

The India Alliance

NEWS OF THE INDIA FIELD OF THE CHRISTIAN AND

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"Clouds"

By RUTH GUSTAFSON, Men's Bible School, Mehmedabad

The glories of nature, as a beautiful sunset or banks of cumulus clouds, often compensate one for having to endure the excessive heat of India's hot season which ushers in the unpleasant Monsoon days. Naturally during this season our eyes are "cloudward" for the position and colour of the clouds are a good barometer. When the clouds are dark and lowering we anticipate rain. Such clouds are welcomed at the beginning of the rainy season, but sometimes it happens that adverse winds come which blow away the clouds and our hopes with them. At other times we have discovered that the "clouds are without water carried about of winds" and appear only to mock those who have prepared their fields in anticipation of a good harvest.

"Clouds" of all shapes, colours and types have been in evidence since the Bible Training School in Gujerat was reopened nearly four years ago. The "Job's comforters" said, "You can expect nothing from such 'clouds'." A few encouraged us, and with us, kept gazing upward, praying that the "clouds" bringing refreshing showers might soon appear. During the first year, several "clouds" gave great promise but teacherous winds caused them to drift away. The majority of the young men whom we have likened to clouds have been tempted by the high wages paid by the mills in Ahmedabad, the industrial centre of this district. Others found study and discipline too irksome, and they, too, faded away as we watched the playful winds toss them here and there. However, there have also been "clouds" with silver linings, and such have inspired and created hope for the future of the school as well as for the future of the church.

Three such "clouds," holding great promise, completed the course of the Bible School in April. One is assisting the missionary ladies in Ahmedabad in their work among the women and children. The second, an orphan who has been in the Mission from babyhood, is labouring among the children, acting as teacher and adviser to them in a Christian village. The third "cloud" is in evangelistic work, walking from village to village to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ. He has had to suffer persecution from his wife and relatives. Many tempting offers of work with increased wages have been given him, but God has kept him faithful to the "voice" who bade him leave and follow Him. His message is given with conviction and power for he has been delivered from the darkness of heathenism with

its chains of idolatry. The simplicity and direct approach to the village people have brought response. Truly the transformation in his life has been miraculous.

During this young man's third year in Bible School, the subjects to be studied were difficult and quite beyond his natural ability, for he had only passed the third standard in the village school when a boy. He claimed the promise of James 1: 5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." His presence in the class was an inspiration, for his face expressed feelings of wonder and joy as he listened to the expounding of the Word of God. Daily we saw improvement until he was able to keep pace with the other students in the class and passing in all his subjects—even Church History!

In I Cor. 1: 26-29, we read, "Not many wise after the flesh are called . . . but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. He hath chosen the weak things, the base things and things which are despised." The "silver cloud" of this year's Preparatory Class fits this description, for he is an outcaste by birth. Several years ago he was baptized and became a Christian by name, but he had no understanding of spiritual things. During special meetings held in his village church he became deeply convicted of sin. Sleep fled and night after night he tossed on his bed until in desperation he began to read his Bible and to pray earnestly for deliverance from the load on his heart. God is faithful and His promise that "they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled" is true, for this poor ignorant lad prayed; God revealed Himself, delivering him from his burden of sin and flooding his soul with joy. At once he began to witness for Christ to his outcaste relatives, as well as to the caste people in his village. Later he began to feel the need for training. He walked here one morning to ask if we would take him into the Bible School. His qualifications for entrance were nil, but he pled so earnestly for a chance to study God's Word that we decided to accept him. His love for Christ and simple faith have been an inspiration to us many times. He has told us many times that his former life held only selfish desires but now his greatest ambition is to be a witness for Jesus Christ. In no uncertain terms, he gives the reason for the hope within and his face literally shines as he tells others of what Christ has done for him.

Join us in prayer for the young men we have mentioned and for those we have left unmentioned. Pray that the Holy Spirit shall call other young people to "forsake" the urge to seek high wages and worldly honours so as to prepare themselves to serve the Lord and His Church in this needy corner of India. Pray for "clouds" full of "living water"—"water" for "him that is thirsty" "floods" for this "dry ground."

