EDITORIAL NOTES.

Once more Europe is plunged into war, the most dreadful since the Franco-Prussian war. At the present writing Austria is fighting Servia and Russia, and Germany is at war with Russia, France and Great Britain, and is trying to fight her way through Belgium. Among others Italy and Turkey have proclaimed their neutrality, but one or both are likely to be drawn into the struggle.

Each nation has a plausible reason for declaring war, but the real causes lie deeper than surface events. It would seem that the underlying causes of the present conflagration have to do with national ambition in most of the parties concerned. Servia is ambitious to form a Slav Power to offset the power of Austria, and Austria is anxious to rid herself of this thorn in her flesh. Russia expouses the cause of the Balkan States for obvious reasons. Germany, although she disclaims any desire of acquiring new territory, covets for her maritime trade, which is growing by leaps and bounds, the coast of Asia Minor and the harbours of Holland and Belgium. France is in alliance with Russia and thus becomes the opponent of the Austro-German ambitions. And England, jealously guarding her suremency of the seas against the growing German naval power, dares not permit any German advantage in Belgium. The latter is now fighting to maintain its integrity against the German army which is trying to advance through Belgium in hope of dealing France a staggering blow on the northern frontier.
The war surprises no one who has followed European affairs carefully, or who reads his Bible aright. Peace proposals, peace conferences, peace 'foundations,' peace sermons, peace pretensions, and the dedication and maintenance of battleships "for purposes of peace" have not stilled the rumours of wars in the European press nor blinded the eyes of the world to the deadly jealousy of the nations or their obvious intention in their steady increase of armaments.

The largest armies of the world and the two largest navies, with the most accurate and powerful war machinery the world has yet produced are matched against each other. The countries now at war can put into the field seventeen million men, equipped with every device for the destruction of mankind that human mind has been able to contrive. The fleets of air-craft,—which aggregate 1750, bring a new and terrible feature into warfare. With all this, if the nations do not quickly come to terms this war may easily become the most terrible of modern history.

Any who had misgivings about India's whole-hearted loyalty to its Emperor are being agreeably surprised. From all quarters come expressions of loyalty and of readiness for any service. Most of the native princes have offered their forces and liberal sums of money to the British Government. The rush of the Bombay merchants to the Currency Offices when war was declared, to change Government Notes for gold and silver, subsided when it was found that the Government was amply able to meet all demands, and financial confidence has been restored.

But because of the dangers to shipping and the discontinuance of much commerce prices of many articles have gone up. Advances in prices of from ten to thirty per cent. are reported in many quarters. The Government is taking what steps it can to prevent all unnecessary inflation of market prices, particularly of country produce, but unscrupulous up-country merchants may be depended upon to make the most of this opportunity to extort from the poor. It might be well for the friends of missions to
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remember that missionaries and native workers in India will have unusually heavy expenses because of war conditions.

The mails will for the present go around Gibraltar by sea instead of across France, which will make the difference of a week in time, and there will likely be other irregularities also. Mail steamers are not sailing regularly from Bombay at present, and because of the state of war at sea, mails are liable to loss or serious delay. We bespeak your special prayers that the mails may be preserved and that Indian missions may not suffer through the loss of monies sent from home.

Germans in India are put under special restrictions both by the Government of India and by their own government. This is therefore a time of special trial to the several hundred German missionaries in India who will doubtless appreciate the prayers of God's people.

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For the most part we are all excited over THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT. the war. But could we for a moment disassociate ourselves from all partisanship and view events from the divine standpoint they might appear quite different. It is in no sense a religious war, but the regrettable spectacle is presented to the world of the leading Christian nations of Europe flying at one another's throats. The array is Greek Catholic against Roman Catholic, and Protestant against Protestant and Roman and Greek Catholics. In each case the nations are the foremost of their respective religions in Europe. Each nation—even Germany—has protested that war has been forced upon it, and that it takes up the sword reluctantly, in self defense. Each calls upon the God in Whom they mutually believe for aid in its effort to humble and destroy its brother. Surely the spectacle is to the world not in keeping with the profession which we make of following a lowly and peaceful Christ. How misguided are those who believe that the world is now heading for a time when brotherly love will control the affairs of nations! How futile the expectation of peace until the return to earth of the PRINCE OF PEACE!
We would not attach undue significance to any event, for every event at the time of happening seems vested with undue importance. The "Wars and rumours of wars," which were to be one of the characteristics of the age, especially of its close, are not peculiar to our day, for since the time of Christ history records over fifty important wars with many minor ones. So the age has scarcely ever been without either war or war rumour. But it does seem that the present one may have a significance apart from that. Many Bible students understand the prophesies of Daniel VII and Revelation XIII to indicate that at the time of Christ's return to earth the region formerly occupied by the Roman Empire will be found divided into ten kingdoms, which will finally be confederated into a ten-kingdom empire—the final form of Gentile World-power. No one can foretell what will be the results of the present conflagration, but as all present combatants except Russia and a part of Germany and Austria, and the possible combatants also, are located within the bounds of the old Roman Empire, we watch the outcome of the struggle with peculiar interest. Even if the war is short and peace soon concluded, the issues which concern national ambitions will still remain to be fought out some day.

Meanwhile our attitude should be one of expectant hope. Christians are counselled, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." For before the consummation of affairs among the World-Powers, that part of the Church which is "Accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass," will have been caught away to meet its Heavenly Bridegroom, to return with Him when He comes to the earth to take control, Whose right it is to reign. "And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
MISSIONS AND THE SECOND COMING.

