suits of black, but in garments of curious shape and of divers colors. The feet of the assembled guests are all bare, and at the entrance is an odd collection of shoes; for each guest, before entering, has laid his aside. Some of

the shoes are coarse and strong, others are elaborately embroidered, but all are finished at the toe by a point which turns up over the shoe. As these shoes are low and loose, they are easily removed.

When the feast is ready to be served, each guest bathes his face, hands and feet with water from large jars at hand for the purpose. After bathing, the guests seat themselves upon the ground in a line, or in a circle if there are many, leaving a space open where servants may pass in and out. There are neither chairs, tables, dishes, knives, forks nor spoons, but by the side of many of the guests are brass drinking-vessels, clean and bright. These they have brought with them from their own homes, but it is not customary to bring to a feast the large brass plates from which food is usually eaten, nor is it expected that the host will provide them. He furnishes, however, a substitute—plates made of smooth, strong leaves joined together by thorns or pins of stiff straw. When the guests are in their places, a servant passes around and deposits before each guest one of these leaf-plates.

For those who have not brought their own drinking-vessels little cups fresh from the potter are supplied. These are very cheap, several being sold for a penny.

At every entertainment among the people of India rice in some form is used. Cakes fried in *ghi*, or clarified butter, usually form a part of the repast; sweetmeats and curdled milk are also frequently furnished. Each person conveys the food to his mouth with his right hand, for this is the custom among rich and poor alike. When the feast is over, each guest washes his hands and rinses his mouth. A man of the lowest caste then gathers up and throws away the leaf-plates. The little cups of pottery, if any have been used, are thrown away.

If women are invited to a public feast, they are the near relatives of the family, and they sit in the inner apartments with the women of the household, and are served there.

A Hindu likes to invite his friends to a feast when there is a birth in his household, but he *must* make a feast when a marriage

takes place or when a death occurs: failing to do this, he would be put out of caste, and to a Hindu this is the greatest of all misfortunes. To avoid such a calamity he will borrow the means with which to entertain his friends, though he knows not how the debt can ever be repaid.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHILD-WIVES.

GIRLS in India are betrothed when they are mere children—sometimes even while they are infants. They usually remain with their mothers until they are twelve or thirteen years of age, when they are thrust out of the home-nest to begin life in a new home.

We had not been long in India when we received an invitation to be present at the festivities connected with the marriage of the young daughter of a rich native banker. We were not asked to be present at the wedding-ceremony, but to meet a company of guests in a large and pleasant house in the midst of a garden where our host received his European friends on festive occasions.

Leaving home a little earlier than the

time indicated in the note of invitation, we soon came upon a great procession, men, women and children, on their way to the house of the bride. All were arrayed in festive attire and, in accordance with Oriental taste, in gorgeous colors. Mingling with the throng were great numbers of servants bearing upon their heads, in shallow brass trays, sweetmeats and other delicacies for the feast. Elephants covered with richly-embroidered cloths were in the procession; camels, too, were there, embroidered trappings thrown over their lank sides.

Upon our arrival at the house a very imposing personage in dress of spotless white ushered us into the apartment where the guests were assembled. The fierce heat of an April day made particularly grateful the delicious coolness of the apartment, rendered thus pleasant by artificial means. Rich chandeliers were suspended from the ceiling; the floor was covered with fine matting, and the room was furnished with comfortable couches. Outside a well-trained European band was playing,

but above all rose the hum of the happy, excited multitude.

The doors opening on the street were thrown open as the announcement was made that the procession had arrived on its way to the house of the bride. First came a band of musicians, then a company of boys bearing gay pennants; the richly-caparisoned horses followed, then the fine elephants and the solemn camels. Then came other bands of music, followed by four litters filled with dancing-girls, and behind these the throng of servants bearing trays upon their heads.

As we watched the gay procession a fine barouche drawn by spirited horses halted before one of the entrances, and the bridegroom sprang upon the pavement. A moment later, and the boy-bridegroom—for he was but seventeen years of age—was ushered into the hall; passing through the throng of guests to a seat by one of the open doors, he pleasantly saluted those near him. He was richly dressed. A long, loose garment of cloth of gold studded with pearls completely enveloped his figure.

He wore a turban of the same material ornamented with jewels. His face, otherwise pleasant in expression, was marred by the idolatrous marks upon it. He remained a short time, then stepped into his carriage and was rapidly whirled away. The little bride, of course, we did not see. For the European guests the entertainment closed with a display of fireworks, but at the home of the bride the feasting and the ceremonies connected with such an occasion continued for several days, and were very elaborate.

Not long since, we were living in tents in the district. One day we heard a great noise outside, and, looking out of the tent door, we saw a wedding-procession passing along the road. There was a band of musicians, and in a litter covered with a gay canopy was the boy-bridegroom. The procession halted for several hours in a grove, and just at nightfall the bride and groom, accompanied by a party of friends, came over to a shrine quite near our encampment to present their offerings. The bride was a child six or seven years of age,

and the bridegroom a boy of about the same age. Their upper garments were tied together by a knot, and, while the young child-groom was carried in the arms of one of the women, the bride was led by the hand.

On another occasion while living in tents we saw a wedding-procession leaving a house. In one of the litters was the bride, a little girl about six years of age. Poor little infant! She seemed greatly frightened to see so many people about her, apparently not understanding the meaning of the strange ceremonies that were being performed. As she was being borne along some toys were put into her lap to amuse her.

In one of the villages where we made our encampment when on a tour in the district lived a rajah with a fair little daughter about twelve years of age who had several years before been betrothed to the son of a rajah living in another part of India. While we were encamped in the village the young rajah came to bear away his bride. For several weeks extensive

preparations had been in progress for the important event. A village of tents had sprung into existence upon the plain, and to add to the pomp of the occasion elephants, camels and horses had been arriving from all directions. Great quantities of provisions had been laid in store, for hundreds of guests were expected, and the wedding-festivities would continue for three days.

At the appointed time, accompanied by a large party of friends and a small army of retainers, the groom arrived by special train. With much ceremony he was escorted to the encampment prepared for his reception, a band of music in attendance meanwhile discoursing lively airs for the entertainment of the people. The guests now came pouring in from all directions, and as if by magic tents shot up wherever there was a bit of level ground. Crimson and orange banners floated in the breeze and crowds of people in holiday attire loitered about, while in every direction were seen elephants, camels and horses.

Just before the going down of the sun we went out to view the brilliant scene—the throngs of happy people, the elephants in glittering howdahs and rich saddle-cloths, the camels in gay trappings and the prancing horses in fantastic livery. Suddenly, as if in obedience to the wand of an enchanter, the moving mass fell into line; the whole, arranged with wonderful effect and lighted by the rays of the setting sun, formed a gorgeous pageant, a show of barbaric splendor such as one seldom sees even in the Orient. The groom was about to pay his first visit of ceremony to the house of the bride. As he advanced with his glittering train a company mounted on elephants, camels and horses, all richly caparisoned, came out to meet the bridegroom and to escort him to the home of the bride. The scene was one of great splendor and magnificence.

At the time of this visit the groom received the first instalment of presents—the bride's dowry—and at each succeeding visit gifts would be bestowed. In this instance the gifts consisted of gold coin,

elephants, camels and horses. The Brahman priests in attendance were well remembered, receiving one hundred cows and one hundred pieces of gold, as well as liberal supplies of food.

The procession returned to the camp after nightfall, lighted torches throwing a weird brightness over the scene and a band of music playing lively airs. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, the feasting and the festivities the bride was borne away to the home of her husband.

Poor little child-wife! Thrust out of her home and away from the mother-love that has been around her from her infancy—thrust out into a world of which she has had hardly a glimpse—is she not to be pitied?

"She will not be able to come back to us for a long time," the father said, "the distance is so great and the expense incident upon the journey so considerable."

Perhaps the young girl will be kindly treated in her new home. We trust so, but it is very sad to see a mere child made a wife. This is one of the cruel and unrea-

sonable customs of India, and it is only as the people learn and receive into their hearts the truths of a religion purer than their own—even the truths of the gospel—that they will abandon this along with many other wrong and foolish practices. Marriage is a very sacred ordinance, but such marriages as these are very sad.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BOYS OF INDIA.

THE boys of India are as merry and as fond of play as are the boys of America or of England. We often hear their shouts of laughter as they pass along the street. At one season of the year every boy has his kite, and wherever there is a bit of open space, there we are sure to see a group of boys flying kites—large boys as well as small ones. When the weather has become so warm that kite-flying is no longer pleasant, we see from almost every tree near a village a swing suspended, and it is seldom empty.

But not all the children of India are free to play; the children of very poor people are obliged to work as soon as they are old enough to do anything.

