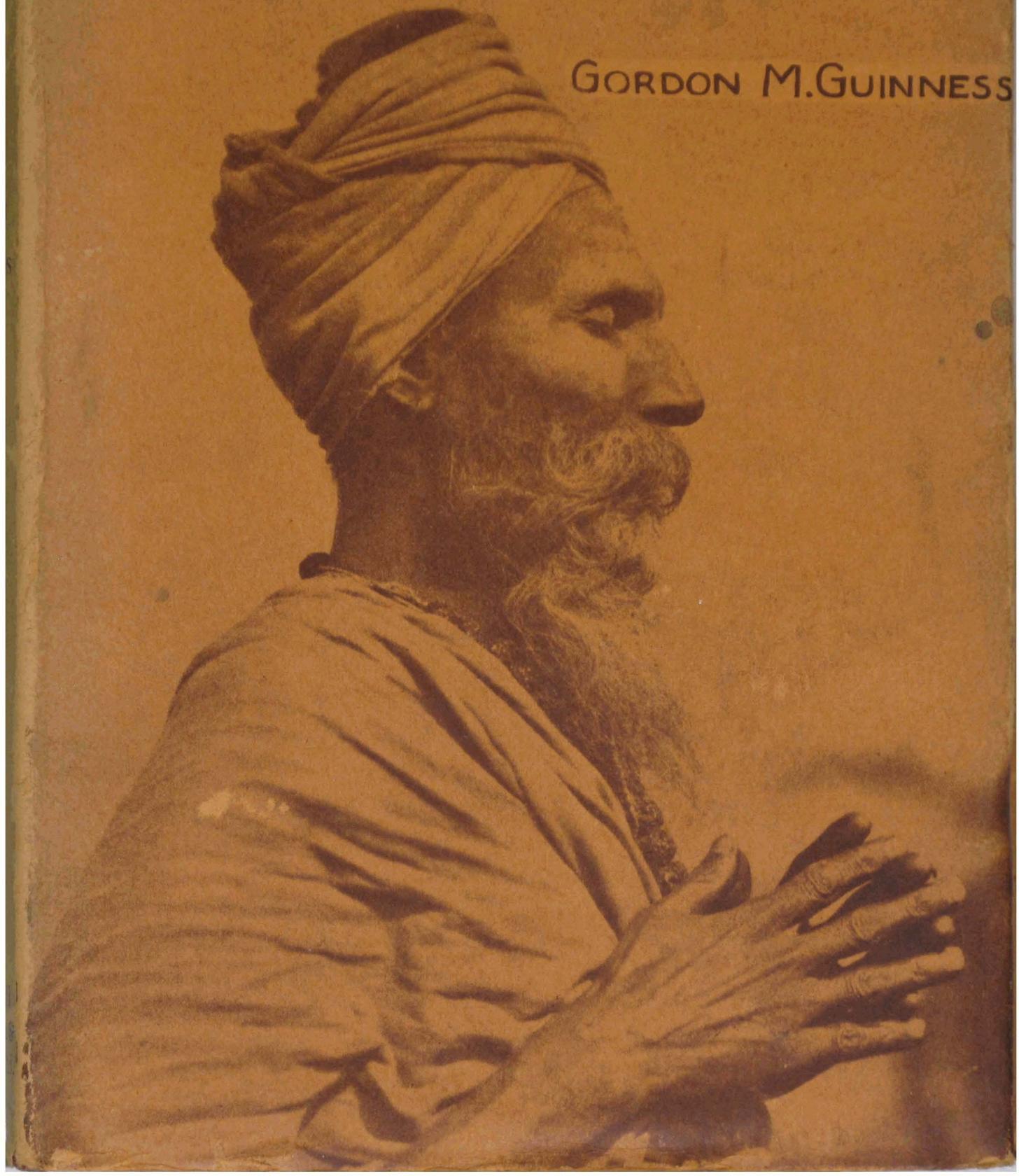
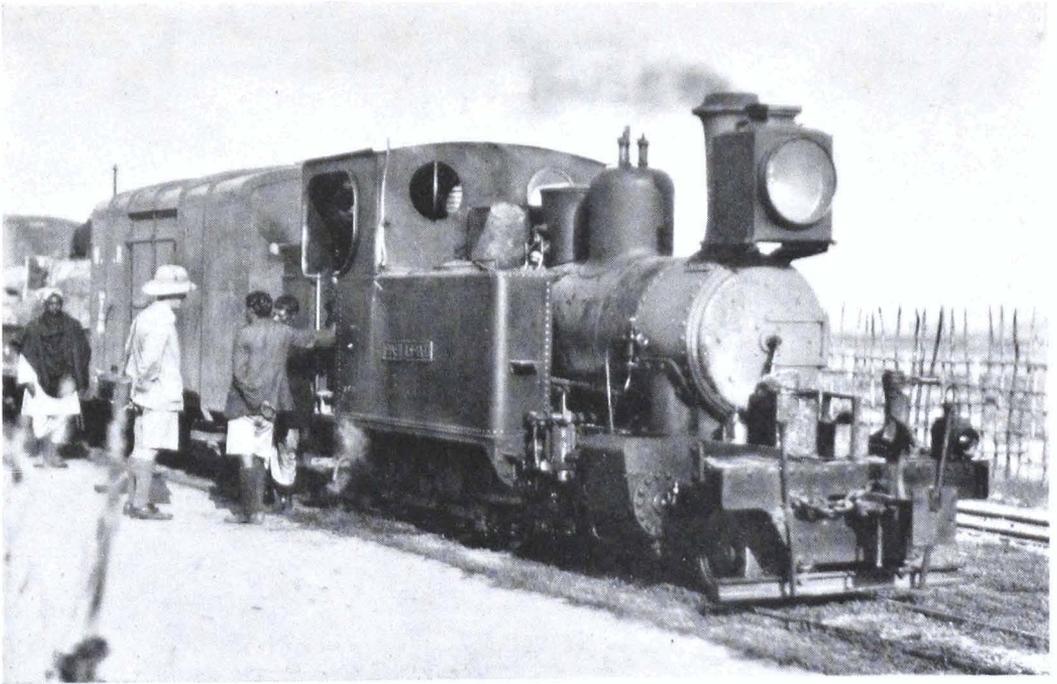


# THE QUEST of the NEPAL BORDER

GORDON M. GUINNESS





THE NEPAL TRAIN IN RAXAUL STATION : The opening of this railway was epoch making. The bridge marks the end of the British Empire and beyond it no Missionary may penetrate.

# THE QUEST OF THE NEPAL BORDER

By  
G. M. GUINNESS, M.A.

*Joint Acting Director of the*  
REGIONS BEYOND MISSIONARY UNION  
HARLEY HOUSE  
18, WOBURN SQUARE, W.C.1

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## FOREWORD

I **HUMBLY** apologise for writing these brief sketches of missionary life in India, but even before I had seen the snows of Nepal the spell and fascination of bringing the Gospel message to the lovable children of the frontier had fallen upon me. Some chapters I wrote while I was in India and some on my return, but my aim throughout has been to bring Christians at home into the atmosphere of North India that their interest may be deepened and their prayer life vitalized.

The sketches have been bound together under the title of "The Quest of the Nepal Border" as that idea seemed to summarize both the search of God for men and the search of men for God which can only end, for Nepali as for Englishman, at Calvary.

All the six mission stations of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, which form the centre of interest in these chapters, lie quite near to the frontier: one only half a dozen miles away. The faithful band of twenty-one workers who occupy them have a unique chance at the gateway of a land closed to the Gospel, and my earnest prayer is that many who read these pages will rise to help them.

I dedicate this book to Christ's service in the sacred and inspiring memory of two generations, Henry Grattan Guinness, D.D., and Harry Grattan Guinness, M.D., with the prayer that God will raise up many from this generation, too, whose passion for souls may burn like theirs.

GORDON M. GUINNESS.



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## CHAPTER 1.

### INTRODUCTION : THE DOUBLE QUEST

NIGHT was beginning to draw in as the tiny train rattled across the narrow bridge at Raxaul into British India. It had been a busy week on the newly opened railway, for away up in Old Nepal a religious festival had drawn thousands from every part of India to seek for salvation and peace. The train that was drawing up with a shrill protest at the frontier station was bearing back into India the last of one hundred thousand sadhus—religious ascetics and mendicants—who had travelled up to the festival by rail : though for weeks the roads would witness the passage of twos and threes returning on foot.

The moment the diminutive engine came to a stop at the junction, the platform swarmed with a strange, motley crowd. A few well-to-do Nepali gentlemen were helped out of their first class compartments by their servants, and a few of their poorer compatriots gathered their bundles together and left the filthy third-class carriages, but the great majority of the passengers were Indian sadhus, strangers in Nepal. They were seekers who had bent their steps thither in the age-long desire for forgiveness and light ; ascetics who hoped to attain liberty for their souls by the

mortification of their bodies ; with quite a few charlatans and rogues, glad to take the opportunity of masquerading in a holy disguise for the purpose of filling their pockets and gratifying their lusts.

All had let their hair grow long, till it hung in filthy, matted tangles around their shoulders : some had platted hemp into it, and coiled it up on their heads. The greater number carried the black blanket of the ascetic, but here and there was a gaunt figure with a leopard skin thrown carelessly over a shoulder, or a deer skin wrapped around his loins.