MISSIONARIES and evangelists are generally convinced that the Bible teaches the "pre-millenial second coming of Jesus Christ." This is due, in part, to the fact that they are more concerned with the practical interpretation of the prophecies uttered by Jesus and His apostles than they are with efforts to form a system of theology. They are also influenced by their appreciation of the tremendous task before the Church in winning the world to Christ at the present rate of progress. The forces of evil are so many and so strong and insistent, and the forces for God are so scattered, and often so half-hearted, that it seems impossible to do more than gather out a Church from the world unless Christ Himself returns in power to direct His forces and assure His followers of conquest.

It is for these, among other reasons, that the missionary forces at home and abroad are interested in the recent "International Prophetic Conference," held at the Moody Church in the city of Chicago. Over 2,500 people attended the meetings. It was a union conference with representatives of many different branches of the Church of Christ, from twenty-nine different states and nine provinces of North America.

The convention brought the profound conviction that it is the duty of every man and woman who believes in the second coming of Christ to proclaim it. Every speaker who touched the question was outspoken in his convictions of the necessity of standing for this truth.

The addresses delivered will be obtainable in the book that is to be printed. The Holy Spirit of God still shows the same powerful working in the hearts of men as of old, and there are still many whole-hearted and true witnesses to the truth. Many there are who believe in the infallibility of God's Word, and who loyally testify to faith in the Divine Christ the Redeemer of mankind, the only Hope of the world.

The belief, as declared by Paul and Peter, that our Lord may soon return to establish His Kingdom, is a powerful stimulus to faithful service, and opens a new door of hope for the salvation of the world.—Missionary Review of the World.

The words of an old Indian woman dying of cancer:—"Miss Sahib, my pain is much better here, and I would like to stay, but the women of my house have never heard about Jesus; I would like to go back to tell them."

—All Nations.
IT was the early part of the touring season and the girls in my classes were taking their examinations, so I had two weeks free. I said, “Now I can tour for two weeks, and Miss Woodworth who was touring the district said, “Come with me, I would be glad to have you.” That night Miss Woodworth and I with our two Bible-women met together for prayer, to ask for help and guidance for the next day.

Early the next morning we were on our way, and as the bullock cart rattled over the government road we planned our work. We decided to go to Sandana, a village about seven miles from Kaira. I was to take our old Bible-woman, Marybai, and go to one quarter while Miss Woodworth and Daibai would go to another section. When we reached the village we separated. Marybai and I stopped a moment under a tree for a word of prayer for direction as to the right section of the village to go to. I like to tour with Marybai. She is old and has grey hair and the Indian people especially respect old age; besides she always seems to know what to say. We went first to the low caste quarter. We made our way in and out among the buffaloes, cows and goats until we reached the women; on all sides dogs were barking at us. The women were busy, some sweeping, some milking the cows, some feeding their children. They stopped long enough to stare at us, then resumed their work. We stood there some time and finally began to sing. But they did not want to hear us sing; they did not want our message—they had heard it before. We could not understand it because we had had such assurance and blessing in our prayer season the night before. However, we were rejected; the people refused to listen to us and we left that quarter and went to another part of the village.

Now we were in the high caste quarter. We had passed in through a gate in the wall which separates the high caste from the low. There was a long row of houses and the doors were open. I could see the rows of shining brass vessels, cups, plates and bowls on the shelves. In a few minutes an old woman came out of the first house. When she saw me she said, “Have you come again? That is good; just sing and all the people will come.” I could not understand for I had never been there before. However, we began to sing and in a few minutes the men, women and children of that quarter were gathered around us—a large crowd. We sang again and then I spoke to them, for my soul was stirred. After my message Marybai spoke for
about forty minutes. She was stirred too. While we were talking, we could hear such remarks as this "Yes this is the true way," This is the true word." They wanted us to sing, so we sang a number of songs and through all that long meeting there was the best of attention. It required no effort to speak.

When we were going away they all said, "Come again, do come again." Then they told me what had happened. They said, "You came here once before and a girl was sick. (They called the girl and she was a young woman.) She was very ill and we asked you to do something for her. You prayed and she got well." Since we did not remember such a circumstance we wondered as we went on our way what they could have meant.

When we arrived home Mrs. Turnbull was there. Of course I told her all that had happened. Mrs. Turnbull said, "Why Sara, I was there and I found that poor girl very very ill. Her mother pleaded with me to do something for her. I told them that I had no drugs but I could pray, and they told me to pray. I knelt right down by her cot and prayed. Then I went home and told Mr. Turnbull and we prayed together. But I did not know that the girl had been healed." These people were very open to the Gospel on account of this girl's healing. Let us pray for more power that more doors will be opened to the Word of God in this land.

AN INCIDENT RELATED BY A BIBLEWOMAN.
BY EMMA DINHAM.

"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

The Biblewoman going about her work as usual, entered one day the section of the town where the high caste people live. Near the rest-house she found a sick woman left to die. The Biblewoman went to her and found her to be a Brahmin, suffering from consumption and nearing her end. Unable to walk, she lay there with no one to give her a drink of water or a morsel of food, for she had no relatives, and no one cared whether she lived or died. She refused to touch the food and water which the Biblewoman hurried away to get for her, for was she not a Brahmin and would she not therefore be defiled by eating food brought by a Christian? Finally the Biblewoman spoke to the people of the Brahmin community in such a way that they were ashamed of their neglect, so they bundled the sick woman into a cart and sent her off to the little hospital.