Once, after a very heavy rain, a part of the wall around our "compound" fell down. When this wall was rebuilt, women and children were employed to help in the work. They came, a great number, each provided with a basket. For each basketful of earth carried a certain number of little shells was given. It takes a great quantity of these shells to make a penny, but they are the currency used by the poor in making their small purchases.

Some time ago I visited a garden in which were several pavilions. The roof of one of these was in process of repair, and boys were bringing baskets of earth from a bank near at hand to spread upon the roof. I noticed that one quite small boy was crying as he carried his load.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

The boy made no answer; and when I turned, I saw standing not far off a man with a whip in his hand.

"Have you beaten that little boy?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered. "Boys are lazy; and when they do not work well, I beat

them. I must do this, or nothing would be done."

I looked again at the boy. He was small and did not seem strong, and I saw that it was very hard for him to climb the long ladder with his heavy load.

We see boys in the city every day carrying boxes on their heads: they are the servants of natives who keep a little stock of thread, needles, buttons, soap, and many other such things. They do not keep these articles in a neat shop, but in a box in some corner of their little homes. Every day they visit the houses of Europeans in the vicinity, and, opening their boxes, display their goods, hoping to find customers. I have sometimes seen a tall, strong man walking along, and behind him a boy staggering under the weight of the box he carried for his master.

We frequently see boy-merchants. Some of these boys are the sons of small dealers, and their fathers, in order to teach them to be shrewd in trade, send them alone, when quite young, to sell their wares. These boy-merchants, if poor, carry their own

boxes, but as soon as they can afford to do so they employ some one to do this work for them—perhaps a boy no larger than themselves.

Boys living in the country work in the gardens or help in the cultivation of the fields. When fruit is ripening, they are employed to watch the trees and frighten away the birds.

But perhaps some one will ask, "Do the boys in India never attend school?" Certainly they do, and many of them learn their lessons well and quickly. In the veranda of a house in a narrow lane not far from our bungalow is a boys' school taught by a heathen teacher. All the children sit on the floor, their feet crossed under them. Those who are learning the alphabet or easy lessons hold in their hands a little black-painted wooden slate upon which are printed the letters or the words. Each boy studies aloud, and as he studies rocks backward and forward. The older boys have books, but they study aloud just as do the younger pupils. The teacher sits upon a mat and calls his pupils to him when he

wishes to know if they have learned their tasks.

In a large school which I have visited, and which is under the charge of a missionary, the boys are carefully instructed and taught to be orderly and to conduct themselves with propriety. They also learn of the one true God and of the duty they owe to him.

In this school, at the time of my visit, were several boys belonging to the family of a nobleman. These boys all wore very fine clothing. Their caps were of velvet and silk embroidered with gold and silver; their long, loose robes were of rich material handsomely trimmed. In the same classes with these elegantly-attired young gentlemen were boys belonging to poor families and wearing not only plain, but scanty, clothing.

One day, sitting in the house of a Hindu, I was trying to instruct a group of women gathered about me. While I was thus occupied several men stopped before the door and began to sing. Two or three of the women immediately rose and went to an-

other part of the house. They soon returned, each woman bringing with her a small quantity of grain, which she threw into the vessels with which the singers were provided. When they joined the listening group again, one of the women said in explanation,

"These are the priests of our gods, and they were singing the praises of the gods they serve. If we feed them, our gods will be pleased."

On a low stool, listening to the reading, sat a brother of one of the women.

"It is not true that the gods will be pleased," said this youth, "for there is but one God, and he has said that we must not worship the images which our own hands have made, for they are no gods."

"Where have you learned this?" I asked.

"At school," he answered; "there I learned about God and about his Son Jesus Christ, who died to save us."

Sometimes the teachers, on going to the school, find the rooms almost empty, and the pupils who are present ask if they too may be excused. It is a heathen holiday,

and on such occasions men, women and children repair to the river, the spring, the grove or the temple to present their offerings and to worship.

A favorite deity is Ganesh, the god of wisdom and policy, a monster with four arms and the head of an elephant. This god is invoked by the Hindus in all matters of business, and especially in all new undertakings. His image is frequently placed over the doors of houses and shops to insure success in business. Upon the first leaf of the schoolbooks belonging to a Hindu youth is inscribed a short prayer to Ganesh; in a niche in the wall in every school in a Hindu village is usually found a small image of Ganesh. A missionary tells us that he once found a Brahman lad, a pupil in one of his schools, crying bitterly. He had quarreled with a schoolfellow, who in anger had threatened to present an offering to Ganesh to induce this god to make him fail in his recitations and fall below him in his class; and this was the cause of the little fellow's distress.

The children in India—and, I suppose, in

GANESH, THE GOD OF WISDOM.

every heathen land—are taught to speak what is not true. They hear their parents and others around them gravely speaking what is false whenever they think it will be for their advantage to do so, either to hide a fault or to secure a favor.

A little boy received a present of a book. One of his companions offered to give him a small price for it, and the book speedily changed owners. The original possessor did not intend, however, to do without a book. Going with a very sad face to the friend from whom he had received the one he had sold, he told him that on his way to school, as he was running along, he slipped near the edge of a tank, and his book, escaping from his hand, tumbled into the water and was ruined. He seemed really sorry, and said he had no money with which to buy another; so his kind friend gave him a second book, and the boy hastened home to tell his parents and his playmates how cleverly he had managed.

A lady who felt an interest in the children of her servants asked one of them who was the mother of a bright little boy to

send her son every day that he might be instructed with some other boys who came for a lesson. But the boy had always spent his time in play, and did not care to learn. His mother, afraid of displeasing her mistress, tried by promises and threats to induce her son to obey her, but, knowing by experience that his mother would neither give what she had promised nor punish as she had threatened, the young rebel refused to obey. The mother, therefore, each day presented herself before her mistress with a fresh excuse. One day her son had no clean clothing in which he could appear; another day, his head was aching; a third day, his eyes were sore; again, he had sprained his ankle. At length, feeling sure that these were but excuses, the lady insisted upon knowing the true reason. The mother then acknowledged that her son would not obey her.

While spending a season in Kashmir we were one day making an excursion upon the great river Jhilum. As our boat landed at a little town along our route a boy-merchant leaped on board; the bundle slung

over his shoulder contained his stock in trade. His small store was soon spread out before us, and from it we selected such things as we required, and paid the stipulated price. The little merchant then presented a book, saying,

"Please write something in this. Say that you have purchased these articles from me, and that they are good in quality. This will help me in getting other customers."

Pleased with the shrewd young merchant, we cheerfully complied with his request, his bright eyes following us as we wrote. Presently he asked,

"Are you putting down the price you have given me?"

"Yes," was answered.

With a quick, impatient gesture he exclaimed,

"Don't write the *true* price, but this," naming a much larger sum than he had received.

"We cannot do that, for it would not be true," we answered, looking straight into the eyes of the boy, who did not in the

ON THE RIVER JHILUM.

least mind the grave looks which were bent upon him, but in a perfectly-possessed manner said,

"That does not matter. Strangers, when they wish to buy, look into this book to see who has purchased and what amount has been paid. They think the amount written is, of course, the proper price, and so I make more money than if the true price had been written. Do you not understand?" he asked, as if wondering that any one could be so stupid.

"We certainly shall write the true price," was answered.

"Then do not write the true number of articles," he pleaded.

At this some of the boatmen laughed and said,

"That is a shrewd lad, and will make his way in the world."

All this time we had been gliding down the stream and the boy drifting away from his home. Presently a boat that was passing up the river drew near. Quickly the boy gathered into a bundle his stock of merchandise, and, calling to the boatmen, en-

gaged them to leave him at his home. Turning toward us with a graceful salaam, he leaped into the boat with a light step, but in doing so his snow-white turban fell into the water. Seizing it quickly, he shook the water from its folds, and, calling back to us in a cheery voice that it was a matter of no consequence, his bright face was soon lost to sight.

At one time, when on an itineration in the district, a house belonging to a petty rajah was kindly placed at our disposal while we remained in his village. This rajah had a grandson about six years of age, and not long after our arrival this little boy came over to our bungalow. He was riding a small pony, and was attended by several servants. He dismounted and without the slightest embarrassment entered the house, and, standing before me, made a low and very graceful salaam.

"Where is the gentleman?" he then asked.

"He is not at home," was answered.

"Then I will not stop now, but will come again when he is at home," he replied, and,

making another salaam, turned away, the train of men, boys and dogs following.