The India Alliance

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The Good Soldier

India's Soldier Viceroy, Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell, has recently written an incisive essay entitled, "THE GOOD SOLDIER." With a wealth of military experience which comes of 42 years of active soldiering, Lord Wavell rates "toughness, endurance, as the prime requirement" of the good soldier. This brings to mind the injunction of that dauntless warrior—who fought "not against flesh and blood, but against . . . spiritual wickedness"—when he wrote to Timothy, "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

Christian soldiering, especially of the mission field variety, can be compared to the soldiering Lord Wavell refers to when he says, "Soldiering . . . has always been a hard testing business." For this "hard testing business" more men of the rugged qualities of William Carey, David Livingstone, James Chalmers, Hudson Taylor—and more recently, Robert Jaffray—are needed on the mission fields of the world. With disciplined devotion to the calling of the Captain of their salvation these soldiers of the Cross braved every foe and endured all afflictions in their selfless ambition to make Christ known. We of this younger, and perhaps softer, generation earnestly voice the prayer, "O God, to us may grace be given to follow in their train!"

News and Notes

The Annual Rally of the Young People of the Seven Missions in Berar and Khandesh convened in Yeotmal, Berar, a mission station of the Free Methodist Church, Nov. 7, 8, 9, 1945. About 600 young people, of whom about 200 comprised our Alliance delegation, attended the Rally. The principal speaker was Bishop John Subhan of the Methodist Church. The blessing of the Lord was manifest in the meetings.

A similar Rally took place about the same time as the one above mentioned for the young people of our Alliance Churches in Gujerat. The Rally was organized by the young people of the Simpson Memorial Church in Ahmedabad. This was the First Rally to be convened in the Gujerat and the results were most gratifying. Mr. P. P. Phillip of Travancore was the principal speaker.

The Annual Conference of our India Mission convened in Akola, November 21 to 27, 1945. The guest speaker was Bishop John Subhan, a converted Moslem, presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in the Bombay Area. The missionaries were much inspired as he laid stress upon the importance of evangelism and exhorted that true evangelism is the manifestation of the fullness of Jesus in the lives of believers.

Great encouragement has come to the India field through the arrival of the following New Missionaries in addition to those mentioned previously: Mr. and Mrs. P. Morris to work in Gujerat, Mr. and Mrs. A. Shaw to work on the Marathi field, Miss Gladys Jasper to assist in the work of the Headquarters Office.

We learn with deep sorrow of the passing to his reward of Mr. C. L. Eicher on December 20th, 1945. In former years Mr. Eicher served on our India field. More recently his work with the World Wide Prayer and Missionary Union in Chicago has been a means of encouragement, blessing and advance in the work of the Lord around the world.

The Mission Executive Committee reports with utmost regret the necessity of immediate furlough of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Eicher, to help in the work of the World Wide Prayer and Missionary Union, and earnestly hopes that they can arrange to return to India before long. Mr. A. C. Eicher sailed for America on December 18th and Mrs. Eicher and the children will follow later.

With the advent of the cold season months the Touring Season is in full swing. Prayer is requested for eternal results from the evangelistic effort put forth by the missionaries and their Indian comrades during this period of itinerating.

Prayer is requested for the annual Camp Meeting Season which begins with the coming of the hot season at the end of February.

With the march of time in India Political Development marks time, awaiting the outcome of the elections to the provincial assemblies in April. If the plan of the British Government is carried to fruition the newly elected members of these assemblies will play a leading part in formulating a constitution for a nationalist India. Keep praying for India's future and, above all, for her Church.

A Tiger Story

The following anecdote quoted from the famous book, MAN-EATERS OF KUMAON by Jim Corbett (published by Oxford University Press and printed in India by the printers of our paper, The Wesley Press, Mysore City), is a modern parable from real life in India which graphically illustrates the fact of the Gospel—Jesus risked the dangers of this dark world's jungle of sin "to seek and to save that which is lost"—

"The father of the lad returned to the village at sunset. . . . Asking where the lad was, he was told that he had gone out earlier in the day to get fodder, and surprise was expressed that the father had not found him at home. After bedding down the bullocks the father went from house to house to find his son. All the men who had been out that day were questioned in turn and all had the same tale to tell—that they had separated at the head of the valley and no one could remember having seen the lad after that.

