At the Meeting of the Rivers

BY MR. LAUREN CARNER

From their lofty sources in the high places of the towering Himalayas two mighty rivers sweep down into the plains of northern India. Past village, town and city, and across the fertile valleys of old Hindustan these two great rivers—the Jumna and the Ganges—pursue their separate courses until they meet at Prayag, near Allahabad, a large city in the United Provinces. The deep green, gently flowing Jumna and the murky, rapid Ganges are considered by the Hindus as the most holy rivers in the world, but more sacred still do they regard the place where these wide streams of water flow into one another. In the Purans (one of the Hindu scriptures) it is said there is no river as holy as the Ganges, there is no garden as pleasant as Nandana-ban (Garden of Heaven); there is no tree as sacred as the Kulpa tree (Tree of Desires); there is no place as holy as Prayag where the Ganges and the Jumna meet. Hindus hold that the god Brahma

(Continued on page 4)
CONVENTION OF GUJARAT SYNOD OF THE CHRISTIAN AND MISSIONARY ALLIANCE OF INDIA,
HELD AT MEHMADABAD, MARCH 5–8, 1936

This picture shows only part of the attendance.

"Find me!"
The Gujarat Mela at Mehmadabad

BY MR. A. HELFERS

While the Muhammadans and Hindus were having their Id and Holi holidays, respectively, the Gujarat Synod of the Christian and Missionary Alliance held its general convention at Mehmadabad. Because of the holidays, the mills in Ahmedabad were closed, thus affording many of our Christians leave of absence from home and the privilege of attending the convention. Looking over a large snap-shot picture of part of the company in attendance (see picture on second page), one of the Indian brethren noted the fact that many of those present were young people and that there was a very noticeable lack of elderly people. This was due to the fact that it is the younger generation who have gone to the city, while the parents remain in the villages and follow their agricultural pursuits. The latter were in the midst of their harvest season and hence could not be in the convention.

As to the spirit of the mela, we agreed with the testimony of a brother in the last meeting of the convention, that there had been a marked sacredness over the whole place during all the days we were together. Then there was a sincere friendliness and an evident and serious expectation written upon all faces, as we mingled among them.

The divinely anointed messages of our mission chairman, Mr. Garrison, given within a week of his being healed in answer to prayer of three of our Marathi pastors, came with triple force, so that as one village Christian expressed it, “The fountains of the depths of our souls were broken up.”

Mr. Brabazon, fresh from furlough, brought us a panoramic missionary message, with up-to-date figures of the work of the Alliance in its many mission fields of the world. This gave to all a new vision of the world outlook of our Alliance and a new sense of world fellowship.

Another impressive scene was the giving of an address of farewell to Miss C. H. Peter, one of our pioneer missionaries who has served almost forty years in Gujarat.

These few glimpses of a blessed convention will enable our friends at home to rejoice with us in what the Lord is doing and also to pray definitely for us and the work.
created this place a place of sacrifice; here the ancient sages practised penance; here the lotus-faced god Vishnu made his abode; and the holy rivers Jumna and Ganges have made this place holy with a holiness that is indescribable. According to the Prayag Mahatmya, “At Prayag one does not have to practise yogi, nor offer special sacrifices; here one needs not wish for a saviour guru (teacher)—such is Prayag, the king of holy places.” Tulsi Das in the Ramayan adds: “This place is the abode of truth, holiness and merit—who can describe Prayag? In this holy place sins as big as an elephant are destroyed. This is the chief of holy places. Here one obtains all that he desires, and here is manifested to the world the power of the Vedas (ancient and revered Hindu scriptures).” Holding so important a position in the annals of Hinduism it naturally follows that pilgrims from every corner of India are attracted to Prayag. This is especially true at the time of the great melas (religious fairs) that convene at this place once in every six years. At such times the proficiency of the Government is taxed to the limit in the endeavour to control the vast crowds which assemble for the mela. Medical men are kept busy guarding against the spread of contagious disease. Railway officials make careful arrangements for the accommodation of the multitudes that crowd the trains. It is seldom that so many people gather together at one place at one time. On the most auspicious day of the great Adh Kumbh Mela, which took place at Prayag this January, it is estimated that a concourse of three millions of people was gathered here from the four corners of this broad peninsula.