I was greatly amused at the gravity of this small man. He came again a short time after, accompanied by the rajah his grandfather. This time, finding the "gentleman" at home, he condescended to be entertained. He was dressed in closely-fitting undergarments and a handsomely-embroidered tunic. He wore on his head a gold-embroidered cap, while ornaments encircled his delicate wrists, and also his ankles. How pretty he was! and how graceful every movement! Many quaint observations the little fellow made, and many curious questions he asked. When tired of the talk of grown-up people, he wandered outside to find entertainment among the servants, issuing his commands as gravely as his grandfather would have done, and the servants obeyed this small rajah without questioning.

While we remained in the village we saw this little boy several times. He was always handsomely dressed, and was usually riding a pretty pony and accompanied by sev-

eral attendants. He was a most engaging little fellow, but he was the child of heathen parents. He was surrounded by heathen, and, though so young, he was taught to bow down to idols and to bring to those dumb images his offerings.

How blest are the dear children in Christian homes! Thank God for all his good gifts to you, and remember those who are not thus blessed.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA.

QUITE near the house which we for several years occupied lived a lady in a beautiful home. Three lovely children made music and sunshine in that happy home. To these favored children the glad Christmas-time was sure to bring much good cheer, but the grateful mother remembered also the little ones about her to whom Christmas would bring only eager longings. For weeks before the holidays this excellent Christian lady was occupied in preparing a Christmas treat for the poor children of the neighborhood. Not only was a great store of toys provided, but the lady's busy fingers and fine taste fashioned many beautiful and useful articles.

The day so anxiously waited for came at length, and at the appointed hour a company

of very happy little people assembled in the large and pleasant grounds, and from the kind hostess each timid little one received a cordial welcome. Christmas-time in India is not ushered in by biting winds and leaden skies: it comes decked with flowers. The trees are heavy with foliage, the skies are blue and the sun shines with so fierce a heat that the shade is welcome. On the broad verandas of the dwelling refreshments were served to the children and young people, who laughed and chatted and heartily enjoyed the good things provided for them.

When the shadows began to lengthen, the children were summoned to a large tent in the midst of the grounds. The curtains were lifted, and a scene of wondrous beauty burst upon the vision. The great Christmas tree was a blaze of light, and suspended from its branches and nestling beneath its shadows were so many lovely things that exclamations of delight burst from the lips of many of the children. When the richly-fruited tree had been sufficiently admired, loving hands released the pretty gifts and

sent them among the waiting guests. How eagerly each child stepped forward as his or her name was pronounced! while joy lighted each face and sparkled from every eye. At last the tree stood bare. The wax tapers were burning low, but the children lingered as if the place still held a charm for them. Some were proudly displaying their gifts to their companions; others pressed tightly in their arms their new treasures, as if fearing they would slip from their grasp.

In the midst of the happy children stood a little girl poorly clad; she had come from a home of want, and her child-life had been brightened by few of the pleasures that belong to happy homes. The little girl held in her arms a large and beautiful doll handsomely dressed, but the child held her treasure loosely, and there was no light in her eyes and no smile on her face. Turning to a lady standing near her, she said in a disappointed tone,

"And I got only this doll and a bag of sweets!"

Poor child! she had seen the tree laden

with gifts, and, forgetting how large was the number to be provided for, felt grieved that from such a store so small a share had fallen to her lot.

Another Christmas which it is pleasant to remember was spent with missionary-friends in a distant station. These friends labor among the Santhals, one of the aboriginal races of India. The Santhals are a rude people fond of active life, and "mighty hunters," like the Indians of North America. Though not quick to learn like their shrewder neighbors the Hindus, yet, since missionaries have been sent among them, they have shown such capacity for improvement, and so many have turned to the Lord from the grossest heathenism, that there is great encouragement to labor for them.

Quite near the dwelling occupied by our host was a plain and substantial building which served as both a church and a school. Between this building and the bungalow of the missionary was a long, low row of houses occupied by the girls of the boarding-school.

Many of the Christian Santhals lived in

villages in the district, but a large number came in to spend the Christmas-time with their fellow-Christians in Pachamba.

We wakened early on this bright Christmas morning, but not before there was a stir outside. We heard just at daybreak soft footfalls on the veranda, and the murmur of suppressed voices. When we came out of our room, we learned the meaning of all this. Passing through the dining-room, we found it decked with garlands of flowers. The pleasant family-parlor was gay with similar decorations, and across the arches of the long verandas festoons of flowers were thrown.

"The schoolgirls have done this," our hostess said, in answer to our questioning looks. "They were here before the dawn, with their garlands, waiting for entrance, that they might give the house a holiday look before we appeared, thus furnishing a pleasant surprise for us."

It was beautiful to begin the day which commemorates the coming of Christ, God's greatest gift to man, by taking such loving thought for others.

In the morning there was a service in the church to which the old and young, parents and children, came to learn of Christ and to sing his praises. It was delightful to see there worshiping in the temple of the Lord those who but a short time before had for the first time heard of Jesus the Saviour. One orphan Santhal youth who had some poetical genius as well as unusual musical gifts, assisted by two or three of his companions, sang on this occasion a Christmas hymn of his own composition, set to one of their native airs. The performance was by no means discreditable.

The missionaries had provided the means for a feast for these Santhal Christians, and in happy preparation for this much of the day was spent. The Santhals have no such prejudice against the use of beef as high-caste Hindus entertain, and as a part of the feast a young cow was provided. This, when slaughtered, was cut into small bits—no easy matter, but in India, as elsewhere, many hands make light work, and this tedious process, because so cheerfully performed, was not regarded as a task. The

meat was made into curry, of which the natives of India are very fond. A large quantity of rice was provided, and with an abundance of rice and curry they were happy indeed. Trenches were made in the ground for the fires, and large vessels of pottery were used in which to boil the rice and stew the curry.

While the men and the boys were engaged in preparing the meat and in grinding the spices there was work for the women and the girls as well. The food was not served in dainty china; our simple Santhals would not have known how to use anything so elegant. A few of the number were the happy possessors of brass vessels; these had been scoured until they shone like mirrors. For the remainder, and far larger part, of the company, leaf-plates had been prepared. Large and tough green leaves had been gathered, and these were "sewed" or pinned together with thorns or fine bamboo splints. I expect that in this very way Adam and Eve made their first garments, of which we read in the book of Genesis. These carefully-prepared leaf-

plates were placed one within another, made into convenient piles and then tied together with a wisp of straw.

About sunset the announcement was made that all things were ready, and the guests needed no second bidding to the feast that had been prepared; they fell into line and marched to the place on the open plain where the feast was to be served. The possessors of brass vessels carried them on their heads. Mats were spread upon the ground, and upon these the company sat, except those appointed to distribute the good things. The carefully-prepared rice was piled into large baskets, and looked like newly-fallen snow, while the curry sent forth a savory smell. Everything seemed very tempting to good appetites, and the scene was certainly very beautiful. The guests appeared very happy as they took their places on the mats spread for them.

The hum of joyous voices was hushed while one of the missionaries present reverently asked God's blessing upon the food of which they were about to partake. The

leaf-plates were then distributed, and those who served passed rapidly around with baskets of rice and vessels filled with the savory stew. Each one received for his or her portion two large handfuls of rice and a measure of curry. The rice and the curry were then mixed with the right hand and conveyed to the mouth by the same means. I have seen few happier companies than this Christmas gathering of Santhal Christians. The provision was ample and the food such as they enjoyed. If, in addition to their rice and curry, they had been served with curdled milk and a liberal supply of the sweetmeats of the country, they would have esteemed it a banquet fit for a king.

Of course this festival differed greatly from the Christmas entertainments our American friends are accustomed to have in their Sunday-schools; but for a missionary land it was very enjoyable.

It was necessary that we should leave Pachamba by the evening train, and we could not, therefore, tarry until the close of the feast. As we left the grounds we

stopped to examine a unique Christmas tree. Some of the older boys had brought from the forest a tall and shapely tree, which they had made fast in the earth. This was crowned by a gay paper umbrella, which by an ingenious contrivance they had made to revolve. The treasures suspended from the branches of this Christmas tree were remarkable chiefly for their simplicity—small portions of the common sweetmeats of the country, scraps of gay cloth, feathers dropped from the wings of bright-plumaged birds, and even some parts of the animal they had slaughtered. They had heard of the Christmas trees with their varied fruits, in which the children of other lands delight, and this feeble imitation told its own pathetic story.

The shadows of night were gathering as we drove away, and, looking back to catch yet another glimpse of that scene under the starry sky, we saw the Christmas tree suddenly flash forth into brightness. How they had lighted that strange tree I cannot tell you, but as we saw its little lights gleaming it seemed to us a beautiful type

of the light which the gospel is shedding, and will continue to shed more and more abundantly until that glad day so long foretold shall come when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

CHAPTER XVI.