Here she was cared for, and the Biblewoman went daily to
see her and tell her of a Saviour Who loved her. She softened, and began to look forward to the daily visit, and soon began to see that Christ had died to save her, and that in Him all are one, and even caste is removed. She lost her horror of the defiling touch of a Christian’s hand. She accepted Christ, and cried for mercy and found it, and began to love the seasons of singing and prayer. She promised “When I get well I will be baptised, and come to live with the Christians.”

But she grew weaker very fast. One day, seeing in her face the approach of death, the Biblewoman spent much time at her bedside, going three times that day and once in the night. Next morning when she went again she found that the spirit had taken its flight. No one had bothered to cover the face from the flies, lest the touch of the corpse would defile her. The Biblewoman went in and amid the sneers of the crowd, which was looking on, tenderly covered the face. Then she turned and told them of the love of God, and of the Saviour Who came to save them from the defilement of sin, and Who could enable them without defilement to touch the vilest with a touch of mercy.

Let us pray for the Biblewomen and their work. Who will share in their labour of love?

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CLOSED DOORS AJAR.
BY FRANCES BANNISTER.

“You can save a life if you are willing to do so.” Such was the rather startling announcement that greeted us as we were about to return to the bungalow after a busy day’s work in town. This coming from a Brahmin gentleman was all the more striking, as the Brahmins have no desire for dealings with the Christians in these parts. But the great leveler of all classes and castes—sickness and approaching death—had touched a proud Brahmin’s home and laid low a beautiful young woman, who even then was nearing the portals of death. Hastening to her bedside, in answer to his anxious plea, it proved only too true that hers was a critical case. A beautiful young babe slept by her side. The rigidity of Indian custom forbids the Medical man’s attendance, death being preferable to such a calamity.

Her room was a small corner curtained off from the main room and carefully guarded against light and air. The outer room was larger, and a casual glance showed the observer that the occupants were of the better class, and devout Hindus.
Neatness and cleanliness prevailed and images of their family gods kept sentinel from niches in the wall. In the corner of this room sat the old grandmother, busy with the evening meal, and a young girl of some fourteen years by her side. It might be stated here that this little girl is about to be married and leave home and friends for those of her husband. Such is another of India's customs. But to resume—on entering the home these two came forward to help. This being their first introduction, to one outside of their own people, it is not to be wondered at that they felt strange and uneasy. So without the exchange of words needed articles were dropped into our hands from a distance or placed on the floor within easy reach. The strain was relieved by the entrance of the head of the house and two sons who composed the rest of the family. They had had to meet the alternative of either offending their gods and incurring the displeasure of their caste people, by applying for Christian help, or of letting the young life go out. They had chosen the former, so, were ready to set caste, custom and creed to one side, and to comply with all instructions, however new and foreign, they might appear.

What a picture to the beholder! Only yesterday an entrance to this home would have been an impossibility; to-day the whole household is at our beck and call. For years this opening had been prayed for; to-day the prayers are answered, and the doors turning on their hinges. "This is the Lord's doing and marvelous in our eyes."

Nor were our efforts in vain. With God's blessing the young woman began to recover, and her case became hopeful. When, after a few more days, she was out of danger, the rejoicing of that household was great! The mother restored to her babe and family; the family relieved of its anxiety and strain; and peace and happiness once more reigned in the once troubled and sorrowful household.

Who can estimate the eternal issues resulting from this incident? Not only is this home—long closed to the gospel—open but many other of the same class. Calls are coming from them for help. How gladly we enter the open doors!

The smile of welcome and the cup of tea tell their own tale, and are a happy contrast to the slights and scorn of the past.

Thank God for the doors ajar! We may enter, and entering carry to them the most precious treasure the world has ever known. And as to us, this treasure is above rubies, so, may it soon become to them. May their voices soon join with ours as we never tire of singing our great Redeemers' praise, and may they be His in that great day when He makes up His jewels.
QUEER IDEAS.
ADDIE GARRISON.

"My relatives already think that I have some queer ideas."

The remark was made by a Mohammedan of good standing, who had evident respect for his own breadth of vision but sought to speak modestly of it. He had invited me to visit his wife and we were talking about the zenana system which secludes the Mohammedan women of the upper classes from all contact with the outside world, and forbids them to see or be seen by any man outside of their immediate family. A man's respectability, according to Mohammedan standard, is judged by the degree of the seclusion of the women of his household, and they are therefore very proud of it. It is this, probably, that makes life tolerable to the women in zenanas. Another Mohammedan told me recently with great pride that he observes this custom so strictiy that his daughter is not allowed to remain in the room if her brother enters.

I asked if some time when my husband were away, he would allow his wife to visit me. He shook his head and said, "I should like her to go but my relatives already think that I have some queer ideas. They do not allow even female friends to visit their women." His obvious meaning was that I was honoured by being permitted to visit his wife, which also showed great liberal mindedness on his part. A servant woman who was washing brass vessels in another room, piped in with a shrill little laugh, "How could she go to the bungalow when she is not even allowed to look through the garden wall?"

"It must be very hard to even not peep outside," I said. "Suppose you were a woman and there was a great commotion outside, do you not think you might be tempted just to peep through to see what was the matter?"

"Yes," he said, with a rather embarrassed laugh, "but they never do, at least not to our knowledge. I admit it would be better otherwise, but our women are accustomed to it. Our religion demands it and what can we do?"