On the great day of the mela, pilgrims began to congregate at the sangam (confluence of the rivers) for their ceremonial baths as early as two o’clock in the morning. There was a veritable traffic jam of
boats at this place where the bathing ceremonies took place. Amid the excited shouts of the boatmen and the incessant roar and noise of the struggling crowds, pious pilgrims sought the gods in murmured prayer as, with frenzied religious desire, they madly scrambled for a dip in the sacred waters of the sangam.

On the long spear-shaped strip of sand which divides the two rivers before they join, other multitudes were gathered. Numerous booths, tents and other temporary structures were erected here, and tall poles, from which were unfurled multi-coloured flags, dotted the whole wide area which, teeming with myriads of people, appeared as a sea of faces.

Adding to the colour of this gigantic spectacle were the large number of sadhus (holy men) who marched in pompous processions down a great roped-off avenue, leading from the entrance of the mela grounds to the sangam. Great hordes of laymen looked on with awe and admiration as the various orders of sadhus vied with one another in the attempt to present the most elaborate display. Government officials were present to preserve peace between the rival factions of “holy men.” Ponderous elephants with rich trappings, prancing steeds, and long-necked camels were all included in the processions. Some sadhus rode these beasts, others were carried in costly palanquins, while great hosts of them proceeded on foot. Some of them carried great banners, others bore long silver rods. Some chanted the names of the gods, and others twisted their brown bodies in the wild contortions of a heathen dance. Some of the sadhus were great pot-bellied fellows, others were gaunt and thin. Some wore nothing more than a loincloth, and some marched proudly by in unabashed nakedness. Some were smeared with ashes, and others wore long, flowing, saffron robes.
Some wore their hair in a large matted mass bound like a turban round their heads, others allowed it to fall in long locks across their shoulders, and still others had their heads completely shaved. Strange and uncouth were these holy (!) heroes of the Hindus.

Behind the glamour of this extravagant display of oriental grandeur there was the stark tragedy of sin. Had not these hungry hearted people gathered from the far-away places of the land to bathe their sin-stained hearts in the rushing waters of the saṅgam? How bitter must be the disappointment of their souls to find that even the united waters of the Jumna and the Ganges cannot avail for the foul and indelible blot of sin! Dear reader, will you pray that there may be someone tell them

There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
Lose all their guilty stains.

A Village Saint  
BY MR. L. E. HARTMAN

In a previous article I said I hoped in the future to tell something about this saint's experiences with God: how He teaches her and leads her and works miracles for her in response to her childlike faith. When she asks "her Lord" to do something and the answer does not come she concludes that He must have some controversy with her, or the one for whom she is praying, and sets out to find what it is.

When I say "asks," I do not mean that "hurry-up-and-get-it-over-with" kind of asking which leaves God no time to speak, or reveal Himself to the asker. Rather she holds the need before God night and day, both at her work and in her regular times of prayer. Being a widow she has to go out and work in the fields to support herself and her small boy, besides doing her own cooking and housework, but no matter what her hands are busy about, her heart keeps up a constant communion with God.

God has taken this simple, illiterate woman, living in a small village, far removed from what we term the regular means of grace, amidst surroundings so corrupt that even those of us who spend five months or more each year out in the villages, have only a dim conception of their reality, and has taught her and led her into a life so deep and constant that it seems to me that if I ever attain to its equal I shall almost have reached my ideal.
When I think of telling some of the experiences through which God has brought her and the way He has led her I am in a quandary as to where to begin and where to leave off, for every time we meet her she has many new experiences to tell.

I think I shall recount an experience which she had several years ago in connection with her little boy, Vishvas. He suddenly came down with fever and she prayed for him as usual, but no answer came that day, nor the next, so she was seeking the reason for the delay. Suddenly, after much heart-searching, one word came to her. It was a word which means a certain kind of grain which, so far as I know, is not known in cold countries. They use it in a number of ways here and when that word came to her she remembered that just before Vishvas got sick he had brought some of that home and it had been put away and not used. She asked him where he had gotten that grain and he said a certain woman had given it to him. Then she asked him if she had given it to him openly, or in a secret manner and he said she had told him to put it in his pocket and hurry home with it. "Oh!" the mother said, "then it didn’t belong to her and she had no right to give it to you."

She then took the grain back to the woman who had given it and asked her if her mother-in-law knew she had given it to Vishvas and she said, "No." She then gave it back to her telling her not to give Vishvas anything in that fashion again, as because of that he had fallen sick and the answer to her prayer had been greatly delayed. She then went home and prayed again for Vishvas and God healed him at once.

