

The India Alliance

A BULLETIN OF THE INDIA MISSION OF THE
CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE

"Other sheep I have . . . them also I must bring."

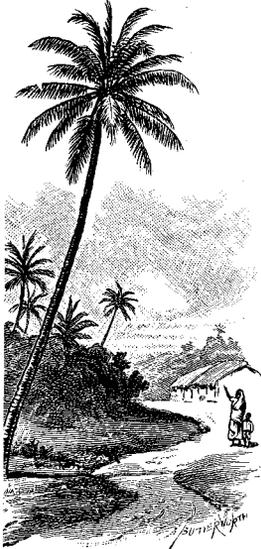
JULY—SEPTEMBER

1939

It Was Worth Coming All The Way For

By FRED W. SCHELANDER

Recently we held a convention at one of our outstations. Nearly fifty people were gathered together for three days of Bible study and spiritual fellowship. The last evening on such occasions is always given over to testimonies. How very, very often we have wished that our friends at home could attend one of these testimony meetings, and understand what was being said! At first you might be rather occupied with the local colour—the strange garb, the squatting so naturally on floor or ground in lieu of seats, the primitive drums and other musical instruments mostly of the dried pumpkin shell type, the antiphonal singing, the sheer frank informality of it all—but you would soon forget all this, we believe, and become wholly absorbed in perceiving that God has indeed "put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us." Three



weeks have gone by since our Panori convention, but since you couldn't be there, I shall try to give you the gist of a few of the testimonies as I recall them after this interval.

First to rise to his feet was Bhona, a young man of about twenty-four, baptized with his wife three months before. He told us that since his baptism his own parents and all his relatives had



BAPTISMAL SCENE

Miss Agnete Hansen

This picture was taken on the Kartapurna River in Berar. Kartapurna means *plenty-of-thorns* and a journey along its banks would convince you of the aptness of the name.

refused to have anything to do with him. The leaders of his village had threatened and scolded him. But in spite of starving conditions everywhere, God had helped them thus far. And now some of the very people in his village who had persecuted at first had begun to gather around him to listen to the reading of the Bible. He had brought two couples to be baptized at this convention. His wife was unable to come to the convention because she was to be confined in a day or two. They had nothing to eat but weeds which they gathered and cooked each day. Because his mother and relatives would not help, no one was with his wife but her ten year old sister.

Hitherto (very sorrowfully) they had buried each baby, but now they were trusting Jesus and were doing none of the idolatrous rites they had practised before. Would all the brethren and sisters please pray for a safe delivery? After this Bhona read from the old torn Bible, which had been given him, a few selected verses. The reading of those particular verses revealed two things as plain as day. First, that Bhona had been studying his Bible, and secondly, that such verses had been the source of the stamina he had manifested in the face of his trials.

Friends at home, do place Bhona on your hearts! He is just the type of village leader we need. God surely has a ministry for him. Pray that he may fulfil it. Our mission worker in that section told me afterwards that Bhona was a most extraordinary convert, and had been a profound inspiration to him.

Next to rise was dear old Sapuna. I remember when he was baptized three and a half years ago, an old grandfather, from whom we didn't expect anything at all. I remember calling on him to pray, and his answer: "How can an old man like I am pray?" A young man of his village, who had spent a year in our Bible School, condescendingly encouraged him! "Oh, just say two words somehow or other. God knows you are ignorant and doesn't expect any more of you." That time he repeated a simple prayer, phrase by phrase, after us, and we told him to practise praying "just like that," only in his own words. Today it is not the young ex-Bible School student (though he still lives there) who is the spiritual leader of that village, but old grandfather Sapuna himself! The group meets for worship in *his* building, which he has dedicated as a church. *He* rings the bell and goes from house to house to call the people to daily prayers, including the tardy ex-Bible School student who conducts them. Each morning at four o'clock old Sapuna, in true, old-fashioned Hindu style, begins his Christian worship. He sings all the hymns he knows, recites all the Bible verses he knows, and prays like a veteran. And now what is his testimony? "This is the very hardest year I think I have ever seen. This hot season I wondered how we

would ever survive. But God has not let us go hungry yet, and now I have faith to believe that He will give us food right until the new harvest." (Sapuna brought six measures of grain, worth a man's wages for a week, to the convention.) Sapuna's wife also witnessed. I can't recall just what she said, but I was struck by her face and her