He seemed pleased at the suggestion of enlarging his wife's world inside her prison and replied "I believe we ought to do so! (evidently that was one of his broad views for which he had been called queer) Our women should be educated. Formerly only five percent of them were educated but now the percentage is much larger. I want my wife to learn to speak English, to sew, and to mend socks!"

Their new baby was shown and duly admired, and the father
with distress on his face, apologetically explained that he was not fortunate enough to have a son,—he had only daughters! They went through the usual little pretence of giving the baby girl away, saying to take her home with me, for they did not want another girl. Although it was a mere pleasantry, it always seems pathetic; we hear it so often as we stop to admire the wee tots and talk to the mothers in the villages.

I remarked to the husband that his wife looked pale, and asked if she were well.

"No she is not well, but I do not know what is the matter, she is too shy to tell me."

When leaving, I asked the little woman her name. This seemed a very embarrassing moment for them. He urged her to tell, but she would not. Then he rose to the occasion and spelled it out—(he would not speak her name) and with good grace he went on to say that her name meant "One-who-had-been-praised."

"Salaam," she said with her pretty courtsey, "The Memsahib has been very kind in coming to see me and I should be glad to have her come again."

I mentally agreed with the man that he did have some "Queer ideas." That system which gives to a wife less liberty than an animal in a zoo, (the animal can see and be seen,) might well be called queer. That bondage to a religious observance, which he admitted to be unnecessary and contrary to nature, is also, to say the least,—queer. His domestic relations are queer. He not only secludes his wife from the world, but he excludes her from his life, so that she is too shy to ever speak to him of her ills. She neither shares his pleasures, his mental pursuits, or his life. She does his cooking and brings up his children. Outside of that, life is sealed to her. She lives and dies between four walls—her world—and soon dies, for stastics show that the death rate among women in zenanas is high. And the man himself who can in such bondage congratulate himself on his broad-mindedness because he sees the folly of that bondage, and yet be content to remain therein, is queer.

I have gone again, and they have brought the children to visit me; and my little woman is going to be allowed to come some day. That will indeed be an event in her life. Her lovely face with its delicate beauty, and her sweet reticence of manner remind me of some one loved in the homeland, and I long that the sunshine of Heaven that enlightens that life may illumine this one also,
DEAR CHILDREN,—I am going to tell you how God has been blessing the girls in the orphanage lately. You know He loves to bless the children to-day just as He did when He was here on earth.

Tana was romping and playing in the compound and having a good time with some of the girls when the Lord spoke to her. Isn't it lovely to think of Jesus speaking to a little brown girl away over here in India? Her forefathers had never heard His voice and if they had, they would not have known it was the voice of the living God, for they had never heard about Him.

Her father was an idol worshipper and he did not love his little girl very much, for he signed her over to us when her mother died. He thought he was getting rid of a big burden when the missionaries consented to take his baby girl. Indeed, there are a great many fathers in India, who recoil at the very thought of having a baby girl in the family.

Tana is not a tiny girl now; she is about twelve years old and she has heard about Jesus ever since she came to us, but hearing about Jesus and hearing Jesus are two different things. This day she heard Him for He spoke to her very distinctly and said “Tana, you have time to play and time for other things, but you have no time to seek Me.” She stood quiet still and the other girls wondered why she had stopped playing so suddenly. She felt as if a great burden had dropped suddenly upon her. Off she went to one of the rooms where several girls were praying and asked them to pray for her. She too began to pray and to seek God and very soon His peace filled her heart.

Silgam and Bhima were seeking the Lord at the same time and they also were saved. These three girls wanted to begin at once to hold prayer meetings, so they sent several girls to ask to have the prayer room opened, for it was locked and had been locked for a month or more.

Just think of a prayer room being shut and locked! The truth is that our brown girls had become careless and they did not care if they spent much time in prayer or not. It was vacation time and they were acting quite like the little girl in the homeland, who told God she had come to say “goodbye”
for she was going away to spend her vacation. Indeed our girls had turned the prayer room into a play-house.

One day I put a padlock on the door and the girls hung their heads and looked ashamed when I told them it was a sad day for the orphanage when there was no need for a prayer room. I am sure they began to think a good bit about that neglected room, for there was the door, with the big iron lock staring them in the face, and it seemed to say "God is locked out." Did you ever shut God out of your work, your school, your play? It is an awful thing not to have God in all we do and say.

The fact of the prayer room being locked, drove a few of the girls to meet in their own rooms to pray, and that is how it came about, that Tana found the girls praying in one of the rooms. Well the prayer room was soon opened, and the girls began to hold meetings in real earnest.

At this time we asked Mr. Dinham to pay us a visit and hold some special meetings. While he was here two whole days were spent in prayer. Girls who had been quarrelling "made up" and got right with God as well as with each other.

The following Sunday when Mr. Carner gave the invitation to partake of the Lord's Supper, the Altar was filled with girls who had sought God and found pardon and forgiveness. An evening service for praise and testimony was held and it closed with a volume of prayer going up to God. Everybody was praying and yet there was perfect harmony and no confusion.

Since then the prayer room has become too small, so many have joined the prayer circle. They have had to move to larger quarters and now one of the larger mud-floored rooms of the place is given over to the girls for a prayer room.

Even the babies want to be identified with the praying girls, and the other day two of them came to me complaining that the girls thought babies had better not attend prayer meetings as they couldn't sit still long enough to let the others pray.

We trust God will keep the girls praying until a revival breaks out among the heathen around us. Will you not pray with us for this?

EMMA KRATER.

