

THE INDIA ALLIANCE.

“For we are labourers together with God.”

1 Cor. 3: 9.



“In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

Phil. 4: 6.

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AUSTRALIA TO INDIA.

Again the time has come to return to India, and I am standing on the deck of the “Moldavia” with a red streamer in my hand. My beloved daughter is holding the other end. Good-byes have been said and as the big ship moves out, and the stormy wind rises, and the shore recedes, the red streamer snaps, and one realizes that he is separated from his precious son and daughter and other loved ones. Yes, hearts break for Jesus’ sake; but still there is the hope that some day the ends of the red streamer—our hearts, will again meet in a glad reunion.

“I am with thee,” is true. He was right there on board ship and souls were blessed and won for Him. Soon the land of idols and devils and the home of the demons greets me with a sore throat, cold and indigestion, but still there is the ever present One. Praise the Lord!

Passing through Bombay I reached Poona, met old friends, and got my share of the monsoon rains that night as I lay on my bed with my eyes fixed upon the hole in

the roof! Next day I reached dear old Mukti where I received a royal welcome from our co-labourers there—Misses Wells, Hastie, Brown, McGregor and about eleven others. These are women who have sacrificed home, loved ones and comforts for the gospel's sake. After greeting me one said, "You are the man we need. Won't you stay a few days and help us roof the blind girls' house stripped by the storm? Six trusses are to be put up and new ones made." So I stayed for fifteen days. On two Sundays I had the joy of preaching to from 600 to 800 girls and women. Under the good care of the Mukti Missionaries my health improved.

A 600 mile trip brought me to Akola, our head station. After a conference with our good Chairman there I paid a week-end visit to Amraoti and Chandur stations. I greatly enjoyed the delightful fellowship with Mr. and Mrs. Carner, and had the joy of seeing many old friends. Especially was I glad to see a convert of six years ago who is a great joy to the Missionaries' hearts and to her Lord. Praise God for His jewels here in India!

My next move was to Anjangaon via Ellichpur by bus. Here, one whom the Master loveth is sick, so I went to speak a word of comfort to dear Brother Garrison who had remembered me so kindly in my time of sorrow. I found our Brother in his weak condition still working. He had just completed his new trailer and to my surprise said, "I am off to-morrow to a distant town to try her out and camp for four days. Won't you come with me?" So we started next day and went 54 miles with that new joint on the back of our car. We ran down two snakes on the way and arrived after dark. Guided by a dim lantern light and our noses, we selected a camping place. By the time dinner was over and camp pitched it was midnight. Weary in body we lay down to rest; but alas! the bazaar donkeys and dogs began to broadcast their up-to-date songs, so we listened in! About 1-30 a guru or Hindu priest took

his turn and began to broadcast a song of the gods which lasted till 2-30, and again we listened in! Then came the hush of the Indian town, and all was quiet till 5-30, when life began again.

At this place we had a crowd that never left us. Finally they began to tear up gospels sold to them and burn them. Two nights in succession we tried to preach and show pictures of Jesus and the gospel story, but we were ordered to stop. On the second night hundreds were present. They began to use vile language, curse Jesus Christ and throw sand. We saw that we were in great danger so we prayed and closed down the lantern. Police came and tried to get the throng off but did not succeed till midnight, and after many speeches had been made against us and our Lord. Finally we shook the dust from our feet in their presence, and next day our Brother Garrison left the town midst threats and abuse. I came to Jalgaon that day to prepare for conference and Brother Garrison spent a night or two in a small town where the poor received him and his message gladly, and some are asking how to be saved. Praise the Lord!

Pray for us this cold season as we go forth among wolves. May we be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

W. FLETCHER.

LIGHT THAT IS DARKNESS.

Early in November, added to the already big celebration of Dewali, the festival of lights, came the important event of an eclipse. To us it means only a peculiar phenomenon in nature which is interesting to see. But not so to the Hindus. Is it not written in their shastras that at such a time a huge giant is trying to swallow the sun or moon? Their word for eclipse means taking or seizing. By the giving of alms this great giant can be propitiated and caused to relax his grip. Hence the high caste people

give gifts of money, clothes or grain to the lower castes and outcastes. These low caste people are seen and heard everywhere, repeating their little rhyme, which interpreted would be, "Give alms, suspend taking," as they receive their donations.

Thus the giant refrains from his evil effort, which has caused the sun or moon to become defiled, and with it everything it shines upon. Grains and what scant provisions might be within the Hindu house, are kept undefiled by dropping a leaf of the Tulsi plant into the bag or receptacle, while all prepared food must be thrown away. The people themselves will be seen streaming to and from every important bathing place in their vain endeavours to be made clean from their defilement. This occasion is also considered an auspicious time to take the name of their gods, and repeat their mantras, which ceremony is preceded and followed by a bath.