The expressions of the men, as they shouldered their belongings and made their way along the platform, were as interesting as their varied costumes. Some were wistful, and spoke volumes of the unfinished quest of those who have learned that there *is* a secret of God behind the universe, but who have sought far and long without finding it. Others were sensual and vicious, with uncloaked sin leering out of bestial eyes. The watcher at Raxual junction was taken back in his mind to the experience of a missionary who was passing through a similar crowd by the Ganges. Hearing his name called out, he turned round to see a naked sadhu beckoning to him. The Indian asked him in English if he did not remember him, and then introduced himself as a fellow-student and friend of Oxford days, where they had read together at the same college. The missionary was amazed, and asked what led a cultured Master of Arts to parade as a naked ascetic? His one-time friend replied that it was an easy way of living without the anxiety of property or money,

without the necessity for work or care. He ate as men gave him food, and pleased every passing fancy without the discipline of home or employment.

Many such men were being deposited by the train from Nepal, yet any of them asked for the reason of his journey up into this inaccessible land would have replied, in effect if not in word : " To seek for salvation and peace."

But, even though a converted sadhu assures the enquirer that there are a vast number of these wolves in sheep's clothing, it is impossible to ignore the volume of religious hunger and unsatisfied devotion that cries out for the true bread sent down from heaven. The depth of India's soul is blazing with an unquenchable desire for communion with God. *That* is the quest of the Nepal Border, where pilgrims come and go in their never-ending search. Never-ending, for ask a simple question along the frontier ; ask it from Darjeeling to Raxaul, from Raxaul to Hardwar ; from Kashmir to the ocean : who has made that Great Discovery ?, and no man can say. The Holy Grail is less elusive than the Border Quest—till men learn that God is found in Christ.

If India's quest for God is slow and she is often lost in by-ways of ignorance or superstition what shall we say of God's search for India ? With unwearying patience, He has been waiting for those whom He loved and ransomed to hear His voice in town and jungle.

While His messengers proclaim the tidings of His love, He is working with them, seeking through

them. That evening on Raxaul platform He was busy with His quest. Two missionaries had met the train to sell Gospels to the travellers, and to fish for men ; they knew as surely as if they could see Him, that Christ was with them. He and they together passed along from group to group, as the pilgrims settled themselves to wait for the next train. An hour passes, and as another engine shunts up with the fire picking out the stoker's face in red, some fifty figures are quietly reading the Word of Life by the flickering station lanterns and in the well-lighted carriages of the waiting train. In a few of these lives Christ's search is soon to find its goal. While men "flee Him down the ages through the corridors of time," the unwearying Christ follows on patiently, even though His pathway lies through the olive garden and over the rugged summit of Mount Calvary.

Though often checked, Christ has come at length over the fertile plains of Bihar to the edge of Nepal's isolated domain. The Maharajah, knowing nothing of Christ's desire, has said, "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther." Like Canute of old, he commands the inflowing tide to stop, not realizing that the tide of Christianity is the imprint of Christ's feet. Christ has reached Raxaul, and hungry for Nepal, longs to advance. Before Him lies a highland people, and what Christians these highland folk do make ! The wiry tribesmen of the hills are needed for the Kingdom : needed too for their brothers on the plains below.

So the Border Quest is a double one. The search

of the peoples who live at the Empire's edge for salvation and peace ; and the search of Christ, who stands on Raxaul bridge waiting for admission to Nepal, for His other sheep whose shepherds are hirelings and who know not the Saviour's voice.

## CHAPTER II

### MAHABIR DAS, SADHU AND CHRISTIAN

As he walked along the path through the village, the people looked happier. Somehow they seemed to respond to the smile of the old sadhu, Mahabir Das : certainly they loved him. The children ran and slipped their hands into his : everybody sent out a challenging "Salaam Baba-ji,"\* waiting with confidence for the reply he never missed, which they regarded as a personal blessing : " Salaam " : he smiled, " Salaam." Here and there a man would bow before him to greet him with the reverence of the East, touching the baba's feet and then his own forehead.

Some Christian preachers would not have troubled to respond to all the salutations ; but even when he was greeted by six together, he had an individual reply for each. When he smiled, love seemed to radiate from his whole being (impossible though it sounds), from the cheerful clip-clap, clip-clap of his wooden sandals to his eyes beaming out from above the white beard.

He came to tell us his story again, sitting on the verandah in the welcome cool of the evening. As he searched back in the past, his face lighted up with joy or became subdued with sorrow, as he told of the way Christ sought and found him—and the way

\* Baba-ji is the title of honour with which Indians address holy men.



MAHABIR DAS, with a child who trusts her old friend more than the camera.



he had lived for years in darkness and unconscious shamefulness.

From the time when he was a lad, sent off into the fields to gather grass for the oxen, he had longed for God. While other boys drowsed on the backs of the buffaloes, as they wallowed in the muddy pools, his mind was reaching out beyond the petty round of village life. When he and his friends were sent off with the goats in the mornings, he used to leave them, to creep off by himself and worship God as best he knew. He cut a bamboo which he fastened in the ground, surrounding it with a pile of mud, and to this he prayed; bowing down to the creation of his own hands.

In spite of his spiritual hunger, he soon adopted a strangely secular occupation. He became a professional wrestler. True, he longed to be a sadhu; but in the pride of his youthful strength he exchanged his spiritual aspirations for rupees and glory. He became the protégé of an Indian planter who kept a band of these wrestlers. Before long Mahabir Das became the leading fighter, despite a torn ear and other minor injuries, defeating three sets of wrestlers in a memorable battle. But the day came when he left his old master to try his skill in larger spheres. In one of his new struggles with a very powerful opponent, Mahabir threw him and broke his arm. The sight of a man suffering through his own skill caused him great pain, and he left the place in trouble of heart. He was met by a pious old sadhu who knew of the incident. He felt there was real character in Mahabir Das, and

evidently wanted him to turn from this altogether futile life. He urged the youth : " Have some love to God in your heart ! How can you spend your life like this, making others suffer ? Leave all this folly and become a holy man, spending your time searching after God." Mahabir was profoundly touched, wondering to himself what would happen if he killed his opponents, instead of merely breaking their arms. From that moment he turned, to become a sadhu, one of India's six millions, who do no work but live on charity as they devote themselves wholly to meditation and prayer.

He set himself to make a round of pilgrimages, till his weary feet had covered thousands of miles of dusty highway. To Allahabad for the world-famous festival, where over a million people gather each seven years to join in ceremonial ablutions, to Benares for the sacred bathing, to Ajodhya, to Muttra, and then away into the recesses of Nepal the pilgrim wandered.

Eight years on the road, with staff and begging bowl for companions, bring a man into touch with the worst and best in Indian life. He learns to distinguish the seeker from the thief ; the ascetic from the sensualist : and he finds that in most holy men, bad and good are strangely mingled. Eight years of wandering also give a man a taste for settled life ; so choosing a quiet spot in the Tharuhath, where he had become a well-known figure, he settled down. Often he had pictured the quiet retreat he would find, so here in the jungle he was content. He settled by the banks of a river, where he quickly gathered some thousand

“disciples” round him. They built him a shelter with room for his cows and supplied him with food. His wants were few, and more than satisfied.

The Ramnuggar Raj declared his cattle inviolable throughout the district; they could not be tied up or driven off by enemies. This was hardly necessary for one whose sanctity was becoming established so quickly. He found two young pipal trees which he planted, one each side of the river, and these soon became recognized shrines. Hundreds returned again and again to pour out buckets of sugar or corn under the branches. The trunks became stained with the offerings, which all went to swell the young sadhu's store. Sometimes two or three pints of milk would be brought in the evening: some to refresh the holy trees and some the holy man.

Watching him spend hours in meditation without moving, the animals grew brave and ventured near. Driven by the cold of the winter evenings, they enjoyed the warmth of his fire, near to which they always found stores of inviting food. Finally, these wild animals came at his call to eat out of his hand: the jackal and fox, with the deer and wild pig. His love was not confined to animals, for the hungry village folk always knew where they would find a welcome and a meal. The women used to come as well; and the sadhu, for all his longing after God, knew nothing yet of His holiness or spotless purity. If he lived in ignorance and sin, his desire was none the less earnest for the truth.

He practised all the usual mortifications of his

class. He used to swallow two feet of a stick and drink half a gallon of water when he withdrew it. For an hour before sunrise, he stood on one leg with his hands pressed close together, waiting in prayer for the day.

Indeed, so stringent were these exercises that his health was undermined : his hands and feet became so thin that children's bangles would almost slip over them. More dangerous than any of these practices was a habit to which he had become a slave. He was an inveterate smoker of ganja, an obnoxious Indian preparation of hemp. Two rupees daily this cost him in money ; but it also stole away his strength as the poison undermined his body. Finally, he became so ill that his brother feared he would die and decided to take him into Bettiah, to hospital. Lovingly, for they all had a very deep affection for him, they put him on to a bullock cart and set off on their journey. They had still ten miles to go, when they crossed the river into Chainpatia to rest awhile. Here the people of the place dissuaded them from continuing to Bettiah, insisting that the padre sahib who lived in the village could cure him. So they turned aside to the bungalow with the sufferer telling his beads and muttering his prayers. A servant fetched the Sahib, who hastened to his side. He tended him with the kindest care, promising that if God were willing, he would be well after about ten weeks. The sadhu was persuaded to remain, and after two months was able to prove the truth of the promise. As he bade farewell to the missionary, thanking him for all his goodness, he was

given three books : " The Testing of Religions," a book of Indian hymns and a " Life of Christ." The sahib asked him to give up the smoking and to read the books with an open mind, really seeking to find out their meaning.