Miss Agnete Hansen

BAPTISMAL SCENE IN AKOLA DISTRICT

A group of friends and neighbours are present to view the solemn ceremony. Baptism means more when the open testimony which it symbolizes means the breaking away from caste and customs of the past and walking in a life which is new in a very literal sense.

voice. The little old lady was so earnest, so eager, so full of conviction!

Jibibai, a widow, a Christian of over twenty years, and once an opium slave, gratefully thanked God for bringing her son into the fold, after so many years of indifference.

Samrut, a simple illiterate young lad of about seventeen, and a Christian of only a few months, lives in the village in which the convention was held. He could attend only the evening meetings because his Hindu employer could not spare his services. He narrated a recent experience. He had been carrying a heavy load (on his head, of course, as all loads are carried in India) across the

fields in the hot sun. Tired, he sat down to rest. Then he sang some hymns and recited what Bible verses he knew. Then he closed his eyes and prayed. He didn't know just why, but tears began to fall. When he looked up there was a woman standing before him. "Why are you crying, my lad," she said, "are you in trouble?" "No", he replied, "I'm not in trouble, I was only praying to God." "And is that the way you pray?" she asked. Then he told her how to pray to God.

Ruma is a poor old man whom many consider not entirely sane, because, with nothing but barest rags on his back, he gives all the money he earns to the Lord instead of spending it for clothes and other necessities. He is the only person I know with just that type of mental weakness, whether in India or America. Ruma rose to thank the Lord that his wife's chronic eye trouble was better, and to ask, with tears, prayer for her complete healing.

Jyoti, a high school student, son of Christian parents, confessed that he had grieved and disobeyed the Lord and gone his own wilful way. At this convention he had repented and now he wanted to go God's way.

An old converted Hindu "sadhu", or begging religious teacher, too infirm to work, now wanders around, dependent as before on charity, but witnessing the gospel to his old disciples and others. He testified to blessing received during the convention, and recited several passages of Scripture, a rather impressive feat for one of his age and background of illiteracy.

Sudam, nearly thirty, once spent a year or two in our Bible School. But since then he slipped partly back into heathen ways and has been more of a stumbling block than an aid to the Christian cause. He humbly made a confession, asked the prayers of all that his life might be different in future, and promised a good sum of money (three weeks' wages at that time) toward the expenses of the convention.

Seven persons baptized that day testified, and so did some of the other candidates for baptism whom we had asked to wait a little

longer. Many other Christians, men and women, gave their words of witness. Some were extremely interesting, but I can't remember the details. Mothers thanked God for restoring their sick babies, and so on. These poor people live very close to nature, and the stark facts of hunger and disease stand out above all else in their daily lives.



H. Davies

A primary Sunday School class. The two ladies in the picture are Mrs. R. E. Neighbour and Miss Bernice Steed. Miss Steed was in charge of the Sunday School and Mrs. Neighbour a special visitor, on this occasion.

Hence what some would call a materialistic note is always dominant in the majority of cases. But it is not materialism. The Heavenly Father cares for sparrows; much more for his poor children, in their troubles.

Sometimes, with moistened eyes, I have felt it was worth coming all the way to India just to sit crosslegged on the ground amid a ragged circle of the Lord's redeemed from among the outcastes of this land, and hear them "bless the Lord who daily beareth their burden."

For Better Honey-moons

BY HARRIET BEARDSLEE

Some years ago a promising young man by the name of Zuma enrolled as a student in the Young Men's Bible School. For a time he seemed very much in earnest and enjoyed the study of God's Word but Zuma wanted to be out doing something. He left the school and found employment, after some time, in the Government Forestry department. Thinking that he must have a name equal to his station he called himself George Washington! He did not feel that God had called him to be a preacher but he continued to give his testimony.