A NEW YEAR'S DAY IN INDIA.

I SHOULD like to tell you how we spent one New Year's day in India. We were not living in a house, but in a tent quite in the country. Under some fine trees in a grove not far from the road-side our canvas house had been set up a few days before the opening of the New Year. Shaded from the sun by an awning, we sat in the tent door on this first morning of the year, enjoying the pure air and the pleasant warmth. The great trees which overshadowed our tent were rich in foliage, and the fields around us were green. Brown-skinned children were frolicking in the sunshine, and everything seemed full of life and motion. On the road, in full view, long trains of clumsy carts with ponderous wooden wheels went

creaking by. They were drawn by oxen with large humps between their shoulders. A string of camels next passed, the rope tied to the ring in the nose of one animal fastened to the tail of the camel directly in front of him, and thus bound together they moved slowly and solemnly along, two or three baby-camels, unfettered, with awkward motion running by the side of the mother-camels. As we watched them there came to our ears the low and not unmusical sound of bells, and soon a company of pilgrims appeared. Each man carried suspended from the ends of a pole resting upon one of his shoulders two baskets, each enclosed in a frame or net and containing, perhaps, the ashes of some deceased friend. These pilgrims were on their way to the Ganges. There they would deposit the sacredly-guarded ashes, bathe in the venerated stream, worship at the various shrines, make offerings to the priests, and then return to their distant homes, carrying with them vessels filled with water from the sacred river. Scarcely had these pilgrims passed out of sight

when a wedding-procession came into view. Musicians were in attendance, and gay little banners fluttered in the breeze. Poorly attired as were many of the people in the procession, yet there was about them a holiday look that it was pleasant to see. Amidst the clang and the clamor made by the musicians a sound greeted our ears which reminded us of merry sleigh-bells in another land, and soon a curious little vehicle passed by. It was drawn by a very small and ill-favored pony, around whose neck was suspended a string of bells.

But we had promised to go into town to attend a children's service that day, and we could not longer sit in the tent door. What a pleasant sight were the gardens as we drove along! There were exquisite flowers in bloom, rare rich roses brilliant in color and heavy with perfume. There came to us, borne on the air, the faint, delicious fragrance of mignonette and heliotrope. The verandas of some of our neighbors were aflame with the gorgeous blossoms of a luxuriant creeper, and over

a tree a creeping plant had climbed and twisted until it stood forth a pyramid of showy bloom. The oranges hung ripe on the boughs of the low trees, and there were rich clusters of the banana in the midst of great shining green leaves. There was not a cloud in the sky, and the sun shone with a heat that was oppressive at noonday.

When we reached the church, a large number of children had already assembled. What happy faces they wore, and how cheerful were their voices! It was "Children's Day," and very important the little people looked as they filed into the front seats in the body of the church. Very heartily they joined in the singing, and sweet and clear were their voices.

The pastor took his place in the pulpit, and after a brief and earnest prayer preached a sermon prepared especially for the children, full of precious truth and in language so simple that the very youngest could understand the message. The children listened attentively and with no sign of impatience, though spread temptingly

on the table before the pulpit were the beautiful books which kind friends had provided—a gift for each child.

At the conclusion of the service the pastor stepped out of the pulpit, and, taking his place before the gift-laden table, called two or three friends to his assistance, and the presents were soon distributed. There were books suitable for the pupils of the more advanced classes, and books for the very youngest. It was pleasant to observe that the children received the beautiful books with a low-spoken "Thank you" or a graceful bow. After the distribution of the gifts another hymn of praise was sung, and with a prayer and a benediction the services closed.

We returned to our tents, and as the sun was sinking in the west the missionary and his helpers went out to a neighboring village. Soon a little company gathered about them, and as they sat together in the twilight they told to the waiting company the story of a Saviour's love. The people listened with apparent interest, and as the darkness deepened women from the low

houses near at hand glided out and, covering themselves with their veils, sat in little groups within sound of the speaker's voice, and heard—it may be for the first time—the sweet gospel story. The stars came out, and still the people lingered. Sometimes a question was asked, sometimes a dissenting voice was heard, and occasionally some one in the audience, addressing the speaker, would say with emphasis, "Your words are good words; they are true words." At last the people returned to their homes, and in the clear starlight the preachers came back to their tents.

The doors were made fast for the night, and the watchmen sent to guard our encampment took up their monotonous call. The day was ended—the first day of the New Year.

CHAPTER XVII.

A CHURCH ON THE RIVER JUMNA.

THE fort at Allahabad is built at the junction of two great rivers, the Ganges and the Jumna. On the banks of these streams are many temples, but on the Jumna, about a mile from the fort, is a Christian sanctuary—a pleasant sight in the midst of so many idolatrous shrines. Many years ago a large bungalow on this stream was purchased for a mission house, and in this same enclosure a neat little church was built; and here a Christian congregation still meets for worship. Not far from the mission bungalow the river is spanned by a very fine bridge over which heavy-laden railway-trains frequently pass. On the river curious barges are slowly plied by dusky natives, who look up with eyes full of wonder as a long railway-train with

its shrieking engine rumbles across the bridge.

The church stands in the midst of the park-like enclosure, and in the grounds are many beautiful trees with spreading branches, while here and there a tall palm lifts its graceful head. When there is a large gathering of missionaries for the transaction of business connected with their work, tents are sometimes pitched in this compound, and for a few days these canvas houses become the houses of the assembled missionaries, while they meet for worship in the church, whose doors are thrown open to let in the sunshine and the soft, warm air.

The first general missionary conference in India convened in Allahabad in December, 1872. The sessions of the conference were held in this church on the banks of the Jumna, and in the spacious grounds between forty and fifty large army-tents were pitched for the accommodation of the delegates assembled on this occasion.

In this compound, under the great trees, in the shade, little children—some with pale

CHURCH ON THE RIVER JUMNA.

faces, and others with brown skins—gambol about, as happy as frisking lambs. The home of the Christian natives connected with this church is just outside the enclosure.

In the year 1857, during the mutiny, much property was destroyed and many houses were burned. The bungalow on the bank of the Jumna, which had been for many years a pleasant mission home, was plundered and fired. The church could not be burned, as it was built of strong masonry, but it was spoiled and defaced, and the mutineers took from the belfry the sweet-toned bell which so often had called together the little congregation, and carried it off to a heathen temple. When the mutineers heard that the English soldiers were coming to the rescue of their countrymen, they were greatly alarmed, for they expected punishment. They could not restore the lives they had taken, but in some cases they returned the property they had stolen; and in this way the church-bell was restored, and now from its former place rings out a welcome to the house of prayer. In answer to its summons from out of their

HINDU MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

homes the worshipers come trooping, fathers, mothers and children.

The people of India have dark skins, but European features, and many of the children are very winsome, with their bright black eyes, regular features and free, graceful movements. The people of the East are fond of bright colors—scarlet, orange, violet, blue and green—so that little children sometimes look like bits of rainbow. During the hot season white is much worn, both by men and by women. The women and the young girls wear over the head and shoulders a snow-white covering gracefully arranged; the men and the boys wear white robes and caps or turbans. A congregation of Christian natives is a pleasant sight.

The people of India are fond of music, and all sing, even the children—not always in tune, it is true, but with a will, as though they heartily enjoyed it.

Some of the members of the little congregation at the Jumna were once orphan-children left destitute and forsaken, without home or friends. They were received by

the missionaries, kindly cared for and instructed, and now are useful members of society and of the church. Some of the worshipers in this sanctuary were once heathen. The children love the Sabbath-school and commit to memory not only portions of the Scriptures, but sweet hymns. Some time ago a young girl, a member of this Sabbath-school, died. She had a pleasant disposition, was quick to learn, full of life and was a favorite with all. She was fond of singing, and in the Sabbath-school her voice rang out sweet and clear. During her illness, which lasted many weeks, she suffered greatly, but she was always gentle and patient. When she knew that she could not recover, she felt no fear, but with a beaming face and sparkling eyes talked of the dear Saviour to whom she was going and of the beautiful home he had prepared for her. The dear child, we doubt not, is now with Jesus and singing sweeter songs than any she had learned on earth.

A little boy in Allahabad belonging to another Christian congregation had a pleas-

ant home, fond parents and affectionate brothers and sisters. He was a very happy little fellow, full of fun and frolic and always in motion. But one day, coming to his mother, he said, "I am ill." The next day he was worse, and as day after day he grew weaker and weaker his fond parents began to fear that their darling would be taken from them. The little boy bore his sufferings with great patience. When he had been some time ill, he called his friends around him one lovely Sabbath morning and said, as they stood about him in tears, "I am going to die, but I am not afraid. I hear the voice of Jesus calling me. He will go with me, and I shall be happy with him for ever." His eyes were full of light and his face wore an eager look, as if he longed to go. "Call my little friends," he said; "I want to tell them that I am glad to go to Jesus. I want to tell them to trust in Jesus too." With a beaming face and eager, out stretched hands he passed away.