He promised he would, then, having gathered all the servants together and given them a great feast, he betook himself home once more. Here he settled down to the study of the books, but before he had finished them he had heard the voice of God. " The Testing of Religions " convicted his heart of the futility of all his former worship. It was the first ray of light that revealed the utter darkness of his soul, without having the strength to illuminate it. He knew that in spite of all the veneration in which he was held, he was a blind leader of the blind. From that day he gave up all his burning of incense, all his offerings, all his prayers. He sat in thought, smoking once more. His disciples could not understand, they asked their sadhu why he refused to worship as he used. His only reply was to say that it could not accomplish anything : it was useless.

The one man who was able partially to understand this new phase was Mahabir's brother, Raghunandan Das. He had lived near-by with other sadhus, rivalling his brother in some of his excesses. He had even won the name for himself of the " mad sadhu " ; for he used to coil his long hair on the top of his head, fill it with incense and set it on fire. When they saw this sort of burning chimney, the simple village folk fled in terror. After taking his brother into Chainpatia, his

heart had been gripped by the Christian message, for God was already leading him into a realisation of the truth in Christ. He did not yet believe, but he recognised the attraction of the Saviour of men.

So, when he noticed the change in his brother, he saw the reflection of his own spiritual conflict, wondering what it would herald. But these reflections did not concern Mahabir, who found himself beginning to hate the Truth, which had revealed the vanity of his old practices. He nursed his hatred as he smoked.

Then once again the frail body rebelled against the liberties to which he exposed it and refused its work. His followers were much concerned and tried many medicines; but none seemed to help the sufferer. He had no intention of being cured in the jungle, telling his friends that his long sickness could only be healed at Chainpatia. "It is the leading of God," he maintained, "I must go." Preparations were made and the journey was started; but, when the sadhu reached the mission, he found that the sahib whose books had brought him back, had been replaced by Mr. Wynd. He was almost too ill to notice, for he was in great agony and too feeble even to raise his hand to feed himself. Night and day the missionary and his wife tended him, slowly nursing him back to strength. During his convalescence there was more discussion about Christianity, and to the fury of Mahabir, his brother, Raghunandan Das, declared his intention of becoming a Christian. And so he did. Some months later, a date was settled for his baptism at Gopalganj, but when everybody was ready, there was

no sign of Raghunandan. Had he backed out? Had his brother deflected him from his purpose? Many different suggestions were made, but none were quite true. He had gone home again in the last effort to win his wife. She would not come, however, so he was baptised alone. Happily, once she saw that he had taken the step, she soon followed him.

This "apostasy" of his own brother intensified the opposition of Mahabir, who was now much stronger, and after having been sent into Bettiah for a slight operation, he retired to his jungle home and his thoughts. He felt that the Holy Spirit had gripped him, but he would not yield. He fought against the possibility of following his brother, though he often compared Christianity with Hinduism. As he made this comparison, he began to realise that perhaps his fathers had been wrong and the Galilean right.

It was now that Dr. Harry Guinness paid his visit to India, so Mr. Wynd took the opportunity of asking the sadhu to meet him. He consented to do so, journeying down to Motihari. He could never forget that interview. Not very much was said, and that necessarily through an interpreter; but the impression remained. Another link had been forged in the chain whereby God would draw him to Calvary.

Returning to the Tharuhat, he gave up smoking and was soon rewarded by a vision from God in the night. Telling the dream afterwards, he declared that it was an English sahib who awakened him from sleep, demanding that he should become his disciple. It was his conception of Christ—but he was not disobedient.

Long had he struggled : far had he fled from his divine pursuer ; but he was forced to confess himself a captive to His love.

\* \* \* \* \*

The old man was leaning forward as he told the story. Two of his nephews were gazing into his face, which showed up faintly in the dying light. "Only the grace of God," he repeats over and over again, "only the grace of God ever sought and found me. The Spirit told me 'this is the Truth' and I had to obey. None can come except they are called : the mercy of God called me and would not suffer me to stay away from Christ."

We sat very still and silent as he closed his story. Somehow we felt we were in the presence of one who lived to show the power of God's love and the lengths to which He will go when once He has set out on His quest for a man. It must have been that those early missionaries had claimed him in trusting prayer, and God was able to honour their faith. We could see, as we sat in the silence, the marks of the Master-Potter on His re-made vessel.

"Are there many," we asked, "who are trusting in their hearts, afraid to come out?" His vigorous nodding left no room for doubt. He believes that soon there will be a great and widespread movement of these secret believers into public Christian discipleship. He mentioned some things which were holding people back, details which fail to occur to many Westerners. Mahabir Das is a strong vegetarian. He will not touch meat. All his friends have a horror of eating most

meats—not only cow's flesh : and he repudiates the necessity of attaching ordinary western ideas of diet on to our Christian faith. These western habits are keeping many away. He himself suffers some criticism now for his conviction. But Paul would certainly sympathise with him.

To win these who are hanging back, Mahabir advocates two great weapons : Good literature and love, each backed up by prayer. These two were the means whereby the Spirit drew Baba, and they are certainly the practice of his life. His very voice is gentle and loving. As he says : “ *His words are sweeter than honey and surely our voices must be sweeter than honey to speak them. If I shout loudly, then the village folk think the east and west winds are blowing in their ears and they cannot understand.*”

When the riots had turned Chainpatia into a bedlam and the Hindus were seeking to kill the Mohammedans, Baba had the opportunity of living his creed in deadly earnest. Armed with his smile and staff, he went to and fro among the excited people, calling on them to live in love. “ Live in love, my friends,” he kept on repeating, “ live together in unity and love as brothers.”

Many good men have repelled children, feeling that time spent on them was wasted. Here Baba follows Christ and the children respond to his spontaneous love, as they always will.

One little lassie had sustained a terrible burn all down her side. Her father, who had been treated at the dispensary himself, brought her to be dressed.

The dressing was a painful business for the girlie and the Miss Sahib alike. Mother and father both tried to hold the small patient, but every day she called for Baba, who held her lovingly while the wounds were dressed.

Here we shall leave him with the child in his arms. He would not wish to take his leave of us in any other way ; for his great sorrow is that he may never have a bairn of his own. As he stands there, the essence of purest Christian love ; gold instead of brass, myrtle instead of briar ; his message is as simple as his heart. God can do anything ; and God works by love. To realise the love of God in Christ means to accept it ; to absorb it ; to live it. Those who pride themselves on having accepted it, but who allow themselves no time each day to absorb it, cannot live it. Those who do not live it, through the power of the Holy Spirit within them, are shouldering an awful responsibility. They are limiting the outworking of the love of God. They are concealing the redeeming love of Calvary. They are refusing to join with Christ in His quest for men.

## CHAPTER III

### BORDER VILLAGES

ESSENTIAL India lives in villages, for only a tiny minority inhabit towns. Along the British border of Nepal—400 miles—there are not half-a-dozen towns.

Chainpatia, some 20 miles from the frontier, is situated quite ideally for reaching these peoples, many of whom are isolated in jungle hamlets. Miss Hope Lee and Miss Lena St. Joseph do a very heroic work together, getting right against the heart of India in the village homes.

If British women desire freedom and romance, let them turn their faces to India and accompany Miss Hope Lee on her five months' winter camping. Often quite alone, save for the Indian preacher and servant, she penetrates far into the interior, reaching villages where the Name of Jesus has never been heard. Preaching and teaching the quite unlearned village women may be very dull, but it may be very exciting.

Walking alone one morning over the fields towards a high caste village, Miss Hope Lee was arrested by a voice calling on her to stop : " I'll cut off your nose : I'll cut off your ears : I'll cut your eyes out : I'll bash your head in : come here, wait for me, I'll kill you ! " Miss Lee did not respond to the kind invitation, but seeing the man was obviously quite mad, she hurried

on as fast as she could towards the village. The man pursued her, reaching the village as she did, and when she tried to enter a decent-looking house for protection, he barred her way, dancing with fury and menacing her with fearful gestures. Some Brahmans came and tied him up, but as he still struggled to follow her, she was forced to leave the village without any chance of preaching Christ.

On another occasion, when Miss Shepherd was with her, Miss Lee had an even more trying experience. They were camping in a tiny bungalow lent to them by a friend, right in the heart of the villages. The servant and preacher were one side of the house while they were sleeping on the other, with the dining room between them. The door was permanently locked between, making it quite impossible for the ladies to call the servants if they were disturbed in the night.

Somewhere about midnight, Miss Hope Lee was awakened by a confused noise, with the conviction that something was wrong. The darkness of the room was made more ghostly by a pale beam of moonlight falling through the tiny window. As she listened, a cry could be heard evidently from a man in pain: "My head, oh my head, I must go to the Miss Sahib." Springing from her camp bed, Miss Lee saw an uncouth figure approaching the bungalow at a run. She realised that he was probably bent on mischief and felt a sudden fear. Had there been a fight in the village? or perhaps the man knew defenceless women were in the bungalow? It was more probable, she thought, that he was mad. Anyhow, she slipped into a

coat and pulling on her boots, let herself out of the back door and ran round to the men the other side of the house. They were soon roused, and picking up their sticks, came on to the front verandah ready for action. Here the man was jumping about, moaning and crying, making a tremendous hulabaloo. Miss Shepherd was awake and nervously wondering what was going to happen next. But the two Christian men dropped their sticks and coaxed the madman away. He was reluctant to stop his mad dance, but yielded at length to their persuasion. When Miss Hope Lee and Miss Shepherd settled into their beds again, they had the comfort of the two men's voices on the verandah, telling of their faithful watch for the remainder of the night.