"Doing nothing for others is the undoing of one's self,"
N returning from the hills, we were delighted by the pools of water and small blades of green grass which greeted our eyes as we looked from the train windows in the early morning. This condition of things lasted two or three hours, or until we arrived to within about sixteen miles of our own station. These last miles, the view was made up for the most part of parched fields below and the blazing sun above, and we knew that we were arriving home before any rain had reached us. However, in about ten days the refreshing showers fell and it rained hard all night.

The next morning some farmers came to our bungalow with the news that they had found a small child asleep in a not-far-distant field. Believing that the missionary would know what to do in such an emergency, they eagerly asked what should be done about it. On enquiry we found that they had seen this same child the evening before with a Mohammedan fakir, or holy (?) woman. She had disappeared, however, and left this child, drugged with opium, asleep in the wet field. Her clothes were dry, so we knew that she had only been there since early morning. I wish you could have seen her. It reminded one of long ago famine days when skeletons were ordinary sights. She was apparently about eighteen months old and had a large head and big eyes, that looked the bigger because of the skeleton-like look of her face and body. When we brought her milk, she grabbed the cup and drained it. She seemed bright mentally and could understand what we said to her. But as soon as we laid her down she went off to sleep, showing that the effect of the opium was still upon her.

We decided to send her to the orphanage at Kaira. So, after giving her a bath and putting on some old, but clean, clothes belonging to our Martha, we sent her with one of our Christian women to Kaira, where she is at present being cared for and fed up. And we trust she will grow up to be a disciple of our Lord. What was intended for evil, (for if we had not found her, she would have died from exposure and starvation or been devoured by jackals), has turned out for good and it remains now for some dear friend in the homeland to take this poor, abandoned, Mohammedan child upon the heart and pray for her and send means for her maintenance. Twenty dollars a year will mean life and all that is necessary to life for this child, and we shall be glad to assign her to any one who will signify
their desire to take her as their special subject of prayer and support.

A few days after this, we heard a great deal of shouting, and went to the window to see what was the matter. A large crowd was gathered around a well a few yards from our compound. It turned out that there were two men up to their necks in water, talking away and arguing at a great rate. One man had run away with the other's wife and on being threatened with punishment had decided to commit suicide by drowning himself in this well. He was no sooner in the water than the other man jumped in too and would not consent to get out until the first man gave him a sure promise that he would also refrain from drowning. After ropes were brought and turbans unwound, the men were gotten out. The would-be-suicide was taken to the police and after investigation and an appearance before the magistrate, was fined $3.33! So, you see, there is much to break the monotony of life even here away from the so-called centre of things.

A few days ago, Miss Taylor and one of our Christian women and myself started out to hold a meeting. We came to a house where several women were seated, so I said “May we come in? We want to visit you.” They were delighted and went upstairs to get a nice, thick quilt to make us a comfortable place to sit, and then they went out and called a number of their friends. After a brief conversation on ordinary themes, I suggested singing and reading to them, but as soon as we began there was a stir and one by one they left us and at last the woman of the house said, the people outside wanted us to come and sit on the doorstep. Accordingly, we proceeded to accede to their request, but as soon as we had passed the threshold and were safely outside the house, she closed the door behind us with a bang, as much as to say, “You ‘faith-religion’ people have been in here once, but I’ll see that you don’t get in again.” We sat on the doorstep and talked for some time and then went on to a place where we were more gladly received.

Another time, I went into a large court-yard to find an audience and seeing a group of women sitting at leisure, advanced towards them. On the way, we passed a man winding rope on a cot. Many beds in India are very ingeniously prepared in this way and are not so uncomfortable as one might think. When we reached the women they didn’t want to have anything to do with us. Then we went to another corner, to another group, but met with the same reception. Then I asked the woman with me what she thought was the cause of all this. She explained to me the trouble and I knew at once that we would better pass on,
The man who was preparing the cot was a sweeper and in passing, my dress had touched some of the rope lying on the ground. As the sweeper held the other end of the rope in his hand it had become defiled and also a “conductor” of defilement, and since my dress had touched it, that also had become defiled, and if any of these elite, high caste women, sitting in the sun and examining each other’s hair in the manner politely called “Madras hunt,” had touched my dress that had touched the rope the other end of which was in that out-caste man’s hand, alas for the purity of high society! And yet after the sweeper’s task was done these same women would throw him some coins as a remuneration and then proceed to rest on this same rope covered cot. Will some one who admires the jewel of consistency, kindly explain and reconcile these facts?

Dear friends, the majority of India’s people are not begging with outstretched hands for us to give them the gospel. They are often ready to listen but Satan has them too much in his power for them to easily and readily yield. His great weapon is indifference and fatalism, and a strong wave of real God-given conviction is needed to-day more than anything else. Such a conviction that will banish indifference and lethargy, and make them cry out even in their fields, in their houses, in their shops and on their beds, “What must I do to be saved?”

Friends, you may all have a part in bringing this about. Will you?

CONVERSION OF A HIGH CASTE WOMAN.

DAVID MCKEE.

ONE evening, about fourteen months ago, while we were in the village of Nendrad giving out the message of salvation through the precious Blood of Jesus, an old, grey-haired woman, who had taken her seat just in front of us, kept looking up into my face. Several times, before all the people, she said, “The Lord Jesus is my Guru” (Saviour.) At first we did not pay much attention, but she only spoke the more positively, insisting that Jesus was her Guru.