On the twenty-seventh of December of last year, "George Washington" was married. His wife is a bright little woman who is acting as headmistress in a Primary School in Badnera. They seem to be very happy and he is as proud of his wife as he is of his name. He got two months' leave of absence in order that he might celebrate this great occasion. Living in his wife's home he went out daily to preach the gospel. While the missionary and her Bible-woman held meetings with the women, they could hear George's voice pleading with the young men to leave their sins and take refuge in the Lord Jesus Christ. George takes an active part in the work of the church whenever he is in the vicinity, but his work calls him to many places where the name of Christ is not known. Pray that he may be a fruit-bearing volunteer in the Lord's service.

We trust that other young men may follow "George Washington's" example and spend their honey-moons in preaching the gospel.

And (Jesus) said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.—Luke 18: 29, 30.

News and Notes

Summer Schools, one in Berar and one in Gujarat, make rainy season days very full for our Indian evangelists and their teachers. Pray for them.



Miss Agnete Hansen

A GROUP OF CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM IN THE AKOLA DISTRICT
IN THE PAST TOURING SEASON

A Berar-Khandesh Conference of representatives of six or seven Missions working in these two provinces is planned for the middle of September. These brethren will meet at Khamgaon, one of our Alliance Mission stations, for two or three days of counsel and united prayer concerning the Lord's work. All Missions represented in this Conference are free from the blight of Modernism and all believe in the verbal inspiration of God's Word. All have common interests relative to God's programme for this generation of believers and all are bearers of the light to those who sit in darkness. Such a Conference should result in fresh inspiration and blessing to all the

Missions concerned, and in deeper, and closer fellowship in our great common task.

With gratitude to our faithful God we record His answer to prayer on behalf of brother C. A. Gustafson, whose serious throat trouble was mentioned in the last number of THE INDIA ALLIANCE. The doctor's verdict, when Mr. Gustafson reported to him at the end of the hot-season, was that the vocal cords were well once more.



BABULNATH, BOMBAY

A picture of one of the more elaborate of India's many temples. The gods of man's own making are on the inside

We thank all the friends who joined us in prayer for Mr. Gustafson and we know you will share with us in praising our heavenly Father for His goodness to our brother and to us.

We request special prayer on behalf of Rev. Elmore F. Eicher. He has suffered a great deal in the past year with malaria fever and while he has carried on for the Lord, it has been very difficult at

times. Pray for his perfect deliverance from this stubborn and trying malady.

The meeting of our General Assembly takes place in the first week in October in Ahmedabad, the largest city in western India, except Bombay. Representatives of the nine Alliance Church Councils will gather in this assembly to discuss the problems of our work and to consider ways and means whereby we may best move forward in God's programme for us. Be with us *to help*, by prayer.

The Annual Conference of our missionaries is scheduled for the last week in October. We look forward to a season of blessing and inspiration at this time. This year we expect to have Rev. and Mrs. John R. Turnbull with us to bring messages from God's Word and reports from the various Alliance Mission fields, in which they are touring this year. Mr. Turnbull is one of our veteran India missionaries and we welcome him and Mrs. Turnbull, fully assured that when they come we shall be comforted together with them by the mutual faith both of them and us (Romans 1: 12),

Our Indian staff of workers has suffered the loss of one of its oldest members, brother Yeshwantrao Ramteke. He went to be "with Christ" in April. We have known and loved him many years and shall miss him. We remember with gratitude his testimony and his preaching as we toured with him in heathen villages.

Reason unstrings the harp to see
Wherein the music dwells;
Faith pours a Hallelujah song,
And heavenly rapture swells.
While Reason strives to count the drops
That lave our narrow strand,
Faith launches o'er the mighty deep
To seek a better land.

—*Frances R. Havergal.*

FOREIGN DEPT.

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