The villager who came up with the buffalo's milk in the morning seemed to know something had happened, because he lingered about, asking questions. Later on in the morning, some of the chief men from the Mohammedan village came up for an interview. With their long beards and flowing robes they were for all the world like Jewish Pharisees. They declared that two men had been killed the previous night and demanded particulars of the man who had disturbed the missionaries. Miss Lee refused to give any information and told them to drop the whole matter.

That morning, as the ladies were visiting in the Mohammedan Zenanas they heard that a messenger had been sent to the lady who had lent them the bungalow with an alarming message that the house had been broken into. Miss Lee called the "fathers in

Israel" and forced them to dispatch a second messenger contradicting the first and telling of their safety. When the messenger returned, he brought a letter warning them not to be too kind hearted to the village people, as the bungalow had already been burned down twice!

Police arrived to protect the place, but four days later the news came that the madman had died very suddenly with hæmorrhage. Though he was genuinely ill, the whole affair was probably a plot to create trouble and make the missionaries fearful of returning.

Such incidents are very few and far between: the ordinary preaching tour is romantic only because of the extraordinary possibilities of the gospel's transforming power. Day after day trudging from village to village in the heat of the sun; day after day telling the same story to very similar women, all brought up in the restricted mental circle of a single village; evening after evening setting up the lantern and gathering the people to hear the preacher's message; night after night coming home to camp in the cool of darkness, quite tired out. Some of those contacts with the village women have been infinitely precious. Always when the strength is gone and faith seems numb with fatigue the Lord has sent some loving token of His care.

A girlie—poor mite, her brain was not quite whole—throws her arms round the missionary's neck pleading: "Sing to me about Jesus Masih, I do love Him so much." Not expecting such a request from the maiden, she asked her: "Do you know who He

is ? ” Her parents were present and the child grew suddenly shy and bashful ; but though she said nothing, her whole face lit up in answer.

The lady missionary left that Zenana with the assurance that God was doing far more in many a quiet heart than she had ever suspected.

Many an incident in the villages shows the steady way the gospel is taking root. Miss Lena St. Joseph spends all her time visiting in the immediate neighbourhood of Chainpatia where she is always welcome in the Zenanas. Over one family she had often taught of Christ, a sad shadow fell, for the man developed tuberculosis. Miss St. Joseph was away at the hills for her summer rest and did not know how rapidly the disease was claiming its victim. On her return, the wife called her to see the poor man, telling her that he was dying and had often called for her in the weeks of her absence. As she entered the dark room where he was lying, his face radiated a welcome : “ I have been longing greatly for your return,” he told her. “ Can your medicines cure me ? ” One look told her, and she did not conceal the truth from him : “ No, I can do nothing. The only thing for you now is to look beyond this world to where Christ has gone to prepare a mansion for you.” Then the welcome Gospel was brought out and the best loved chapter, John xiv, read to the fast dying man. When she had finished, he was thoughtful for a moment and then looked up and begged her to leave the book with him. Miss St. Joseph marked some passages in pencil and with an earnest prayer, gave him the Gospel of John. As

he received it, he gave her a glimpse at his heart : " The burden of my sin is very great," he said, sadly. Miss St. Joseph pointed him to the Sin-bearer : " Rest in Jesus, He has died to save you."

During those last weeks, she was often at his side, and the early teaching he had received from Mr. Wynd, when he had learned of Jesus in the little school, seemed to be helping her loving messages. Then one day he passed quietly over the River without confessing to her whether he trusted or not.

After a few weeks, the Miss Sahib called and asked the widow, who could not read, to return her the Gospel so that she could pass it on to another seeker. But she would not give it up, nor would she say where she had put it. Miss Sahib was not at all distressed, knowing that the Lord would use His Word as it pleased Him.

Visiting in a near-by house, a young wife told her of a change that was coming over her husband. Formerly he had been utterly opposed to Christianity and hated the missionary visiting his Zenana. But of late he had taken to the reading of a book which absorbed his whole time and attention. He would sit for hours reading, and when he had finished he would put the book on a shelf, without telling his wife what it was. Miss St. Joseph was intrigued and asked the woman to fetch the mysterious book. When she returned, lying on her hand was the same Gospel of John the dying man had treasured. Miss St. Joseph was delighted, telling the woman, very naturally, to allow her husband to read it as much as he desired. Gradually his antipathy

vanished till he used to welcome her to the house, instead of trying to prevent her coming : “ Why don't you ever visit my house, Miss Sahib ? ” he called as she was passing one day. Thus the Book has opened another home and is rapidly opening another heart. The gospel is permeating the Chainpatia villages slowly indeed, because of the small number of missionaries, but with all the certainty of the living Word.

The lady missionary in the border villages may find her bungalow becoming an orphanage at almost any time. A famine turned Siwan station into an orphanage, for the dying parents left little ones none wanted to feed or clothe. At Motihari, too, nineteen girls have found a happy home. The story of how Miss St. Joseph received a child from God will help to visualise another opportunity—perhaps the most fruitful—of pointing the village folk to the Saviour.

One day Miss St. Joseph was teaching in a school at an outlying village when a rough man came and called for her, asking if she wanted a baby of five days old.

Miss St. Joseph, not knowing how she would tend it, refused, but her Bible woman offered to take charge of the little one and begged her to say “ Yes.” The man said carelessly that if she would not take the child she would die, for her mother had thrown her away. The baby had been born with hair and teeth and the man added : “ I won't touch her, because if I do I shall die.” Miss St. Joseph promised to give the answer in an hour ; then she dismissed the school, to be alone

with God in prayer. For all that hour she asked for guidance, and finally the Lord told her quite clearly to accept the child. The Bible woman was childless and had been deserted by her husband, so her heart was very glad.

They went together to fetch the unwanted girlie, but the women of the village, when they saw her intention, urged her most earnestly not to touch her. "Something will happen to you—something dreadful; leave the child," they pleaded. Miss St. Joseph replied that God was greater than evil, so she had no fear. Asking the women for some clothes, she wrapped the child up safely for the journey home. When they reached the carriage they found the horse had been suddenly taken ill with colic and was quite unable to move. The women of the place became hysterical, crying to her that the horse was possessed by a devil and that if she didn't give up the child she would be killed. A child born with hair and teeth could not be touched without most fatal results. It sounds foolish to think of this in England, but in the East, where devil possession is a very real thing and a group of wide-eyed Hindu women were shaking with fear, the air seemed heavy with danger. Miss St. Joseph lifted her heart in prayer, feeling the challenge from Satan, and waited patiently for the fresh horse which she had summoned to take her back to the bungalow.

The babe was suffering badly. Her eyes and mouth had not been washed since birth, so that it seemed a miracle for her to be alive at all. The doctor gave her every loving attention, but told Miss St. Joseph that

though the little one might live awhile, she could never grow up. "Shanti" they called her—Peace—and saw her grow to live her name.

When she was into her second year, the mother who had deserted her came to see her daughter. She held out her arms but Shanti turned to Miss St. Joseph who could not comfort the agony of tears from the repentant mother heart. The father would not allow the child home again. When Shanti was five, Miss St. Joseph had to be away in England for several months, but left her in the care of the faithful Bible woman. Sad news awaited her return. The Bible woman had died during her absence, while the fatal illness the doctor had foreseen had seized Shanti. She had been taken to hospital where loving hands had tended her, in vain. At first she had seemed to be holding her own and her childish feet had pattered through every ward of the hospital. The Sister spoke of her as the light of the place, for her happy smile and affectionate ways had won the hearts of the sternest. Shanti was a most devoted Christian and God used the fleeting life to save many souls. She would approach a sufferer and tell her so simply of Jesus, that words which would have passed unheeded from the English Sister received a joyful response when coming from the lips of the Indian maiden.

Shanti was entirely given up to Jesus, whose name was always on her lips as she ran to and fro singing favourite hymns. But the disease claimed her at length and the feet no longer pattered up the stone floor of the ward. The childish voice joined the

heavenly choir, but left a living fragrance to linger on down here.

Miss St. Joseph was very happy to feel that God had thus honoured her obedience, and little Shanti is still a precious memory.

The missionary is not always allowed to help all the deserted children she would like. Her enemies are watching so carefully to-day that it is far more difficult than it was to bring up orphans to love Christ. The Arya Samajists know that if the missionary takes in a deserted Hindu, that child will become a Christian : so they strain every nerve to prevent it.

One day the Chainpatia Evangelist, Mahabir Das, found a maiden of about six lying naked by the roadside. He brought her home to be washed and clothed and fed. For three days she was as happy as the daffodils in spring, just revelling in the love she was receiving. On the fourth day the Arya Samajists arrived in a mob. They invaded the Mission compound, seized the girl and carried her away. She was terrified out of her wits, sobbing and screaming as if her little heart would break. Miss St. Joseph could do nothing ; they claimed relationship with the maiden and she had no legal rights over her. To-day, that sweet lassie is a half-witted beggar in the village. They stole her everything. They call themselves Hindu reformers ; sometimes they are devils. Other distressing memories linger in the missionaries' minds : none so poignant as the thought of the terrified girl being hurried away by a mad mob of Arya Samajists ; but sufficiently sad to drive them to their knees again.