"Crossing the terraced cultivated land the father went to the edge of the steep hill and called and called again to his son, but received no answer.

"Night was by now setting in. The man returned to his home and lit a small smoke-dimmed lantern and as he passed through the village he horrified his neighbours by telling them, in reply to their questions, that he was going to look for his son. He was asked if he had forgotten the man-eater and answered that it was because of the man-eater that he was so anxious to find his son, for it was possible he had fallen off a tree and injured himself and for fear of attracting the man-eater, had not answered to his call.

"He did not ask anyone to accompany him and no one offered to do so and for the whole of that night he searched up and down that valley in which no one had dared to set foot since the advent of the man-eater. Four times during the night—as I saw from his foot-prints—when going along the cattle track he had passed within ten feet of where the tiger was lying eating his son.

"Weary and heartsick he climbed a little way up the rocky hill as light was coming, and sat down for a rest. From this raised position he could see into the ravine. At sunrise he saw a glint of blood on the two big rocks, and hurrying down to the spot he found all that the tiger had left of his son. These remains he collected and took back to his home, and when a suitable shroud had been procured, his friends helped him to carry the remains to the burning ghat on the banks of the Mandal river."

The one point at which this parable obviously differs with the wondrous story of redeeming love is that the Lord Jesus rescues those sons of men who trust His vicarious death on the Cross to release them from the foul clutches of that most dangerous Man-Eater, Sin!

By All Means

By HARRIET BEARDSLEE

Principal, Women's Bible School, Khamgaon

Paul said, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." In Khamgaon, Miss Moore has charge of the Preparatory School of 120 girls and Miss Hansen and I have the Bible School comprised of 30 young women. Hence we are living in the midst of 150 young lives. To be all things to these young people, day after day and week after week, means that we must guard every step, ponder carefully every word, and walk circumspectly at all times for the purpose of winning these young women to the Saviour.

Mr. Avdhut Chakranarayan arrived at the Bible School a few days ago on his

way to the Men's Bible School and he left his wife with us. She had no clothes, no bedding and no dishes. When I asked him about it his reply was, "I had to provide for myself, didn't I?" Mrs. Chakranarayan shed a few tears and Mr. went on his way with never a worry. Mrs. C. is an extremely homely person to look at, but a very interesting character. She has been an idolater all her life and has come direct from a Hindu home. She has sensed something different here and seems determined to know what it's all about! The girls told her that she must, first of all, confess her sins. She began with a will—has confessed and confessed and keeps right on confessing. Today she said she knew she was saved and her ugly black face lighted up with a smile inspired in heaven. Will you help us with your prayers to win this young woman for a life of usefulness in village India?

Sadgunabai is an old gray-haired woman, but she has an intense love for God and His Word. The great desire of her life is that she may be able to read the Bible for herself. Every time I go to the compound I find her either praying with one of the women or with her face in her book crooning over the letters. She can read a bit now and does she enjoy it? Miss Ransom is here holding meetings with the girls and by the use of the flannel board has made the way of salvation and sanctification very plain. Sadgunabai went up to her at the close of the meeting and said, "I am like a young child trying to feed itself; it spills a lot, but what it does get, tastes so sweet." She is a real benediction to our compound. This woman (you have already read about in K. D. Garrison's pamphlet, *An Outcaste Transformed*) is going back to a large district (Anjangaon) where there are thousands of women sitting in darkness. Will you pray that God will use her for His glory?

Saru is another outstanding character. She prayed and prayed, pounding the floor with her fists and telling the Lord she meant business and He must listen

to her. After she had been talking to the Lord for some time she suddenly, exclaimed, "It has happened." When I asked her what had happened she replied, "I have it, I have God in my heart."

And so it goes! These new-born babes in Christ need to know Him as their Friend and Guide before school closes. Did you say you would pray for them?