I will tell you of one other happy death among the Christians here. This was long ago, and the story has been beautifully told

by a faithful missionary who has now gone to join the ransomed of the Lord. It is the story of a woman named Jatni. She was the daughter of a Brahman—that is, her father was a Brahman before he became a Christian. Jatni was married when she was but fifteen years old to a Christian young man, and came with her husband to Allahabad. Jatni was very quiet and very diffident, but she soon had many friends in the Christian community. "All the men were ready to point to her as an example for their wives, and all the women, without envy or strife, acknowledged her as the most excellent person amongst them. She never quarreled nor slandered nor excited differences, but was a healer of divisions." The pleasant new neighbor who had so soon made a place for herself in the hearts of all was early called to bear heavy sorrows. Her first-born, a beautiful, winsome boy, was taken from her loving arms after an illness of a day. Sorely the young mother grieved for her darling, but she did not murmur. "It is the will of God," she said. Another precious son was sent to comfort her in her

grief and loneliness. He was the light of the little home only for a few brief months, and then went to join his angel-brother. The stricken mother even now lifted her tearful eyes heavenward, and between her sobs faltered out, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." A dear little daughter was next given to bless and to brighten the lonely home, but this sweet blossom was soon transplanted. Now, in the bitterness of her grief, the sorely-bereaved mother cried out, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." But as one whom his mother comforteth, even in this hour did the Lord comfort his stricken child. Yet now the mother began to droop. Months of weakness and pain she patiently endured. She knew that she would not recover, but with eyes clear and voice calm and steady she said, "I know Christ, and can fully and completely trust him in all things. He keeps my mind in perfect peace." When the end was approaching, she called for her friends and assured them that Christ was with her, and that her heart was full of faith

and joy. Then she bade all around her farewell and prayed for them. After this she was silent for a few moments, and then quietly and peacefully passed away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DEATH IN A HEATHEN HOUSEHOLD.—THE CONTRAST.

IN a Hindu household at our very doors were three little boys, "black but comely." All day long they played in the sunshine, as happy and as free from care as the sporting lambs or the birds that warbled in the branches above them. Their merry shouts of laughter could be heard from morning until night. Constantly in motion, they were climbing, dancing, leaping, as if they found delight in mere animal existence. Very poor were the parents, and they found it difficult to obtain food sufficient to fill the mouths of their hungry children; happily, it was not necessary to take much thought for raiment.

One morning the father called to tell us that one of his sons was ill. The boy

languished through the day, and the parents in agony called upon their gods; "but there was no voice, nor any that answered." Very early the following morning there was borne to our ears the sound of bitter wailing. Springing up and throwing open the shutters, we inquired the cause. "Jaglal is dead," was the answer. Around the little lifeless form gathered the parents and the sobbing brothers, and poured out their tears and bitter lamentations until the very air seemed freighted with anguish. Through all the morning hours that low wailing sound was heard, for the parents in this country, as in other lands, love their children fondly and account the death of a child, especially of a son, as a great calamity.

How hopeless seemed the sorrow of these stricken parents! In their affliction there was no thought of the chastening as a portion meted out to them by a loving Father's hand; it was, instead, a punishment inflicted upon them by an angry god. "What had they done," they questioned, "that they should be so sorely bereaved?

Had they not presented from time to time such offerings as they were able?" The little form they had loved so dearly would soon be hid from their sight, and for ever: their creed gave them no hope for the future. The child they had petted and fondled—what would it become? A tree, an animal, an insect or a bird? To them the child was lost, and lost eternally. No wonder, then, that their sorrow seemed heavier than they could bear. They had no such comfort in their sorrow and bereavement as Christian parents have in theirs. To them death was only blackness and the grave was dark as midnight.

A few hours after the death of the child the little form was wrapped in a bit of new cloth, and the father, accompanied by a few friends, bore the body in his arms to the Ganges and cast it upon the bosom of the sacred stream. When it had quite disappeared from view, with empty arms and aching heart the bereaved father returned to his desolate home.

One cold season, after we had spent several weeks in tents, moving from village

to village in order to carry the gospel to those living at a distance remote from the great centres, before we returned to our home, as the weather grew warm, two or three unoccupied bungalows were placed at our disposal. One of these was built upon a high bank overlooking the Jumna, at this point a broad and beautiful river. It was the middle of March, and the time of wheat-harvest. Following the reapers were the gleaners, glad, by gathering the stray sheaves, to provide a portion of food for themselves and for their households. Up and down the broad river passed curious native boats laden with wheat or cotton, or other merchandise.

Looking out one day, we saw a funeral-procession slowly moving down the bank to the water's edge. Upon a bed was laid a dead body, covered with a cloth. When the bearers had set down their burden, preparations were made for bathing the body, after which it was laid upon a small pile of fagots; and when it had been merely blackened, it was cast into the river.

Another day a body was brought to a little point of land that jutted far out into the river; to this place had been brought a large pile of fagots. The deceased evidently belonged to a high-caste family of considerable means. Several Brahman priests were in attendance, and performed the ceremonies customary upon such occasions. When all was in readiness, the body was placed upon the funeral-pile and covered with a new cloth. Upon a woman, in this case, devolved the duty of lighting the funeral-pile. This woman walked several times around the pile with a little bundle of burning fagots in her hand before setting it on fire. Applying the torch, the pile was instantly ablaze, and as the flames leaped up the woman turned her face away from the sight and uttered a loud and piercing cry. When the body had been partially consumed, the fire was extinguished, and the charred remains were cast into the river.

What a sad funeral it was! and how different from a Christian burial! We lay our dead reverently in the grave—with

tearful eyes and sorrowing hearts, it is true, but we are not left comfortless: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him;" but the poor heathen has no such hope in his sorrow.

CHAPTER XIX.

BENARES, AND ITS SCHOOLS FOR HEATHEN GIRLS.

TO the devout Hindu the Ganges is an object of worship from its source amid the snows of the Himalayas until it loses itself in the Bay of Bengal. The cities on the banks of the Ganges are naturally regarded as sacred, but the city of Benares is considered pre-eminently holy. It is a very ancient city—just how old is not known, but it was great and prosperous twenty-five centuries ago. The city stretches along the banks of the river Ganges for nearly three miles, and there are flights of handsome stone steps—or *ghâts*, as they are called—leading from the temples and palaces and from the narrow streets to the water's edge. On these broad steps there are always throngs of

people—the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the sad and the gay—all anxious to bathe in the sacred river whose waters they are taught to believe will cleanse them from all sin. Great numbers of priests are constantly in attendance, and these receive liberal offerings from the people.

While on a visit to Benares we joined a party of friends in an excursion on the river, and on that occasion had a fine view of the temples with their glittering domes and pinnacles, the stately palaces and the crowds of people flocking to the sacred places. Before we reached home the sun had set, and as darkness settled down over the city lights flashed from the temples, and out upon the gloomy river shot little vessels filled with oil in which lighted tapers had been placed. Each little lamp, as it rose and fell upon the water, was watched with anxious eyes, for it had been launched with a prayer to some heathen divinity. Should the light be quickly extinguished, this was accepted as an indication that the god was not pleased to grant the request;

if it floated on unextinguished, it was believed that the prayer would be answered.

Benares is a city full of temples and shrines. Idols great and small are found not only in temples, but in niches in the walls. Indeed, there are idols everywhere. And not only are dumb idols worshiped, but animals also. One large temple is devoted to monkeys; another, to sacred cattle. There are sacred wells and tanks.

Benares has also its busy bazaars and its shops filled with many beautiful and curious things; but nothing in this teeming city interested us so much as the schools for girls we found there. In one school which we visited there were more than a hundred heathen girls. Many of these children came from homes of great poverty and were very scantily clothed. One child, as she came forward with her class to recite, held in her arms a babe, thin and ill, that clung to her and moaned. The little sister was not impatient, but very tenderly rocked the puny creature in her arms. Many of the children in this school could read well.

BENARES.

They had learned much of the Bible, and they sang several hymns very sweetly.

In the second school which we visited the children were more comfortably clothed, and such bright, happy faces as they wore it was a delight to see. How eager they were to learn, and how proud of their attainments! Here, too, they had learned to sing Christian hymns, and several of the children recited the "old, old story" as it had been translated from English into their own language.