A few days later, however, she came to our home to have a quiet talk about the Lord. Going first to the catechists she told them that she had been a great sinner and asked if the Lord would forgive her. They assured her that He would; that He came to call, not the righteous but sinners to repentance. By this time we realized that she had not as yet entered into the light but was earnestly seeking a saviour who could save from the consequences of sin. For years she had sought peace according to heathen customs but her quest had failed. Almost
overwhelmed with her grief she stammered out, "Are you sure
the Lord will forgive me? I have killed a man." Then she told
how one night while her husband was away from home some
robbers had tried to break into the house to get a sum of money
that they knew to be in her husband's possession. In trying to
defend her home she had killed a man. Over and over again she
repeated her sad story inquiring each time, "Are you sure the
Lord Jesus can forgive that awful sin?"

How glad we were to point her to "The Lamb of God Who
taketh away the sins of the world." "If we confess our sins He
is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from
all unrighteousness." At first it was difficult for her to understand
that the Blood of Jesus could cleanse from all sin, even the sin
of murder. But the light presently broke in upon her dark and
hungry soul, and she was enabled to cast her heavy burden on
the Lord, exclaiming, "Jesus is my Saviour! He has forgiven my
sins! She went home rejoicing, promising to come every day
to learn more about her new-found Saviour. In a short time
she was able to repeat the Lord's Prayer and some of the
commandments, and learned also how to make known her wants
to Him.

Up to this time she had gotten her living by going from
door to door and asking alms in the names of the heathen gods,
for she was a Brahmin widow. But now although no one
mentioned the matter to her but the dear Lord Himself, she came
and told us that she felt it was not right to get money in that
way. So, as she had no means she went to work by the day in
the fields for the farmers. But she was frail and unaccustomed
to exposure to the sun, and was soon down with fever. Then
about ten months ago she asked for a dollar with which to open
a little store. I gladly gave it, and in this way she has continued
to earn her living ever since.

Recently she was run down by a bullock cart and picked up
insensible and with a dislocated elbow. Afterward in her
intense sufferings she would cry "Oh, Lord Jesus, heal me or
take me home." Once she was discouraged and said, "I think
the Lord has forsaken me, to let me suffer so much pain." But I
said that He was only trying to bring her closer to Himself;
that He loved her with an everlasting love and only permits
affliction for our good. She did not fail amid her sufferings to
proclaim the name of Jesus to all around.

Thus amid many trials and difficulties the poor old woman
is pressing on. Please pray that He Who has begun a good
work in her heart may finish it until the day of Jesus Christ.
A few days ago, two of our missionary ladies went into the town of Mehmadabad to buy some cloth. As they approached the row of small, dingy cloth shops they were told by the fat shop keepers, lazily sitting on their floors, to stay at a distance and not touch their places of business. The ladies stepped up to one place and asked to see some white longcloth. The merchant unwillingly reached up to one of the shelves and pulled down a large bundle which he angrily slammed onto the floor. The ladies asked to feel it that they might know the quality, but no, the shop-keeper waved them off, and an old man who sat on the door-step of the place, and who looked as though he was about ready to topple into the grave, turned his angry scornful, old face toward the missionaries and waving his hand as though he were dealing with beggars said, “Go or somewhere else.”

The ladies stepped on to the next shop and were again bid-den not to touch the edge of the high stone step leading into the shop lest they defile the place. They stood at a respectful distance and cheerfully asked again to see some longcloth. This shop-keeper was not so mean, and he pulled out several pieces, but on no account would he allow the ladies to put forth their hands to touch the goods. The would-be buyers remonstrated, and asked, in as courteous a manner as possible, how they were to know if the cloth was of the quality and texture they desired if they were not allowed to feel it and had to look at it from a distance. Finally, the merchant tore off a tiny strip of the goods and threw it to the ladies to feel, and after feeling, the ladies bought. And the funny thing about it, and the inconsistent part of it is that the merchant was willing to take the money from the defiling missionary ladies without fear of defilement.

Such is the bondage that caste puts upon the people of India, and such is the treatment missionaries in some parts receive because they take the gospel to the low-caste people as well as the high.

THE DAY THE CURSE FELL.

The gay bridal garments were all folded away. The string of pearls was rudely torn from the smooth, olive-tinted neck. The shrill skirling of the pipes and the beating of the queer drums had ceased. The child herself was pushed about by the guests who, a short time before, were smiling on her so pleasantly.

How happy she had been in the early part of the day, which
THE DAY THE CURSE FELL

they told her was her wedding day. She had wandered about among the guests watching the opening of boxes brought by the dozens of visitors from other towns, for these wedding feasts are occasions of social display among the high-born.

Calls for the tire-women sounded on all sides. "Shake out this silken sari!" "Here, lazy one, brush these gold chains a little better." "Where is my little velvet vest?" and so on, each order teeming with the wealth of the speaker. In the East as in the West, the feminine desires to dazzle the feminine.

Outside, in the more airy verandahs, the men smoked and laughed, their gayety filtering, somewhat diluted, through the high partitions and thick purdahs of the zenana quarters.

"Ah, that is a sahib's voice!" a frolicsome young woman called out as a deeper and more restrained tone came over the cloth wall.

"Yes, it is a sahib's voice," volunteered a pert upper servant dressed in the doubtful colour, yellow. She showed by her assurance that she belonged to that class who go about freely—sometimes too freely—are the daily newspaper of the neighbourhood and certainly see life, albeit at times it may be dubious life. The better-born are cooped up and depend for many comforts besides news on those free-booters of the courtyards.