One such was connected with an old holy man, whose feet Miss St. Joseph washed. The incident profoundly affected him, for the Easterner is quick to see true humility and self-forgetfulness even in a Christian. It touches his profound spiritual insight.

This sadhu, one of India's six million holy men—who never raise their hands to work—was stopping at Chainpatia mission station. The evangelist there was Mahabir Das, who had been a sadhu before he heard the call of Christ, and now was always ready to welcome these "Seekers after God" for a few days. The days lengthened into weeks, till the sadhu was so moved by what he heard and saw of the Saviour that he asked to be allowed to accompany the evangelist to the summer school held for our Indian Christian workers at Harnatar. He wanted to become a seeker after Jesus!

As they were about to set out, a dog bit his foot so badly that he could not travel. He was bitterly disappointed that he, a great, strong wrestler, famed near and far for the way he had thrown a young ape, should have been disabled by a mere dog. The ape had leaped from some trees right on to his back, but he and a friend had thrown it off—a great feat of strength. Now he had to say farewell to the evangelist, who left for the summer school, while he remained in the charge of Miss St. Joseph. She bathed and tended his foot till he was able to get about again. The first day he walked as far as the village, the Arya Samajists jeered at him, taunting him with going to the Mission.

The sadhu turned on them in a flash, asking whether he would be wiser in coming to the Arya Samaj, who took all a man possessed, or to the Mission who gave a man all he needed?

When he returned to the Miss Sahib, he told her the whole trouble and then broke down; with the tears in his eyes he poured out his whole heart: "Can I ever forget, Miss Sahib, how you, the daughter of the ruling race, bent down to wash my feet? The love of Christ made you do it, but I can never repay you."

The old sadhu would not confess Jesus as his Lord, but he returned thoughtfully to his home, bearing a Bible with him for his son.

The Miss Sahib went up to the hills for the usual summer's rest, but all that holiday the burden of the sadhu in the burning plains below drew her out in prayer. Often she went aside to plead for the softened heart of the Hindu.

On her return Mahabir Das greeted her with the sad news of the sadhu's death. A messenger had come through from his home, telling of how the old man met his end. He had fallen fatally sick and as he lay dying he called his servant, charging him to bear a message to the evangelist at Chainpatia. "Tell him," he said, as his strength ebbed, "I am dying, we shall never meet again."

That was all; but Miss St. Joseph can never forget those times of intercession. Did the Holy Spirit lead her to pray quite in vain? It is a memory of sadness with none of the triumphant glory of Shanti's crossing.

But the work in the villages is happy work, not sad. It is infinitely valuable.

It is the basic spade work, with little of the glamour of the pioneer and nothing of the glory of the famous educationalist. But it is touching the heart of essential India—the India of the villages.

Christ is seeking through the mud walls of Indian villages the children for whom His kingdom waits. And in these border hamlets only those have found true peace whose quest has brought them face to face with Christ.

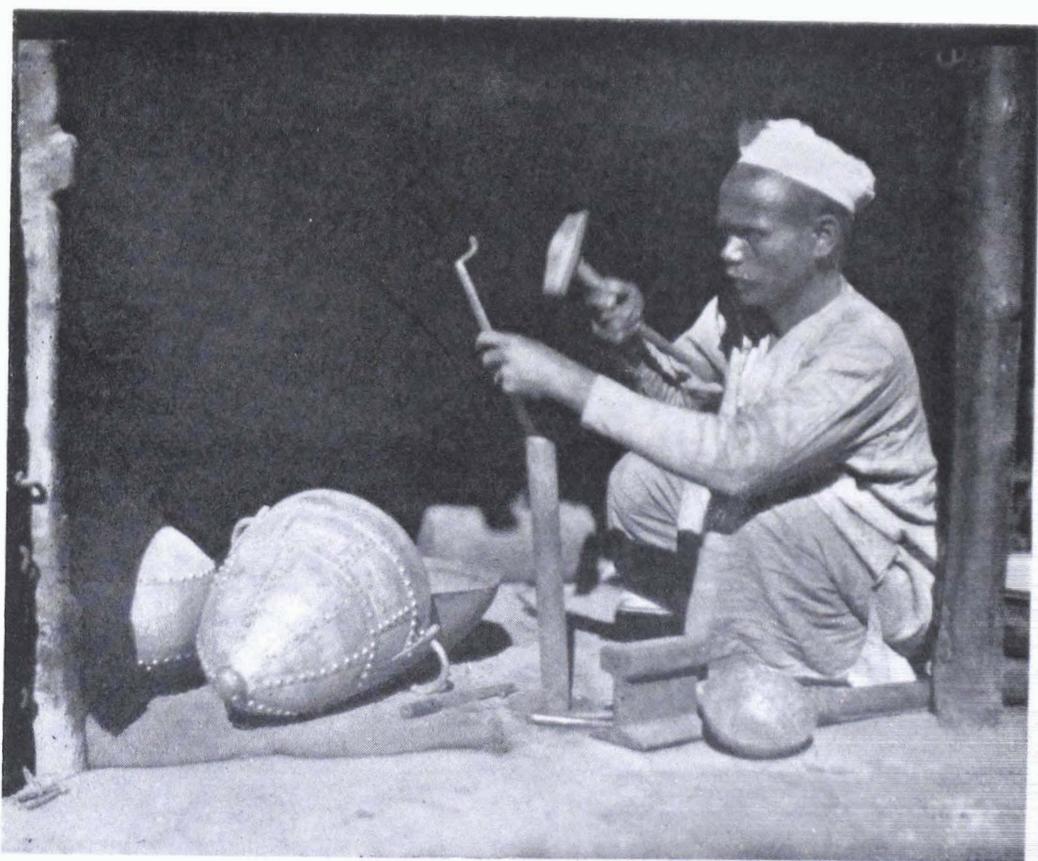
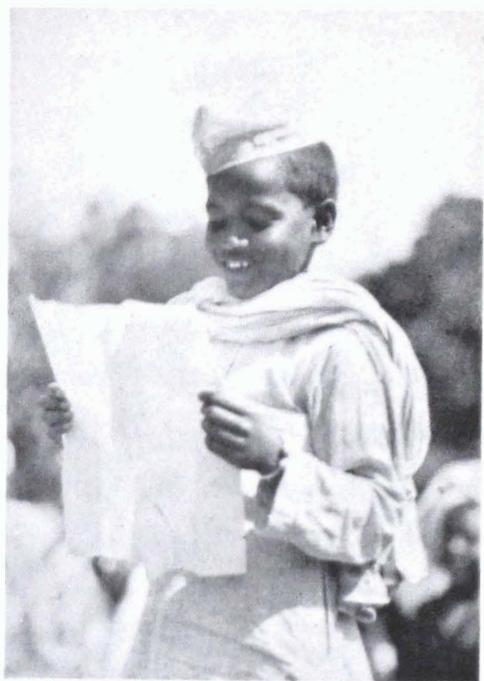
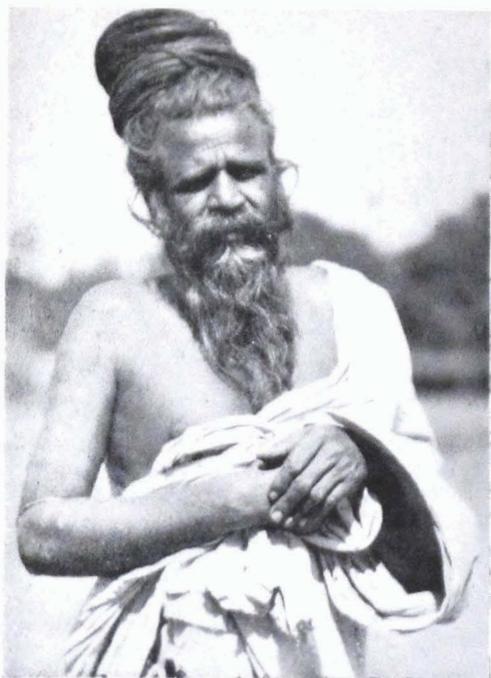
## CHAPTER IV

### CONFLICTS OF FAITH

WE were roused in the darkness at dawn to snatch a hurried cup of tea before we started for the Mela. It was the first new moon in the year and Allahabad was filled with tens of thousands of pilgrims, all bent on the sacred ceremony at the junction of the Jumna and the Ganges. Long before our ponies had reached the river bed we were hopelessly entangled in an ever pushing, shouting, cheerful throng, all approaching the distant hubbub by the water's edge.

When we breasted the bank that led down into the river, we discovered that the Ganges had changed her course in recent years, leaving us with a mile-long walk over the dry, sandy bed. Along the sides of that roadway were hundreds of stalls with innumerable beggars lying or sitting in a variety of attitudes, calculated to arouse the pity of the traveller. Some were displaying their putrid wounds, others were moaning piteously; while at least one had been carried and placed on the ground to lie, covered with a filthy mat, helpless and motionless, with a steadily growing pile of charity by his side.