The third and last school which we at this time visited in Benares is supported by a Hindu nobleman who founded the school for the education of the daughters of high-caste natives. The school speedily became popular, and at the time of our visit twenty-one teachers were employed and six hundred pupils were in attendance. As we went from room to room our hearts were full of gratitude that in so idolatrous a city such a school was possible. In one department we found girls grown almost to womanhood, many of them well dressed and adorned with jewels. Maps were on

the walls and books and slates on the tables, while the ready answers and the eager looks showed that learning was a delight. In some of the rooms the children were learning the alphabet. They held in their hands pieces of tin or small, thin bits of board, upon which, with a reed pen dipped in a chalky mixture, they tried to copy the letters made by the teacher. In some of the classes the children were reading fluently; in others, learning geography; in others, working examples in arithmetic. One large room was occupied by the sewing-class. The girls were not learning plain sewing, but were making beautiful fancy articles.

"Why do they make those things?" we asked. "They can have no use for them."

"They are made for the nobleman who supports the school," was answered. "All the materials are furnished, and the maharajah is pleased to present these articles to his friends."

All the children in this school were from high-caste families, and some of the number wore many and handsome jewels.

When they moved about the room, the ornaments upon their feet and ankles made a tinkling sound. The children in this school do not receive Christian instruction, but to see so large a number of high-caste girls learning to read, and learning, besides, many useful lessons, in a school carefully superintended, the whole supported at a great cost by a native prince and in a city like Benares, is certainly most encouraging.

CHAPTER XX.

OTHER SCHOOLS FOR HEATHEN GIRLS.

SOME time ago we paid a visit to South India, and there saw several very interesting schools. The first which we visited was for heathen girls in the city of Vellore. The girls in this school were chiefly from well-to-do families, and were comfortably clothed and quite neat in appearance. Many of them wore gayly-colored jackets, and the bright colors contrasted pleasantly with the dark skin. A large number of the girls could not only read and write well, but they knew something, also, of geography, arithmetic, grammar and the history of their own country. They had been taught to sew, and the dark eyes sparkled with pleasure when some specimens of needlework were exhibited and the neatly-made garments called forth

well-merited praise. Better than all else, these girls had learned much of the Bible and the Saviour therein made known, for the wife and the daughter of the missionary living in Vellore had in their own loving way instructed them in these things. The parents of the children were proud of their attainments and gladly availed themselves of the opportunities afforded for the instruction of their daughters, though a few years ago it was considered very improper for a woman to be at all enlightened.

The place in which this school met, like many of the dwellings of the East, consisted of a large number of rooms opening into a central court. Sitting on the ground in this court, only the clear sky above them, were several little girls learning the Tamil alphabet, but they had neither book, slate nor blackboard. Fine clear sand to a considerable depth had been spread upon the ground in the form of a square, and around this sat the little girls writing in the sand, with the fore finger of the right hand making a letter, then with their fat little hands smoothing the sand and making the same

letter again until the teacher was satisfied. Learning the alphabet in this way was nearly as good as play to the children. It was a wise plan, too, for, while they learned to distinguish the letters one from another, they also learned to form them. When they had in this way learned all the alphabet, they were promoted to a higher class.

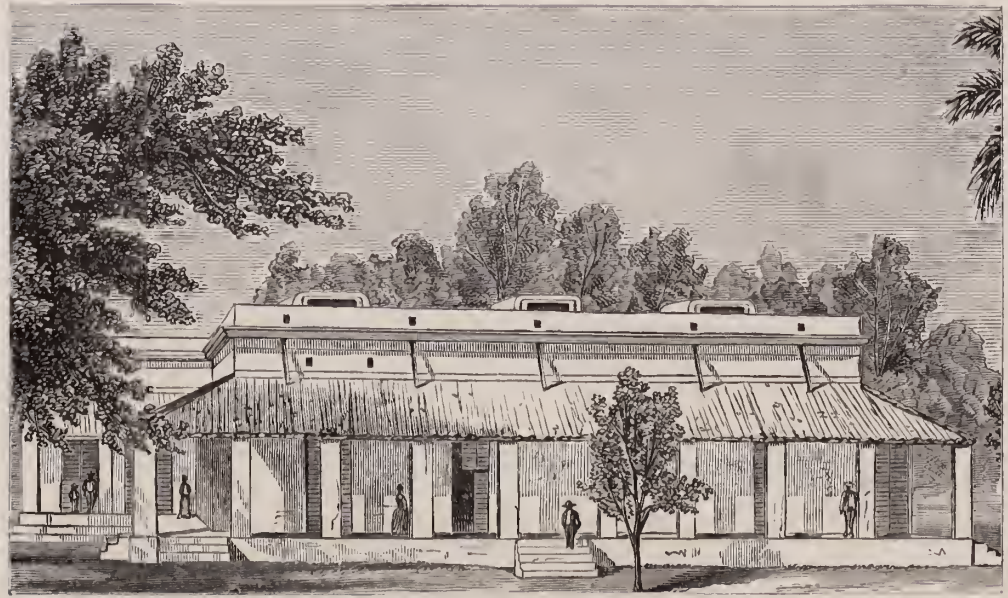
In another school which we visited the copybooks were brought us for inspection. They were made, not of paper, but of strips of the dried leaf of the Palmyra palm. These strips were about a foot in length and about two inches in width. Instead of a pen a little pointed steel instrument was used in writing. Through one end of each strip a hole was pierced, and the leaves of the book were then strung together.

We saw loads of this curious stationery on the way to the bazaar for sale. It is not only used in schools, but the accounts of shopkeepers are preserved in these leaf-books. On such strips records are kept, and even letters are written.

A third school which we visited was in

Trevandrum, the capital of Travancore. This little kingdom is governed by a very enlightened native prince; his palace is within the fort. Here is also a large and very sacred heathen temple. Several inferior princes and nobles, as well as a large number of high-caste natives, reside within the fort. The fort is enclosed by a high wall, and within the gates no person of low caste is allowed to dwell.

Several years ago one of the wealthy natives built for himself a fine house with large pleasant rooms. When the house was ready for occupancy, the owner heard at various times strange sounds which he could not understand, and, supposing that the house was haunted, could not be induced to take possession. About this time an English lady, as she read and heard about India's needs and how ignorant were the children in the most favored families, resolved to leave her pleasant home and devote her life to teaching the women and children of that dark land. She came to Trevandrum, and, won by the lady's kind face and pleasant words, several families of



MISSION-SCHOOL IN INDIA.

influence at length consented to place their daughters under her instruction. A suitable building was required, and the lady, hearing of the haunted house, visited it, and finding it well adapted to her purpose, and having no fear of the evil spirits supposed by the owner to dwell there, secured it for her school. It was in this fine building that we saw assembled a large company of happy children. The girls were evidently very fond of the school and of the kind lady in charge. All the children were taught to read and to write in their own language, and some of the older ones were also being taught to read and to write the English language. These bright-eyed girls were learning to use the needle with skill, and some of the specimens of work shown us were really beautiful.

In many families in India, even among the wealthy, the women are very ignorant. They have never learned to employ their hands, as the household occupations are left to servants; they therefore spend their time in a very idle manner—eating, sleeping, oiling and braiding their long black

hair, in admiring and counting their jewels, and, it must be confessed, not infrequently in gossiping and quarreling. But the children taught in these schools, when they become women, will have wiser, more womanly occupations.

We were both surprised and delighted to find how much precious Bible truth the girls in this school had learned. They knew much of the Saviour, of his life on earth and the work he came to do. They could repeat many precious passages of Scripture, and they sang very sweetly many Christian hymns.

Will not the reader pray for the heathen girls gathered into schools in India that they may not only learn about Jesus, but accept him as the Saviour and *their* Saviour?

CHAPTER XXI.

SCHOOLS FOR CHRISTIAN GIRLS.

AT the foot of the Himalayas, and separated from the plains by a range of low mountains, is a very lovely valley more than two thousand feet above the level of the sea. This valley is about sixty miles long and ten miles wide, and is bounded by the Ganges on one end and by the Jumna on the other. In the midst of this beautiful *doon*, or valley, is the pretty town of Dehra. Set in the midst of grounds tastefully laid out, shaded by trees of luxuriant foliage and bright with flowers of richest hues, are many pleasant homes. Some of the roads in and around Dehra are hedged with roses, and here and there are clumps of the feathery bamboo. Lofty, majestic Himalayan peaks are in full view, and on the slopes of the mountains eight or ten

miles distant nestle the white houses composing the picturesque towns of Landour and Mussooril.

A lovely spot is this town of Dehra, with its attractive homes, its fair and fragrant gardens and its glorious outlook, but to me the brightest spot in this fair valley is the large and fine school established about a quarter of a century ago for the daughters of Christian natives. Very few of these children in their own homes could be trained to such habits of neatness, order and industry as are essential to the formation of a symmetrical character, since many of the mothers themselves have received little education or training.