"Well, tell the rest," said a visiting matron with some asperity.

"I will, I will," "Yellow Sari" laughed. "He was driving by, the sahib, when an invitation was conveyed to him to stop. What better chance to show the wealth of the house?" and the woman giggled at her own impertinence.

A comely matron tried to silence the saucy one, but the young woman who had first heard the strange voice wanted to hear more; so the jewel-decked visitor curled up again on her couch and, after a half-mocking courtesy and the remark "With our lady visitor's permission," the servant proceeded, "There is a mem sahib there, too."

"Oh, surely not among all those men," said another Bibi, looking up severely. "These foreign women have no modesty."

At this the saucy servant hushed everyone by saying softly, "Here she comes, here she comes," and in a moment the little mem was in the midst of them.

"Oh, it is the padre mem," came from more than one; for the little American and her Bible women were, to many there, the sole connection, save for the gossiping servants, with the great world beyond. And to some she was the bringer of soul release.

On her entrance the boxes were again opened and a verit-
able jeweler’s shop appeared on the raised platform around the enclosure. The gay wedding gifts were duly admired and the little mem added a pretty crimson book to the collection.

To the child becoming this day a wife in name and to go to the strange home in a year from the date, the little mem leaned with a mother’s love, for to the free woman this was all a travesty of love and marriage. “All have given you jewels, but you will find the Pearl within the book, dear child,” she whispered to Lilla.

Amid this cloy of sweetmeats, flowers fresh and crushed, the odour of garments well steeped in attar and the odour of distant cooking, there was only this one woman who felt anything but delight in it all. Lilla was counted a fortunate bride.

From many standpoints of the Orient she certainly was fortunate. Only last month her little neighbour friend, Sivunti, had been married to an old man, and Lilla’s parents knew only too well that the life or death of the husband alike spelled misery to the child. Living, he was an uncongenial companion; dead, she would become an accursed widow.

While on a railway journey a short time before this, Lilla’s father, a wealthy barrister, saw a blooming girl of sixteen in the care of a man of fifty-five or sixty. On her face was a perfect conflict of the emotions of respect and contempt, but the uncongeniality was all too apparent. Being a Hindu progressive, Lal Behari meant to do his best for the loved child in his home. The family into which the child was to enter was thoroughly orthodox Hindu, and in such families woe betide the widow! But of course, with a young bridegroom, such an event as his death seemed as unlikely as Lilla’s own death.

Barrister Behari remembered with chagrin how his face betrayed his crestfallen feelings when the little girl was born into his home; but he had come to see, with some few other enlightened men, that the womanhood of India must be as valuable as the manhood. Perhaps the fact that no boy came to his home induced him to still more recognize the value of his little daughter. Certain it is that he looked forward with fear to the possible new home. Would she still have opportunity to cultivate her bright mind? Would she perforce be silent before the numerous “in-laws” who would make their home in the same huge house? Must the bright jewel of their home go with clipped wings and lose her care-free childhood? Custom, however, urged her marriage, and they had done their best aided by hired match-makers.

The wedding festivities had begun with unusual joy. The children had played together and, their ages being so similar, the
marriage was of more than ordinary promise. Lilla, unusually well protected by good parents, enjoyed the festivities as any child would.

But even as the mem sahib lingered in the scented air the word was brought, "The little bridegroom is ill." It may have been the exposure to the sun during the long procession through the streets, but whatever the cause, the fatal word soon followed, "The little boy is dead."

All was confusion and Lilla, doubly cursed, was a widow on her wedding day. Cold glances and imprecations came from the guests who were now hastening to leave the house cursed by the presence of a widow.

"What can have happened?" thought the child. The erstwhile fond looks had become averted glances. Even the children of the party called out, as they were told to do, "Go away! Go away! You will hurt us all."

Poor Lilla was terrified and began to cry for her mother, who had always been gentle and kind, but the mother was prevented from answering the call. Lilla could hear the altercation on the side verandah, but she did not know the cause.

In a room above lay a beautiful boy, still decked in the gold and crimson and wedding jewels; but he was cold and stiff, unmindful of all the confusion about him and of the misery his death meant to the little girl weeping below.

The food from the great cauldrons was thrown to the pariah crowd on the street. In covered or latticed carriages the purdah ladies were being whirled away to the railway station, where, between sheets that were held up to make private avenues, they found their way to the apartments reserved for them. Poor Lilla crouched as far away as possible from the tide of hatred jetting her way.

As the mother was forcibly taken away she insisted that her daughter should come with her. Denunciations followed. "Do you think she is to escape the punishment due her for killing our son?" and many similar questions were hurled at her. But the child saw the mother and rushed madly to her. The mother caught her up and carried her into the waiting carriage regardless of cries of hatred and warning, even though she knew the act would cause the end of all caste fellowship for father, mother and child from that day forth.

The beautiful child has grown to young womanhood, and the little family of three, with the American teachers, are very happy together in spite of ostracism. As I look at her it seems all a dream—the day that her mother has described to me. She is reading a book of hymns and explains them to her mother, for
she is reading the Bible and the hymns in English.

Her mother turns to me and says, "She is a comfort, not a curse. True, our friends and relatives have left us alone all these years because we chose to love our daughter and educate and care for her though she is a widow, but we are happy together and she is the joy of her father's and my hearts."

The face of the young woman is all that the face of the child promised, and though no little faces may ever look up into the lustrous eyes, yet to father, mother and loved teachers, the hidden zenana gem shines clear and bright and is destined to adorn a palace by and by.—Margaret B. Denning in "The Woman Missionary Friend."