The educated people will tell you that this superstition is adhered to only by the uneducated. However, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, high caste and low caste partake in the ceremonies. If asked why, no doubt they would say because their fore-fathers did so.

Very often, when telling the gospel story to the people we have occasion to ask them if going to the rivers and sacred places (so called) washes away the defilement of sin from their hearts. Very readily the reply comes, "No." They say, "Our clothes and bodies become clean, but our hearts remain the same." Praise God for the privilege of telling them that the living God has provided a remedy for sin, and that the heart can be made every whit clean through the precious blood of His Son. Will you please pray that as we go forth these days with this precious message of salvation, the bands of superstition and idolatry may be broken so that they might be able to see that the Light of the world is Jesus.

ALICE BACKLUND.

CASTE BONDAGE AND CRUELTY.

It was a hot day (not that all the days in India are not hot, but some are hotter than others) when Miss Woodward and I boarded the train in Mehmedabad and entered the Women's third class compartment. There were four Indian women in the compartment. They were all of the farmer caste. One was a sad faced young widow, two were women of matronly, dignified appearance and one was an old grandmother. In a few minutes we were engaged in conversation with them, and after some preludes we struck the marriage chord.

Different castes have different marriage laws. Some castes sell their daughters in marriage and the child wife usually goes to the highest bidder, but in the farmer caste the girl's parents must give a very large sum of money to the father of the bridegroom. I asked how the poor people managed it. The old woman said, "If one is rich it is not so bad, but we poor folks spend all our lives earning money to pay to have our daughters married." "Is there no remedy?" I asked. "Yes there is one remedy and the poor folks often resort to it. We murder the girl child shortly after birth." When I exclaimed in horror at such a custom, they went on to tell us that one woman had two daughters whom she drowned. She told us that when her first daughter was born she turned her face to the wall while her mother-in-law drowned the child in a huge vessel of milk. Her mother-in-law had drowned six daughters of her own in this same manner. I asked why they used milk. They explained that the cow is the sacred animal in India and if the gods see that a child is drowned in milk they will not be angry and will not curse them. While this conversation was taking place the widow sat silent. But when I told them it was murder and a very sinful thing to do, the widow leaned forward and said, oh, so bitterly, "I wish my mother had drowned me, for would I not then have been better off? My

parents spent so much money to marry me and now I am a widow, far better to be dead," and the three Indian women listening, nodded their heads in assent. The old grandmother said, "Your religion is different, isn't it? You seem happy and free. Your country is different. Why is it?" And here was the golden opportunity. So while the train thundered on and the hot wind blew into the dirty compartment, Miss Woodward told them the old, old Story of salvation for all. I sat back in the corner and prayed that their minds might be able to grasp it and to believe it. When I looked up I saw the young widow leaning forward in her seat that she might catch every word with such hunger and yearning in her eyes. They seemed to be saying, "Can it be for me too?" My own were blinded with tears. These poor, needy women in India, they are so many and their need is so great. Won't you pray?

TAMAR E. WRIGHT.

BEGGARS IN BHUSAWAL.

During our short residence in Bhusawal city, we have been mainly occupied with some renovating work in the bungalow, and so have not much to say regarding the work here as yet. However, we have had ample opportunities to become familiar with one section of Bhusawal society—the beggars.

At any time of the day or night one has only to alight from the railway station and walk two blocks toward the market place, to pass from six to a dozen or more wretched human beings, sitting in the dust of the roadside, begging a few coppers. Some are crippled, or deformed and some are blind, while others are merely homeless, aged and starving. Often there is a leper or two. Of course, they all wear nothing but dirty rags. Many of these beggars permanently reside in Bhusawal, while others are travellers, begging from town to town.

Some of these beggars seem to do quite well. There is one crippled man who has the luxury of a crude wheel-chair, and his friends push him around to his place by the road every day, prepare his meals, and even place an umbrella over him during the heat of the day. We used to be more liberal with him until we found he could afford to smoke European made cigarettes. Another, a little blind girl who sits at the foot of the bridge over the R. R. tracks, supports her whole family through her earnings in this way. Miss Steed wished to send this little child to the Ramabai Mukti Mission to be educated and cared for, but her parents could not afford to lose the family breadwinner. However, all do not fare so well, we are sure.

We realise that we have an obligation both material and spiritual to the scores of beggars in Bhusawal, and we plan to start a weekly "Beggars' meeting" in the immediate future, at which time we will ease our consciences by giving each one a little grain, and make them earn it by listening to a sermon.