In this school the children are received as into a home, and are taught to prize its privileges and to bear each her share of its duties and responsibilities. They are taught to keep in a tidy condition their rooms, to make them cheerful and tasteful with womanly devices, to make their own clothing, and in order to inculcate a thoughtful, unselfish care for others each one of the older girls has in her care one of the young-

er pupils, for whose neat and tidy appearance she is responsible.

It is pleasant to watch the kindling of the eyes and to note the light beaming from the countenances of these girls in the classroom as some new truth is comprehended. One of the girls educated in this school has taken the high position of a graduate in arts of the University of Calcutta, the first woman in India who has attained to this degree. Some of the daughters educated in this school are now the wives of native pastors and teachers; others are themselves teachers; while others, in homes of their own, are doing their duty more faithfully, are making their homes brighter, purer and happier, because of the influence and education of this school.

I have told you in a previous chapter of the large and important school established in the city of Benares by a native prince for the daughters of high-caste families. Another school which I visited in the same city gave me much pleasure: this was the normal school for the training of native Christian girls. I saw the pupils first in the

chapel when they had assembled for morning prayers, a large number of neatly-dressed girls with happy and intelligent faces; later I saw them in their classes, and marked the interest manifested in their lessons and the prompt and correct answers. Deftly they had learned to use the needle, fashioning dainty garments which the "highest lady in the land" might wear with pride and pleasure. I saw some of those who had passed the full course of instruction in this school giving instruction in other schools and acquitting themselves with great credit. Bishop Speechly of Travancore, a visitor from the far South, writes of this school, "It is one of the most beautiful things in mission work I have seen."

When, a few years ago, we paid a visit to the South of India, we spent a Sabbath in the hospitable home of Bishop and Mrs. Sargent—a precious, never-to-be-forgotten Sabbath. Quite near the residence of the bishop was the church, a spacious edifice with seating accommodation for an audience of fifteen hundred. On the day we worshiped there the congregation numbered

nine hundred and fifty-nine, and a more interesting congregation we had not seen in India, the audience, adults and young people, so reverent, so attentive and apparently so intelligent.

But a short distance from the bishop's own dwelling was a boarding-school for the daughters of Christian natives; in this school Mrs. Sargent felt a very deep interest. Becomingly clad, graceful and polite in demeanor, the girls belonging to this school filed into the drawing-room on the evening of our arrival, and in low, sweet voices sang several Christian hymns. We saw these girls as they marched past the house on their way to the sanctuary on the Sabbath. Reverent in manner, as became the day and the service, it was a sight to fill the heart with gratitude. When the service at the church was over, the girls, fifty-eight in number, met Mrs. Sargent in one of the rooms of her own dwelling. Together they sang a hymn of praise, then in her own loving way Mrs. Sargent questioned them about the sermon to which they had just listened. Each girl held in her hand her

Bible, to which she frequently turned for references bearing on the subject under review. The hour closed with prayer, after which, in thoughtful mood, the girls returned to their own quarters. We saw them again the following day, when, their school-lessons over, they gathered in the broad, pleasant verandas around Mrs. Sargent's own room to receive instruction in needlework; and while their hands were thus usefully employed precious words of truth and wisdom fell from the lips of the beloved lady who joyfully spent her strength in such Christ-like service.

But this faithful laborer in the vineyard of the Master is not, for the Lord has called her to himself. Suddenly the summons came to her to "go up higher." On the last Saturday afternoon of Mrs. Sargent's life she had her girls, as usual, to pray for God's blessing and to prepare them for the duties and the privileges of the coming Sabbath. Before separating they sang together that beautiful hymn "Safe in the arms of Jesus." On the morning of the following Tuesday Mrs. Sargent passed away, and on the

morning of Wednesday her body was committed to the grave. Standing around the open tomb after the officiating clergyman had pronounced the benediction, the girls of Mrs. Sargent's boarding-school sang alone, in a softened strain, the first verse of the hymn, the last in which they had joined with their beloved teacher and friend, "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

Surely the girls trained under Mrs. Sargent's faithful care will never forget her wise and loving counsels. If disposed to be cast down in trouble, they will hear again the voice that so often said to them when schoolgirl trials seemed hard to bear, "Where is the smiling face the Christian ought to wear?" If tempted to be remiss in duty or prodigal of time and opportunity, they will hear the voice of the one who was for so many years their guide, in tones of gentle reproach whisper, as was her wont, "When the Master comes, he must find me at my work; Jesus claims all our time and all our powers."

We left Palamcottah at twilight one evening, and traveled all night in a con-

veyance drawn by bullocks. Just as the day was breaking we saw against the sky the tall and graceful spire of a Christian church. We were in the midst of a great sandy desert where only thorn-bushes and castor-oil shrubs seemed to grow, and the only tree that thrived was the Palmyra palm. Yet here in the desert was an imposing Gothic church edifice crowned with a beautiful spire. Not far from the church was a village numbering less than a thousand souls. Through this village was a broad street with rows of feathery palms on either side. Around the church the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. There were fine trees luxuriant in foliage, graceful creepers and lovely flowers in profusion and variety. There, too, was a Christian home as well as large and handsome school-buildings. We were welcomed to this paradise in the desert by Mrs. Thomas, widow of the Rev. John Thomas, who came to this spot in the wilderness in the year 1837. A desert it was indeed at that time, but wells were dug, buildings erected and trees planted; and the springs

opened in the dry and thirsty land caused the wilderness and the solitary place to blossom abundantly.

The corner-stone of the spacious church-edifice was laid on the 26th of June, 1843, and on the same glad occasion the corner-stone of a large and commodious building designed as a boarding-school for native Christian girls was also laid.

Does any one wonder why so noble a church-building and boarding-school were required in such a place? This desert-land, rich only in Palmyra palms, has been a field greatly blessed of the Lord. There are in the district of Mengnanapuram alone more than eighteen thousand persons in connection with one hundred and eighty-seven congregations, and in the various schools in the district are gathered over four thousand children.

When, in the year 1868, the top stone of the spire of the Mengnanapuram church was laid, a short thanksgiving service was first held within the church, when one thousand native children joined in singing the Doxology. The audience then stood

outside the building while the stone was adjusted, and at a given signal four thousand happy voices shouted, "Glory be to God!" taking up again and again the triumphant refrain until the desert rang with the joyful sound. Two years after this memorable occasion the faithful missionary whose labors God had so signally blessed laid aside his armor and went up to take his crown, leaving this beautiful church as his monument, and beneath its shadow he sleeps, waiting for the morning of the resurrection.

Mrs. Thomas and her daughter remain in the home hallowed by so many sacred and tender associations, that they may labor among the people for whom the husband and father laid down his life. The boarding-school for the daughters of Christian natives is their especial care. From the village schools scattered throughout the district those pupils are selected to enjoy the privileges of this school who, it is felt, will best appreciate and improve its advantages. Of the influence exerted upon children thus placed under Christian in-

struction Bishop Sargent says, "What influence does the kind and consistent character of the missionary's wife bear on these children! Fed with food convenient for them, well clad and trained to cleanly and regular habits, the moral and religious feelings exercised, children of very ordinary, and even forbidding, looks are turned into pleasing and attractive beings."

We set out from Mengnanapuram just at nightfall for another journey through the desert. It was not a long journey—less than twenty miles—but it occupied the entire night, a night of strange stillness, the creaking of the great wheels of the cart as they slowly turned in the trackless sand almost the only sound that broke upon our ears; but with the coming of the dawn we passed out of the desert into another paradise in the wilderness, Edeyenkoody—literally, "shepherds' village"—where for more than forty years the Rev. R. Caldwell (now Bishop Caldwell) has lived and labored.

When this faithful shepherd first made his home in this place, Edeyenkoody was

but a desert; now India boasts no fairer spot. In the midst of tasteful grounds rich in noble trees, blossoming shrubs and graceful creepers was set the home of Bishop Caldwell and his family. The village of Edeyenkoody was indeed a model village, with its broad, straight street, its tidy homes and its happy people. A spacious Gothic church-edifice designed to seat one thousand two hundred persons was in process of erection at the time of our visit.

Outside this little Eden all was desert, but in the sandy waste the Palmyra palm flourished, and here too Christianity had triumphed gloriously over heathenism the densest and grossest. Scattered over the district were Christian villages and congregations, churches, prayer-houses and schools.

At Edeyenkoody, as at Palamcottah and Mengnanapuram, we found a large boarding-school for girls. Into this school were gathered the more promising daughters of the Christian natives from the district. Carefully they were trained, that when they returned to their rural homes they

might be "specimens and patterns to the rest of the people of what Christian women ought to be, thus raising the character of the female portion of the community."