Four young women will receive their diplomas next April. They, too, have a need. They must know God before they go out to face the world with its sin and wickedness. Can you not visualize, to some extent at least, what the daily life of a missionary in this setting must be? What a joy to watch them open their hearts to him and His Word! But what a responsibility to live the life before them that they, too, will follow on to know Him!

Shall India Be Literate?

By MARTHENA RANSOM, Amraoti

Modernistic preachers in America are not the only ones to carry on discussions concerning the Virgin Birth of our Lord. India's ignorant village women have arguments on the same subject, though in a more crude fashion. Anusayabai, one of the Lord's children, came to the short-term school for women with a determination to learn to read the Bible, so she can read it to the women of her village. She told, with brimming eyes, that the women say that Jesus was born just like everyone else and she said, "I told them that He was *not* born as others, because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. But when I tell them about Him they argue and think that I am telling idle tales. If I could only read to them from the Bible, they would *know* that it is true!"

The enemy knows the desire of this deaf child of God and he has been working hard to thwart her purpose. Her baby was very ill for several days and she was kept awake at nights so it was difficult for her to concentrate on letters the next day, but she laboured on. Then her husband became very ill and

she had to care for him as well as for the two children, but she kept on in the battle for a knowledge of reading. Then she came down with fever herself. Nevertheless, God is working and Anusayabai is coming through victor.

She has been reading in a simple little book of the stories from the Gospel of John and in a couple days will begin one of the books of the Bible itself. What joy that will be to her! Praise God for the women who have the determination to continue in the struggle until they are really fitted to be useful instruments in the Lord's hands.

There are two other women in our little school attempting to learn to read the Word. One is an old woman who is quite thrilled at the opportunity and raising a hand toward Heaven, she says, "I will perfect this learning and will then go to Him."

Their prayers sometimes call forth a smile, as they seek the Lord for His help in making this learning "come into their heads," and remind Him that their tongues will not "turn right" and their heads do not "walk" as they should. But, He who has promised wisdom to them that lack, hears these simple petitions, and is enabling these dull heads to slowly absorb the "learning" which they so desire.

Dr. Laubach says, "India shall be literate." If this is to be realized, you will have to labour much in prayer.

Helping Hands

By R. H. SMITH

Principal, Men's Bible School, Nargaon

We were attending a young people's conference at Chikalda, which looks down with serene coolness on the burning plains of Berar over two thousand feet below. The young men of the group were from those plains, some of their villages almost visible from the edge of the plateau, and all of them men of the plains. They were used

to the flat unending roads of their villages and the snakes and jackals infesting the fields, but the proximity of tigers and panthers and the precipitous ravines of the hills sullied their pleasure with a tinge of fear. In the recreation period one evening a group of us decided to visit one of the spurs jutting out from the tableland to view from its pinnacle the landscape o'er. We scrambled down two or three hundred feet of steep incline into a saddle-back where jungle paths crossed from one great valley to another. Ahead of us was a grassy hump like a steep-pitched roof up-ended, and a pinnacle on the tip whence the escarpment fell away into the jungle beneath. It was a stiff climb at a 45 degree angle or more. A slip might have sent one hurtling down the slope, but I was more concerned with my wind than with a fall as I puffed along behind the younger group. A few yards from the peak I came across one of the men at a dead stop. He could walk miles at a stretch on the plains, but those few remaining steps here on these hills, with a yawning abyss on either side and one before, seemed too much for him. Grasping his hand I said, "Come along" and so he on one side of the pitch and I on the other, we balanced each other in safety to the top. Said he, as we rested on the summit, "If you hadn't held my hand I wouldn't have made it."

How many helping hands the young people of India need if they are to leave the plains of sin and reach the heights of Christian living. The Bible schools extend their hands to young men and women for this purpose, but we are conscious that the helping hands are at home, hands opened wide to give, hands clasped in prayer, hands to wave a greeting and word of cheer to those on the upward climb. May it be given to many of you to hear some day the words, "If you hadn't held my hand I wouldn't have made it."