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**NINE WIVES FOR A SON.**

MISSIONARIES often come across unusual experiences illustrating social ideas and practices. Here is a record showing two things:—(1) What some Indians will do in order to beget a son to perpetuate the family; (2) The easy-going way in which the Hindus of the depressed classes sometimes contract and dissolve marriages.

X is a man in the Ahmednagar District between eighty and eighty-five years old, who relates the following account of how he has married nine wives to get a son. When he was about ten or twelve years old, somewhere between 1840 and 1845, his parents married him to a girl five years old. When she was about twelve she became the mother of a daughter, had no other child, but lived with him for forty years. That daughter had three daughters and one son.

Because No. 1 had no son X married wife No. 2. She had two daughters but no son. Of those two daughters one died childless; the other had five daughters and one son. Wife No. 2 lived thirty years under the same roof with No. 1. Because No. 2 had also no son X married wife No. 3. She had one daughter but no son. That daughter had one daughter, but no son. No. 3 lived with No. 1 and 2 till her death. Because neither 1, 2 nor 3 had a son, X married No. 4. She proved troublesome, soon ran away, and was not heard from. A ceremony called mohatta was performed with No. 5. She proved childless, and was sent away. The same happened with Nos. 6 and 7. It would not be strange if Nos. 1, 2 and 3, living in the same small house, made Nos. 5, 6, and 7 feel that there was not room for others.

Another candidate turned up, and with the approval of friends the mohattar ceremony was performed, and wife No. 8 entered the circle. But in seven days a man turned up, who proved to be
NINE WIVES FOR A SON

Her former husband and carried her off. Still X was sonless. So in 1904 he married wife No. 9. She has born him three daughters and one son. Now at last when he is over eighty years old, he has secured one son. Of all his spouses No. 9 alone now lives with him, with two small daughters and one infant son. X is still hearty, but having a son, is not likely to marry again. So far as he certainly knows, his entire progeny from his nine wives is only twenty-four, including children, grand-children and one great grandchild.—By Rev. Dr. R. A. Hume, in "Dnyanodaya."

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PRAYER AND PRAISE.

PRAISE.

AHEMADABAD.—Miss L. Prichard sends a note of praise for divine help in language study.

JALGAON.—Praise for the healing of baby Oscar.

PANCHGANI.—Praise for the continued good health of the missionaries’ children in Panchgani.

GENERAL.—Praise for sufficient rain to insure fair crops in most of our stations in both fields.

PRAYER.

CHANDUR.—Pray for a very bright and winsome little girl whose parents, though Christians, seem to have adopted a course that will inevitably lead to her ruin.

JALGAON.—Pray for Govind, a former catechist who wandered away from the Lord, that he may be restored.

—For our preaching in the big town of Jalgaon during the rainy season.

—For the blessing of God upon our Bible study just commenced with our native workers.

SANAND.—Pray for the head-man of the village of Soyla and his people. He came to the bun galow recently stating that his people had requested him to bring them a lot of gospels that they might read more about the Christian religion. Pray that God’s word may not return unto Him void.

GENERAL.—Pray that in the uncertainties of the European war, making cable communications so difficult, God will care for all missionaries of all missions in India.

—That mail steamers may have God’s special care.

—That with the rise in prices God may provide for the Indian workers, and for all Indian Christians, that they may not suffer actual want.
—For more than three hundred German missionaries in India, and for their work, that in spite of all complications God may take care of them.

CHALISGAON.—Praise for the baptisms at this place.

ITEMS.

The annual convention is to be held at Akola this year as usual, and will begin on Friday evening, October 23rd, with a devotional meeting. Remember this time in your prayers.

We have heard from the party including Mr. and Mrs. Culver and children and Mrs. Erickson and Victor and Miss Case since they reached San Francisco. All had gotten on well. Mrs. Erickson was walking a good deal. Prayer was still asked for Miss McAuley.

We congratulate Miss Lillian Prichard on having successfully passed her second examination in Gujarati.

Mrs. Cutler has written from England that she expects to sail for India, August 26th by the P. & O. s.s. Persia.

Mrs. Schelander writes from Jalgaon:—

"We had a wedding here at the bungalow (which is also the church) yesterday. The bride who was an orphan and was adopted by a Christian family since six months of age, is now fourteen years old, and the groom is eighteen. She only speaks Marathi and he only Hindi, so the ceremony had to be translated for his benefit into Hindi. The bride's name is Soni (gold). She had never been away from home before, so tears of sorrow were mingled with her joy as she left this morning for a different part of Khandesh.

A girl over twelve years of age was brought to Khamgaon this summer, who, though she had been in two other Christian institutions, had never been touched by the love of Christ. She knew all about salvation but was unsaved. Recently she broke down and cried and confessed her sins and said "I am not a Hindu any longer; I am Jesus' girl. He has broken my heart which was like stone, and His love has come in." This girl is a new creature in Christ since that. Several of the women are earnestly seeking the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The girls prayer meetings at the orphanage are also having a special blessing. Some one's prayers are being answered.

Mr. Dinham baptised a young man and his wife in the Chalisgaon River on August 25th, and expects to dedicate their two year old child soon.
The India Alliance.

This is intended as a monthly message from the Alliance Missionaries to the friends of their work. It will also deal with the general questions of mission work by original or selected articles, and will seek to deepen the interest and stimulate the prayers of all who may read it, by showing the encouragements as well as difficulties of the work.

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