I fancy I see before me now the long line of neatly-dressed girls as they filed past the home of the missionary bishop and passed into the church. Nothing in connection with our delightful visit to Edeyenkoody do we remember with more pleasure than the school where so many of the daughters of the land were being trained for future usefulness.

Another night of travel by bullock-cart; and when the morning dawned, we stood on the seashore at Cape Comorin, the Land's End of India. Loudly the waves thundered against the rocky shore, sending out sheets of foam. There were groves of palms within a few rods of the shore, and there, too, were many temples; for Cape Comorin is one of the places of pilgrimage sacred to the Hindu. We remained by the sea until late in the afternoon, and then set out on our journey to Nagercoil, only a few miles distant. Here the Sabbath was spent

in the pleasant home of a missionary and his wife. It was our privilege on this Sabbath to worship with a large and very interesting congregation in a spacious church the corner-stone of which was laid by the Rev. Richard Knill on the 1st of January, 1819. The people of this congregation had just completed, at their own cost, a fine school-building near the church, and here, on the afternoon of the Sabbath, an interesting children's service was held.

On Monday we paid a visit to the excellent boarding-school for the daughters of the Christian natives connected with the congregations of this flourishing mission. This school was established more than seventy years ago, and has accomplished a noble work in the education of several generations of daughters. At the time of our visit the school was in the care of Mrs. Lee, wife of the Rev. William Lee.

I will speak of only one other boarding-school for Christian girls. This is at Cottagam, on the western coast of India. The school is now, as it has been for *sixty-five years*, superintended by Mrs. Henry Baker,

Sr., and not only superintended, but the pupils are personally instructed by this remarkable Christian lady. Mrs. Baker pointed out to us girls whose mothers, grandmothers and great-grandmothers have been educated in this school under her tuition. His Highness the late maharajah of Travancore not long before his death paid a visit to this school, examined the pupils in their studies and expressed himself much gratified with the result, sending afterward a considerable sum of money to be expended in prizes for the most deserving pupils.

Many years ago the Rev. Henry Baker, Sr., one of Travancore's most devoted missionaries, was called home to his reward; several years have passed since the Rev. Henry Baker, Jr., who followed in the footsteps of his father, also entered into rest, but the wife and mother, her heart wedded to the work in which her life since her early youth has been spent, still continues to labor, thinking not of rest until the Master shall summon her home.

Who can estimate the influence of this

one consecrated life? Is there no hope for India, when all over the land are found such nurseries of piety? May each child trained in these schools be like a lamp which shall shed its gleam far out into the darkness of India's night!

CHAPTER XXII.

SACRED BEASTS AND BIRDS.

SACRED MONKEYS.

ONE of the largest temples in the city of Benares is devoted to monkeys. Some time ago we visited this temple, and saw, running over its roof, climbing its pillars and scampering over the walls of the enclosure, more monkeys than I could count —some very large and old and gray, and some very young and small. There was in this temple a bell that the worshipers struck when they presented their offerings. The monkeys would climb to the bell and strike the hammer against the sides of the bell, just as they saw the people do.

While we were in the temple people came to bring offerings. When grain was thrown to the monkeys, they crowded around, chattered and pushed one another until their

hunger was satisfied or the food exhausted. Some of the older monkeys, with baby-monkeys in their care, would take the little creatures in their arms, and, climbing a wall or a part of the temple above our reach, would sit and look at us very gravely.

I went into a school one day to hear some little Hindu girls read. The book that one of the children held in her hand was very badly torn; and when I asked her how it had happened, she said, "A monkey did it."

A gentleman was one day packing his trunk for a journey, when a monkey came in at the door and carried away a pair of gloves.

The monkeys in this temple do a great deal of mischief in the houses and in the gardens near, but no one would dare to injure them.

A few years ago two officers in India were very much annoyed by a large monkey. One of the men, to defend himself, raised his gun and shot the animal. When the people knew what had been done, they were not only frightened, but were very

angry, and began to hurl stones at the officers, injuring them so much that, as the only means of saving their lives, they mounted the back of their elephant and ordered the driver to go as quickly as possible to the Jumna River, which was not far off, and let the elephant swim across. He did so; and though elephants can swim well, yet the water at the time was so very high, and the river so wide, that elephant and riders were all drowned.

SACRED BULLS.

To kill a cow is considered by the Hindus as a very great crime. In one of the cities in India where we lived several years ago I saw almost every day in the bazar a large sacred bull. The shopkeepers in India usually place on the little verandas before their shops samples of the kind of things they have for sale. The grain-merchants set out baskets filled with various kinds of grain—wheat, barley, rice, corn, and other kinds that you have never seen. This great creature would come to one of these shops and eat as much grain as he

wanted, and the shopkeeper would not disturb him.

A few years ago in the streets of Benares were seen great numbers of these

A SACRED BULL.

sacred bulls. They were very troublesome, and people could not walk about comfortably; so the magistrates issued an order commanding them to be removed from the streets. The people were greatly troubled, and said, "What can we do? We must not

let these creatures suffer. We will build a temple for them." So they built a very large and very fine temple, and into it they gathered the sacred animals; and there they are still fed and cared for, the people constantly coming to bring their offerings.

THE PEACOCK.

The peacock is a sacred bird, and, of course, it is regarded as a crime to kill one. About five years ago we went with a party of missionaries to a part of the country where white people had never before gone. Our tents were pitched in a pleasant grove, because, although it was winter, we needed the shade of the trees to protect us from the sun. This grove was full of peacocks.

The peacock is a bird with very fine feathers, but his voice is not pleasant. The little robin that comes to sing with the first warm days of spring has a plain brown coat, but his voice is full of music. We did not like the screaming of so many peacocks, especially as they were never quiet at night, and disturbed our sleep very much. As the pea-fowl is good for food,

we proposed that one should be shot. We thought not only that this would give us a dinner, but that the noise of the gun would frighten away the rest. A missionary who had been many years in the country said,

"No; do not shoot them. They are no more sacred than any of the other creatures God has made, but the poor natives think them so, and would be greatly displeased if even one should be killed. They have never heard of the Saviour. We have come to tell them of him; and if we displease them by taking the life of one of those birds, they will not listen to our words."

SACRED FISH.

A few weeks ago we saw people worshiping fish in a tank which had been made to receive the water from a spring that issued from the ground at the foot of a very high mountain. The tank was full of fish, and the water was so clear that we could see every movement of the active little fishes. These fish were regarded as very sacred; no one was allowed to catch or injure them, but they were fed with the

choicest food by the people who came to worship them: They brought not only wheat, rice and little cakes made of fine flour, but milk, and even roses. In a sheltered place near the edge of the water a priest sat all day to feed the fish. Many times during the day people came to bring their offerings, not only to the fish, but to the priests who cared for them.

YES, AND SNAKES!

Snakes are worshiped. The people think that by making offerings to them they will receive blessings. For many years a large snake lived about one of the temples of India. The people regarded the ugly creature as the god of the temple, and of course he was not disturbed, but milk and food of whatever kind he liked was brought him in abundance. At length a European in traveling about the country came to this temple, and seeing the large snake crawling about, and fearing some one would be injured by it, killed it. It soon became known, and the people were greatly enraged. They said to the man,

"This was the god that gave us the rain. Our fields are parched. You have killed our god, and the rain will no more visit us, and we and our little ones will perish."

They were so angry that the man was afraid he should be killed by them. He said to them,

"The rain will surely come again. This serpent could not give you rain."

They answered angrily,

"He has brought us the rain for many years. When our fields were withered, we have brought him offerings, and in return he has sent refreshing showers."

The poor man did not know what to do to quiet the people, but he asked God to help him. At length he said,

"I tell you that rain will come again; and if it comes again, and soon, will you let me go in peace?"

They consented at last, and the man prayed earnestly to God to give the people rain. His prayer was answered. Heavy showers soon refreshed the parched fields, and the people then permitted him to depart.

THE BAT.

A traveler in India a few years ago shot a bat. The noise of the gun brought all the people out of their houses; and when they saw that one of the creatures which they regard as sacred had been wounded, they set up a piercing cry and surrounded the man who had committed the deed. The man began to fear that he could not escape; but when they became a little more quiet, he told them that he was very sorry for what he had done, and promised to be more careful in the future. He was then allowed to return to his tent, and he went away very thankful for his deliverance.

Are you not glad that you live in a country where the life of a human being is considered of more consequence than that of a cow, a monkey, a snake or a bat? and will you not pity and pray for those who, instead of worshiping God, worship idols and the creatures God has made?

THE END.