The mud of the old river course was baked by the heat and broken by fifty thousand feet into a fine, penetrating dust, which settled like a great cloud,



FRONTIER TYPES :

The Religious Devotee ; The Mission Schoolboy ; The Coppersmith.



shutting out even the blaze of the sun. Through this dust cloud came the strangest motely ever conceived. A group of elephants swung slowly along, bells tinkling from their silken saddlery, bearing a medical commission from the League of Nations. Wild ponies with fearless riders came at full gallop, swerving in and out among the throng. Absurdly out of place, a very attractive English girl, in faultless riding breeches, rode a perfectly groomed horse ; by her side was the young English police officer controlling the great multitude. The most ancient car man ever conceived, apparently built in the days of the Mogul Empire, was trying to avoid a convoy of camels ; but the obvious futility of the steering gear warned everybody of their danger.

Halfway down to the beach we passed the preaching tent. The Christians in Allahabad had combined to give an effective gospel witness and here from the earliest dawn they had been hard at work. The pastor of the local Indian church was their leader. That evening, when I was making my way back to the house, I met him selling books. He was always selling books, but I was touched by the despondent droop of his shoulders. He was tired out, for he turned to me with a sad smile, saying : " Fighting with the beasts of Ephesus ! that is the only word to describe our day."

What a day it had been for them ! Long before dawn these Christian preachers were up, welcoming the pilgrims round a great fire they had kindled. The Hindus, as they sat with the Christians in the firelight,

were glad of a warm rest after their long tramp and were ready to listen to the news of the Saviour, told naturally but very earnestly. None could feel those hours were wasted.

After a prayer meeting at 4.0 a.m., when the dawn had broken and the fire sunk low, the sterner business of the day began. It was then, after the sun had turned the sandy river bed into a furnace, that the opposition commenced.

Satan did not come with naked fang and claw. He was imitating what would have been called in New Testament days "an angel of light." The enemy first appeared in the unexpected disguise of a woman from the Mission house. She was an Indian woman who had been befriended a few weeks before by one of the Mem Sahibs. Before she came to the Mission station she had been a woman sadhu ; but she professed to be truly converted. The Mem Sahib left her at the preaching tent while she herself went down further into the Mela ; but once alone, the Indian woman asked to be allowed to address the crowd.

The pastor gave her permission, and she soon began to attract the passers-by with her good and Christian message. But suddenly her whole attitude changed. Raising her voice, she began to curse the Indian gods and the whole worship of the festival. She called down on the people and their idols all the disgusting epithets of a vivid eastern imagination. Her denunciations were unspeakably revolting and blasphemously insulting. The angry voices of her audience only increased her frenzy. The crowd

were not only angry but getting out of hand. From all sides furious Hindus swelled the mass of swaying people, till they broke the ropes and swept her off her feet. Crowd psychology is uncertain when fanaticism has been set on fire. Their cries attracted missionaries and police, who tried to reason with the leaders of the mob. At last, while the discussion was raging between them, the woman was hurried out from the rear towards the edge of the Mela, where the carriages were parked. Before she had gone a hundred yards the crowd had surrounded her escort, threatening the young American missionary who was conducting her away. She had probably meant to raise the crowd against Christianity in her deceitfulness, but this was quite beyond all calculations. Prayers were certainly reaching the Throne from several hearts, as the crowd, with the group in the centre, arrived at the Mission carriage. The horse was unable to move, even though the woman was safely within the vehicle. As the driver was urging his frightened steed to go forward, a naked sadhu rushed up, a long beard his only clothing, shaking his fist in the face of the man with terrible threats. Slowly the pony began to move with the missionary on guard, till at last it left the crowd behind. One thing was clear, this woman had been employed by some enemies to destroy the Christian witness. She was no true Christian, but in her enmity she had gone too far and almost lost her life.

So back to the arena, with the people shouting what was in former days, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." But their day's conflict was not over :

the sun was still rising towards its zenith and would not set for many hours.

As the preachers began to gather a fresh crowd of less excited people about them there was leisure to observe folk. Sometimes a figure seemed to stand out from the crowd with a message for us,—and then was gone.

A leper, with sin and disease written all over his face, is slowly making his way towards the sacred waters, supporting himself on two sugar canes.

An old countryman, who is obviously utterly worn out with his long pilgrimage, is starting his return journey. His bathing is over : but instead of the serene gladness in his face, that should express even his mistaken belief in forgiveness, there was nothing but a painful and querulous thoughtfulness. His feet are sore with blisters, and he stands in his wooden sandals on tip-toe, shuffling along with quick short paces in evident pain. It seems difficult to think of his going one mile ; perhaps he has fifty to face.

We turn away to speak to a stranger who pushes into us, and instead of the lame countryman, we are looking at a sturdy northman. Strong in build and a trifle arrogant in bearing, the highland hills have hailed him as their son, stamping their hall-mark in his figure. But he, too, is bound in misery and iron, for he has never escaped from the tyranny of an over-bearing priestcraft.

Beyond him, a young University man saunters along, conscious of his independence, proud that he has flung off all authority. He owns no political,

religious or mental master. He has taken a sip at the cup of knowledge, and sunk back intoxicated. For him the ceremonial day has little significance. He will never bathe in the Ganges again. He is more a follower of the Arya Samaj than anything; certainly he is no orthodox Hindu: but just as certainly deadly anti-Christian and anti-Islam.

Seeing a camera, he is on fire in a flash: "I know you people—here to take photographs and then write books against India, like Miss Mayo. You hate India. You want to keep her for ever under the heel of Britain. You want to make the British think our religion is a base and wicked system. Your Bible!! bah! I have read it often. I want nothing of your Christ who was born in England. How could He be the Son of God? Was God married then? Away with your Jesus, we want nothing of Him."

Quietly we chatted to him, trying to calm his anger with kindness and friendliness.

We explained that Jesus came to the East for the East: but he was not satisfied. "No," he urged, "you hate India": implying fairly clearly, "and we hate you, too."

The missionary who was with me took his hand and looked straight into his eyes. "I love India," he pressed earnestly; "I have loved India for years. I have left my mother and all my friends in England; nothing brings me here but my love for India."

He might have added too, "I have a wife who waits close to the heart of India for the Resurrection day"; but that was too sacred; though it could

not but explain some of his great passion for India's children.

His earnestness silenced the student for a moment, so he pressed home his advantage. "How old are you? Twenty-two? Then for more years than your life I have loved and served your motherland."

The young fellow's bluster had vanished, so a Gospel of John was produced, with texts marked and prayed over by Lincoln Crusaders, which he gratefully received.

We turned back after our talk with the student, towards the preaching tent. It seems a small enough task in England to spend the day preaching at a Mela; the Indian pastor knew otherwise.

The previous year he had been preaching, when some Arya Samajist incited the crowd to assault him. They rushed the tent, snapping the barriers, and seized him, roughly dragging him out of the enclosure. There they flung him on the ground and broke their great sticks on his body, giving him a terrible beating. Bruised and bleeding they left him, like Paul at Lystra, to be tended by his comrades. With this in his mind his courage may be measured, as he faced the crowd that long day through.

All the day, the preaching went forward; in all the preaching Satan is at work.

He attacks the preachers, whose voices lose their zest as they wonder how much use preaching really is. They grow listless and some don't even trouble to take their hands out of their pockets as they sing. They hardly expect any conversions and seem to be getting

what they expect. Few gospels seem to be sold, everybody is tired and jaded after ten hours on duty. Oh! the strength of Satan is abroad: appearing, too, in many a British home, stopping the Power at our end, raising obstacles to prevent our prayer. Supporters flag and waver: preachers fail.

The next attack was delivered just as we reached the preaching tent, by our student friend—with the Gospel of John still in his pocket! He had sauntered on before us, till catching sight of the meeting he had scented his prey. He was heckling persistently, refusing to be silenced or satisfied. After a few minutes we managed to draw him to the edge of the circle, where we discussed his point.

“What happened before Jesus came? Why do you Christians never talk about that? You know you can't, because Science is utterly against all your ideas of the creation in the Bible. A pack of lies—that's what you are preaching! Anyhow, what is the use in telling us about a God who never cared for men till He sent Jesus, after a thousand generations had died.”

His argument and raised voice had attracted quite a group around us, so our reply was addressed to them as well as our student. We told him of the parable of the Vineyard: of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ: of God's great plan leading up to Calvary—praying the while.

His arguments were answered, but we could see he was only half satisfied: but there was nothing to be gained in our continuing just then: so we bade him

farewell. Some more gospels changed hands as the group dispersed.

The sun had risen slowly and yet more slowly as it reached its height, seeming to wait there motionless, enjoying a midday rest : but now it was setting more and more quickly as the evening drew in. When the shadows of the crowd were beginning to lengthen and steps began to be turned homeward, the final attack was made. A simple Christian preacher was being persistently interrupted by an educated Indian, who kept on demanding a scientific explanation of the Virgin Birth. He seemed bent on breaking up the meeting and as we arrived our sympathies went out to the harassed Christian.

We tried to get the Hindu to discuss the matter with us, thinking we should be able to satisfy his mind. Our self-confidence was to be humbled ! He turned readily, quite happy to address us in English, with quotations from up-to-date European rationalists. He had soaked himself in John Stuart Mill, Hegel and Kant, and turned their broadsides on to our frail barque. We tried to deal quietly with one point at a time, but as we answered one difficulty we found he has shifted to another. With the crowd at his back, he was able to turn the laugh against us very quickly.