But while maimed and diseased paupers seem content to sit by the road side, many that are hale and hearty persist in coming to our door to present their claims. The other day about ten people most of them English speaking came asking for "a little Railway fare." We invite these friends inside, if we have time, and give them a little private sermon, not forgetting the closing prayer. Then, if they do not smell too strongly of liquor, we try to donate the price of a simple meal, just to make the rest "stick." Yes, Missionary life is anything at all but monotonous, and we solicit your prayers that we might be, "Instant in season, out of season."

FRED. AND MRS. SCHELANDER.

THE STORY OF JESUS.

Last year, because of sickness, I was not able to get out into the district among the women very much, so it is with great expectancy and eagerness that I look forward to district work this touring season. Let me give you one or two incidents which have filled my heart with gladness and spurred me on to greater activity in getting the Gospel to the women of Chalisgaon district.

During the rainy season I frequently went to the market on Saturdays and sat in the car while the weekly marketing was being done. In this way I had opportunities of talking with numbers of women who gathered about the car. In one crowd there was one woman who seemed particularly interested, so I inquired as to who she was and the name of her town. I asked her if she would assemble the women to listen to the Gospel if I came to her village. She said she gladly would. It was some time before I had the opportunity of visiting the town. I had forgotten her name, but described her to the people who gathered upon our arrival. One young lad standing near me said, "I know whom you want. I was standing near the motor that day." So he sent for her. When she came I had already started the meeting but stopped to greet her. Her face fairly shone as she said to the women. "Oh! she said she would come to my village and she has come." She immediately sat down in front of me and said, "Tell me the Story about Jesus." As I told her the Story she and an old lady who sat beside her seemed to drink in every word. I believe those two are very near the Kingdom.

The other day as we entered a village I saw ten or fifteen women standing in the doorway of a large courtyard. Usually upon entering a village I seek out the high caste quarters, but this large group of women attracted me and I went to them. They seemed so glad that I had come. As the Biblewoman explained the song we had

sung, one woman standing near said, "This is good. This is true." After a time they said, "Let the Bible-woman teach us." So after another song, I began to tell them about sin and its awful grip upon us and how Jesus had come to free us from it. Just as parched ground drinks up the rain so these women drank in this message. As I talked, one woman explained the message sentence by sentence to the others. They seemed eager to know the prayer I told them they should pray, and asked me to come back and teach them hymns and Scripture verses. Pray that I may have an opportunity of returning to this village soon and that these women may remain open to the Gospel.

RUTH SCHLATTER.

ITEMS.

In the middle of November our Chairman, Mr. Moyser, commenced a tour of all our Alliance stations in Gujarat, Khandesh and Berar, for the purpose of eliciting from our Indian Evangelists and Biblewomen suggestions as to how we can retain our present staff of workers, in face of the annual reductions of 10% in their wages, as per the plan of devolution adopted by our Home Board. Our Field Treasurer's receipts for the last ten months disclose a shortage of 50% in workers' allowances, so the problem which confronts the Field Committee is a very real one and is keenly felt by our workers, of whom we have but a bare 130, divided amongst a heathen population numbering 3,500,000. Ways and means of extracting more financial help from our Indian church were discussed. Homeland friends, please pray much for our native church. She is experiencing a new kind of 'growing pains,' and needs prayerful and careful handling that her 'faith fail not.'

District Missionaries on tour are experiencing most unusual weather. Last week in November heavy rain surprised us and made jungle roads muddy and sticky and our canvas homes damp and uncomfortable. High, cold winds shake the tents from stem to stern, while Station reports show many blown down trees and broken roof tiles. Ask God to protect His Messengers, brown and white, from colds and other maladies, so that the glorious work of proclaiming Christ, *the Saviour*, Who 'came into the world to save sinners,' might not be hindered.

Shortly after Convention, Mr. A. I. Garrison was seized with another severe attack of illness and it seemed as if he were very near the borderland, but God, in His mercy, spared the precious life, we believe for His glory, and he is now up and doing although still very weak and frail. Continue to plead 'His stripes' at our Father's throne for our brother's complete restoration to health and strength.

Gerald Carner; Stephen, Maran, Bernice and Margaret Garrison; Elizabeth and Charles Gustafson and John and Marion Kerr are all home from school for a two months' vacation and great is the joy in the hearts and homes of both parents and children. They are all well: active as bees and supremely happy in their release from study and books.

As we go to Press Mrs. Carner is in Miraj Hospital for an operation for gall stones. Mrs. Amstutz is suffering from pleurisy in a Bombay hospital, where she was taken immediately from board ship. Miss Rurey is recovering after an operation for appendicitis and dear little David Hostetter is down with paratyphoid fever. We need help and health from God and would request that our readers make intercession for the physical as well as the spiritual health of our Missionary family.

A Christmas babe, named Dorothy Jean, was born to Mr. and Mrs. Ringenberg on December 21st.

N. B.—News comes that all our sick ones are on the road to recovery.