Before this she had been trying to teach Vishvas to reckon on God’s presence with him everywhere and all the time, but the little chap had not been able to grasp it. He was used to seeing the Hindu idols which they call gods, but the thought of an invisible, spiritual God being with him was a little too deep for him, "Now," she said, "don’t you see that God was with you and that He saw when that woman gave you the grain?" He said, "Yes, I see it now." And thus he learned the lesson.

From a Gujarati Christian Hymn:

‘As a vine without the support of a tree,
So is the disciple without the help of Thee;
Without Christ all are beside themselves—so we.’
Petitions for Prayer

BY MR. J. S. RINGENBERG

'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest.'

Puri, the wife of Khordabhai, was baptized a year and a half ago. At present she appears disinterested in her soul's need. Her husband is a bright Christian and is much concerned about his wife's salvation. Please pray with him and us for her.

There are Christians of several Missions in Viramgam, but no other church except the Alliance. Pray that all may be united in Christ so as to press effectively the battle in His name.

Mr. J. S. Ringenberg

THE DHOLKA–VIRAMGAON CHURCH COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Many in the district listen intelligently and sympathetically to the story of salvation. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead such to full acceptance of Christ.

Pray that individuals, and especially the young people, of each church shall be awakened to the privilege and need of meeting in classes for the systematic study of the Word.

A class of pastors and evangelists will meet in August, D.V., for the study of the 8th year Prospective Pastor's Bible Study Course. Please remember them and their instructors.

The Mission is assuming the responsibility of a virgin area called East Messana District, comprising 1,000 square miles and about
400,000 population. These inhabitants have never had evangelists or missionaries to enlighten them with the gospel. Pray for Rev. and Mrs. Brabazon as they begin work there.

An opposing minority group of Christians has arisen within the Gujerati churches. After years of prayer and attempt to bring them into line, they have become only more refractory. If God so leads you, pray that they will get right with God and be useful in gospel effort, or else wholly withdraw.

India needs revival; we need a revival in the little churches here and in the district.

**Notice**

By one of these little inexplicable happenings which no one can ever quite explain our last issue of the *Bulletin* was dated "January-February," whereas it should have been "March-April." We hope that none of our readers will be worried any more than the editor about this mistake, and as for him he has now committed the matter to its place among the "all things" of Romans 8: 28.

**For Prayer and for Praise**

Smallpox has broken out on the Mehmadabad Mission compound. Prayer is asked that the disease may not spread and may not be fatal to any of those stricken by it.

Please remember in special prayer brother Manikchand Mashramkar, one of our older mission evangelists. His eyes had been troubling him for years and recently he was advised by a Brahmin 'specialist' to have an operation. He submitted to this operation a few weeks ago and has suffered more than ever, since then, with the additional alarming fact that he can not now see at all. He longs to have the use of his eyes that he may further serve in the Lord's vineyard. Pray for this dear brother in Christ.

Recent special meetings in Amraoti District at the railway town of Badnera, conducted by Mr. Timothy, resulted in the salvation of a number of young people and others, and in the reviving of the Christian community there. Praise God for this victory and pray for the spiritual growth of this work.

Mr. and Mrs. Lapp report forty-five recent baptisms which took place at their annual *sabha*, recently. Pray for these precious souls who have take the name of Christ, that they may follow on to know the Lord.
The Khandesh Marathi sabha was much blessed of the Lord. It was held at Chalisgaon, February 28 to March 1, and while the number present was not large the Lord Jesus honoured His people there by meeting with them.

The Gujarat Mela, was well attended, as the picture of part of the attendance, on page two, shows. Read Mr. Helfer's article about the blessing there.

Gujarati Sayings and Proverbs:

'In a thin hedge many holes are made.'
'The field keeps the hedge and the hedge keeps the field.'
'If the wind is pure the water in our vessel is holy.'
'Courtesy captures the enemy.'
'From a vessel but partly full much spills over.'
'Unless one dies one cannot get to heaven.'
'Amongst the blind a one-eyed man is king, and in a desert place the castor-oil plant is chief.'
'Not all that is white is milk.'
'What is in the well, that only comes into the trough.'
'The work of our hands will assail our hearts.'
'A string though burnt keeps coiled.'
'Who has been burnt by milk will blow before drinking it.'