Then we realised what an experienced missionary would have known all along : he did not desire to be convinced of anything ; his only purpose was to prevent our witness. Our object was now plain, we must get him away from the tent so that the meeting could continue. Each time we attempted to close the

discussion he turned to the crowd, calling on them to witness that we were confessing ourselves unable to answer his arguments.

He had passed from the Birth of Christ to His Resurrection ; from that to the authenticity of the original manuscripts. It was during his loud-voiced remarks on the question of documentary evidence that we saw our chance. " I believe in nothing based on written documents," he asserted. " But what of your own religion ? " we asked : " the incarnations of your gods are they not written, do you not believe in them ? " " Certainly," he replied, " but they are very different." " May we see your books to judge for ourselves," we asked. " Have you got any with you ? " " No," he answered, and added what we hoped he would, " Will you come with me down to our tent and I will show you our Vedas ? "

Our purpose was achieved, so we followed him away from the meeting, which he had so successfully broken up. It was soon able to continue, while we explained to him that as we could not read his language, we had better leave the matter as it stood. We were humbled, who had thought our mental equipment adequate for such an encounter, and wondered at the grace needed by these Christian preachers in dealing with such men.

Later on that evening, he found us taking photographs of some sadhus worshipping idols. He came up to us pugnaciously jeering : " Why don't you laugh at Roman Catholics ? They worship idols just as much as we do." We replied at once that we would not

defend the worship of anything or any person, save God Himself. "Well, you are as bad," he laughed, "You worship a dead Jesus." "Oh, no!" I replied, glad that here at least I was on the firm ground of experience: "He is alive. I speak to Him every day and He speaks to me. To-day He has done so. I know Him as my greatest friend and living Saviour."

He changed the subject, seeking to draw us into argument: but we refused to have any further discussion. In this mood he would not admit the Ganges to be wet or the sun hot.

It was then, as we turned away from our truculent adversary, that we saw the tired pastor, slowly wending his way towards us with a handful of booklets. He smiled a little as he caught my eye: "Fighting with the beasts at Ephesus," he murmured. He turned to a countryman passing home: "Will you buy a gospel for two farthings, my friend?" The only answer was a surly grunt.

## CHAPTER V

### ARYA SAMAJ

IGNORANCE is often regarded as being the greatest foe of Christianity. In India, ever since Carey, Marshman, and Ward began to attack this enemy with sound Christian learning, the great missionary desire has been to spread the *knowledge* of Christ.

To-day we are confronted by a far-reaching and implacable opposition made up of those who have a little knowledge but profess to know almost everything. Their knowledge has led them to study Christ—indeed to admire His character and peerless teaching, but they utterly refuse to acknowledge His supreme claim to their allegiance and worship. Many of these antagonists are banded together into organizations, one of the most powerful of which is the Arya Samaj, which is rapidly growing in strength as the more educated classes lend it their adherence.

Some understanding of the Arya Samaj will be very valuable, and is really essential, in seeking to grasp the missionary situation in India to-day.

The Arya Samaj is a reformation very similar to that which transformed Europe in the 16th century. The Luther of this Indian reformation was its founder Dayananda. As Luther in Europe was profoundly affected by the Renaissance of learning, which helped to shatter the old blind faith in the teachings of the

Roman Church, so Dayananda was influenced by a parallel movement in India. The impact of Western science and learning on ancient India, made it impossible for those Indians who were fast becoming educated, to retain the traditions of their ancient religions.

In Europe, Luther claimed that the many abuses and irrational traditions which had sprung up were not part of essential Christianity, so he raised the cry of : "Back to the Bible." In India, Dayananda claimed the same thing for Hinduism and called men away from the false crudity which had grown up round later literature, back to the original Hindu scriptures—the Vedas.

The movement he initiated claims that none of the corruptions Christians condemn in Hinduism are part of its essential nature. They have only arisen (such is the claim) through the perverting influence of those writings which have grown up round the Vedas. These widely read and respected books profess merely to be commentaries upon the Vedas, but actually they usurp their authority and destroy the purity of their message.

The Arya Samajists have never wavered in their condemnation of the evils in present Hinduism, and the strength of their hatred of them is probably found in the extraordinary revulsion of feeling which rent the life of their founder in his early years. Dayananda was the dutiful son of good Hindu parents and was actually being initiated as a lad into the worship of Shiva, when that event occurred which doomed his faith in Hinduism. His closest disciples tell the story

very graphically. Dayananda and the other novices had to spend the hours of darkness in the temple, keeping watch before the great Idol seated on his bull. As the night advanced, the boy noticed first one and then another of the temple servants and devotees fall to sleep. He dared not allow himself to be overcome by his heaviness for fear he should lose the merit of the vigil. As he sat there, gazing wearily at the idol, he spied a company of mice run out of the wall and swarm over the great image. They ran in and out of the grinning mouth, corrupting the sacred figure and eating all the sacred food. His heart almost stopped beating as the awful question burst upon him : “ Can *this* be the Eternal It : the Deity : the Mahadeva—The Supreme Being ? ” He had been told *It* could eat and talk and sleep. *It* cursed men and beat the drum. But now mice were playing hide-and-seek on *It's* awful body ! His faith was lost : the whole current of his life was changed.

His father realised his son had gone through some great crisis but could not enter into his terrible soul struggle. He arranged to marry Dayananda to a young Hindu maiden to turn his thoughts back to everyday life. The same plan had failed with Buddha : it now failed with him. He fled from home to become a wandering seeker after the One True God.

During his search he found himself by a river, where a dead body was floating slowly towards the sea. The thought came to him that he could test the teaching of the Pundits on the human body. If that were true he might trust their teaching on the soul.

He brought the body to land and dissected it with his rude knife ; only to prove how utterly false was all Hindu teaching on anatomy. Never again would he believe the orthodox Hinduism.

He dedicated his life to a ceaseless pilgrimage through Northern India, crying : “ Present Hinduism is false to its own holy books—throw aside all your idolatrous practices and turn back to the Vedas.”

To-day the Arya Samaj follows its founder in a hatred for all the corruptions of modern Hinduism. It condemns idol worship, polytheism, and child marriage, perpetual widowhood and the practice of Suti ; the degradation of outcasts and the refusal to raise women’s status by education. From the days of its founder it has sounded a trumpet-call back to the original uncorrupted religion of the Vedas.

It might logically be expected that such a movement could have welcomed Christianity as an ally in the removal of these abuses. But it was not so, for two reasons.

First, their teaching was not utterly consistent : where it touched themselves too closely it became modified. Though opposed to caste, the four principal castes are still recognised and no Arya Samajist will ever marry outside his own particular section of society. Though the purdah was attacked, it is more than probable that the wives of many Arya Samajists have but little freedom. They know that Christianity would be too thorough and radical to accept as an ally.

But far more cogent than this was the second reason. In England the Reformation came in on the

wave of a realisation and revival of nationalism. In India, for very different reasons, we are witnessing the identical combination. The "Back to the Vedas" cry is touching a chord in the soul of India : a note is responding which is utterly national. Samaj will tolerate nothing from the West. They are the avowed opponents of Christianity, the Western creed, with which they wage a constant warfare.

Not that there is no good in Arya Samaj. We must recognise and glory in the good that is present in their movement. Those who join the brotherhood confess their faith in the ten principles of Dayananda. These show both the length of their advance towards truth and the limitations which bind them.

They admit that God is All-Truth, All Knowledge, All Wisdom, All Power, Unbegotten, Omniscient, Eternal, and Holy. But they never call Him LOVE. They claim that worship must be paid to Him alone, but cannot show how we may offer our worship with clean hands. They confess that the primary object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world : all must be treated with love, justice, and a due regard for their interests : no one should be contented with his own good alone, but every one ought to regard his prosperity as included in that of others. This teaching is Christian, so far as it goes, besides being Arya Samaj ; but only Christ could give His life to eradicate the selfishness which makes brotherhood impossible. And only our personal union with Christ can beget in us the new life which issues spontaneously in the fruits of the Spirit which are love, joy, peace . . . . .

Their social efforts are as commendable as their philosophy. Often in railway accidents the only Hindus who will help their fellow-countrymen belong to the Arya Samaj or kindred organizations. They gather orphans into homes and establish schools and colleges. They encourage their child widows to re-marry, while they foster education for girls, preparing them for the time when they shall be able to enter the wider sphere of life now reserved for their Western sisters.

But with all this they hate Christianity, entirely misunderstanding its genius and regarding it as the child of the West. These misconceptions they spread with untiring zeal, both through paid agents who itinerate, propagating their tenets as they go, and by means of literature. The written attack is subtle. In one book addressed to "Fellow Hindus," the writer is pointing out what insidious enemies the Christians are. He writes to his Indian brethren :

"Just at the time when you are considering whether the West is not really superior to the East with all their telegraphs, irrigation schemes, railways, roads, and a host of other things : just at such a time, when doubts are in your minds, the missionary comes to you. He whispers that the superiority of the Englishman is the gift of the Son of God, whom he has acknowledged as his King and Saviour, and that your countrymen can really become great if they come under His banner. The idea thus insinuated is daily fed and strengthened by the education that he imparts to us through a large number of Mission schools and colleges that cover the

country with their network. He is encouraged in his proselytising work by the apathy of the Hindus towards religious instruction."

Could anything be a more complete misunderstanding of the message of the Cross? It is a terrible thought that in part we may have been responsible for this as a Church of God in India. Our British patriotism must be lost in that of the kingdom of God and our racial pride must be broken till a British Christian is no longer ashamed of meekness.

This perversion goes to such lengths that one is compelled to believe that it is not so much a failure to understand the Cross as a deliberate misrepresentation of our Saviour.

Dealing with the forces opposed to a renewed Hinduism, an official Arya Samaj writer, having disposed of Islam, turns his attention to Christianity :

"The followers of the prophet of Nazareth are also sapping the foundations of Hinduism. The missionaries of Christ have, instead of the mere brute force employed (by Islam), the unconquerable forces of Mammon and Western civilisation at their back. They are excellent diplomatists and tacticians. They know how to befool the simple-minded Hindu. The Hindu is only allowed to look at the bright side of the Christian religion and his attention is skilfully diverted from the absurd Hebrew traditions. The missionary contrasts the character of Jesus with that of Shiva—the former meek and humble with a soul aglow with the love of mankind—the latter fierce and ferocious, a lover of liquor and ganga and the very principle of

destruction. The Hindu swallows this bait easily and never suspects any weakness in his assailants. He hangs his head for shame and has no answer." Then this writer attacks women's work, warning Hindus not to be deceived by the subtle Zenana schemes, with bribes for the children to fetch them away from their homes to the Miss Sahib's school.

They never tire of mocking at the Old Testament stories, from some of which they seek to prove that Christianity is really degraded polytheism. Dealing with Genesis vi, and the sins that provoked the flood, the attempt is made, not only to turn it into a degrading story, but to undermine the true Christian idea of God. They write: "Beside God the major, there is an indefinite number of minor Gods who are the sons of the great God. The grossness of this conception is apparent from the fact that, according to the Bible, Gods marry human beings and their intercourse with them results in stalwart sons."

These attacks reveal them as the implacable enemies of Christianity, even though we are both seeking the amelioration of the Indian people. We seek that end by the spiritual regeneration of individual Indians, but they deny that regeneration is even possible. To them our whole gospel of salvation, through faith in the vicarious sacrifice of Another, is sheer nonsense and lunacy.

It is impossible to hold the fundamental Hindu belief in "Karma" and believe also in the possibility of the entail of sin being suddenly broken, through the death of Christ. The essence of "Karma" is "what-

soever a man soweth, that shall he reap." Physically, I must digest my own food : once I have eaten, it is I alone who can deal with that food in the process of nature. Nobody else can offer to perform this physical task on my behalf. Why then in the spiritual realm do we expect natural laws to be overthrown? "The Arya Samaj denies that there can be anything like vicarious atonement or salvation through another." This, placed in italics by the Indian writer, is the official attitude of the Arya Samaj towards Gethsemane and Calvary. And they maintain this position with the support they draw from *English* writers. That is the tragedy. English rationalism is strengthening the East against Christ.

If the Arya Samajists are actively opposed to Christianity, they are just as certainly a force to be reckoned with. This is not only because of the sincerity with which they hold their views and the energy with which they seek to propagate them, but more on account of the class from which they are chiefly drawn. Their strength lies in the small minority of English-speaking men. They form but a handful compared with the great agricultural population of India ; but they, as educated English-speaking men, hold in their hands the destiny of their land, for good or ill. They can lead the rest of India after them. They are mostly schoolmasters, lawyers, barristers, government servants and clerks, but their influence is quite out of proportion to their numbers. It is this class which both articulates the thought of India and also helps to mould it. That so many of

these men should be Arya Samajists is a real hindrance to Christian enterprise. It is an opposition which can be met in England by a rising tide of prayer and sympathetic understanding. Knowledge of this movement enables us to grasp more intelligently the obstacles before our fellow workers. Without this knowledge, our prayers must lack understanding and power.

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This is an example of Arya Samaj propaganda in the ignorant country districts. It is translated as literally as possible to keep the local colour and, with a few sentences omitted, it appears substantially as it was written.

It is offered to the villagers for a farthing, the price of a gospel from the Christian.

#### THE PADRE SAHIB AND THE VILLAGER.

The Padre Sahib puts on his hat and coat and enters the Mela (fair). He is selling a picture book and cries: "Brothers, take this book of song." Many people are there who did not know his deceit. They buy the book for one pice ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ) and are happy. Quite an ignorant villager enters the Mela, and accosts the Padre Sahib:

"What is this book?" he asks. "By this you can get Salvation," replies the Padre Sahib.

The villager says that Salvation can only be obtained by bathing in the Ganges and following the teaching of the Pundits (religious teachers).

"No! no!" says the Padre; "they are false teachers. Salvation and satisfaction can only come by

reading this book." He opens it and reads aloud :  
 " Jesus Christ is the Saviour of my soul."

The villager enquires : " Who is this Jesus, how can He save ? "

" He is God's Son and our soul's Saviour," replies the Padre.

The villager asks : " Do no people die in your homes ? Why are there so many Christian graves ? "

" You are a fool," says the Padre. " Saving our souls means that if we trust in Jesus we go to heaven."

" Oh ! " says the villager, " then do no Christians sin ? "

" No ! " says the Padre (falling into the trap ! !)

Villager : " Have *you* never sinned ? In church why do you pray to God to forgive you ? "

Padre : " To be saved is this—that we may come under the protection of Jesus."

Villager : " Who was Jesus ? "

Padre : " I have already told you : the Son of God."

Villager : " We are all God's sons. All in the Mela are sons of God. The goats, the cows, the bulls, all are children of God."

Padre : " No ! Jesus is specially the Son of God : born of Mary the Virgin."

Villager : " Are all those born of women who are not married God's sons in a special way ? Because there are two in my village and we consider them utterly base."

At this the Padre Sahib loses his temper : but the man presses home more questions about the Father

and Mother of Jesus. He makes it clear to those who are listening that the Sahib is a fool and a simpleton ! Then he turns to another point.

Villager : “ Our Pundits say that Christ is shown to be a sinner in the Christian book. Is this true ? ”

Padre : “ No ! This is a lie from some Arya Samaj man. Avoid their teaching and don't be tricked by them.”

Villager : “ If Christ was a sinner, how could He save us from sin ? The Arya Samaj men don't deceive us : you are doing that.”

Padre : “ You are a quarrelsome fellow. Put your trust in Jesus and get joy.”

Villager : “ Well, where is Jesus ? Give me His address.”

Padre : “ Jesus is with God. Put your trust in Him.”

Villager : “ But God is everywhere. Why do you say He is in heaven ? Besides, where is heaven ? Is not God here now ? ”

Padre : “ Heaven is in the sky where God and Christ are. The Bible is a heavenly book : read it.”

Villager : “ How can it be a heavenly book when it was made on earth ? It is like all other books.”

Padre : “ No ! God's words are written here : the oracles of God are in this.”

Villager : “ Bring it here and I will read it.” (He opens it and finds the passage he wants). “ Listen to this ! Here is written, ‘ When any chief sins, he is to take a lamb and present it before God, where he is to sacrifice it.’ It is written that goats must be

killed. How can you call it a religious book? The more sin you have the more goats are slain! You have a cruel and bloodthirsty God."

Padre: "Well! What harm is there in killing goats? They have no souls."

Villager: "Bah!! Why is there no soul in it? If it has no life in it, then why does it cry when it is being killed? Even an ant has a soul. A goat eats and sleeps and works like us. We can't find a spark of pity in you Christians. Do you eat cows?"

Padre: "Of course. We eat everything. There is no harm when God made them for food."

Villager: "You great murderer! To kill useful animals is a great sin. Cows give milk too—can't you see the profit in a cow?"

Padre: "Yes! But if a cow doesn't give milk, we eat it."

Villager: "If your mother didn't give milk to you would you kill and eat her?"

Padre: "No; that would be cannibalism."

Villager: "Well, so is the other! But tell me, how many sons has God?"

Padre: "One only, who died on the Cross: the only begotten Son."

Villager: "What harm did Jesus do that He should be crucified?"

Padre: "None. He suffered instead of us."

Villager: "What happened afterwards?"

Padre: "He was buried, and rose again after three days."

Villager: "Get away with you! What rubbish!"

Between the Crucifixion and the resurrection where was Christ's Spirit? "

Padre : " It isn't written. Ask me something else and I shall be able to tell you."

Villager : " Why do you call Jesus ' Lord ' ? It is written that whoever calls him ' Lord, Lord, ' shall not enter his kingdom ! Stop calling Him ' Lord, ' or you won't go to Heaven ! ! "

Padre : " No. No. You don't understand. Put your trust in Him and get peace."

Villager : " How can I get peace ? Read your own book and see what is written there : ' And in Heaven there was a war : Michael and his angels fought with a serpent ! ' What rubbish ! Quarrelling in Heaven ! How can you have peace there ? "

Padre : " You don't understand. Among Christians there is unity. They don't quarrel like you : that is the Kingdom of Peace."

Villager : " No, that is not true ! The Kingdom belongs to George V. All Christians are not Rajahs ! Why, in many countries the kings are not even Christians, and Christians certainly quarrel. In the last war there were Christians on both sides."

Padre : " You are a quarrelsome fellow."

Villager : " No, it is Jesus who is quarrelsome. He said : ' Don't think I am come to bring peace, I am come to bring a sword : to set a father against a son, and a mother against a son ! ' "

So the Padre, when he had heard the villager, went away. Thus the villager saved the crowd from the Padre Sahib's snare.

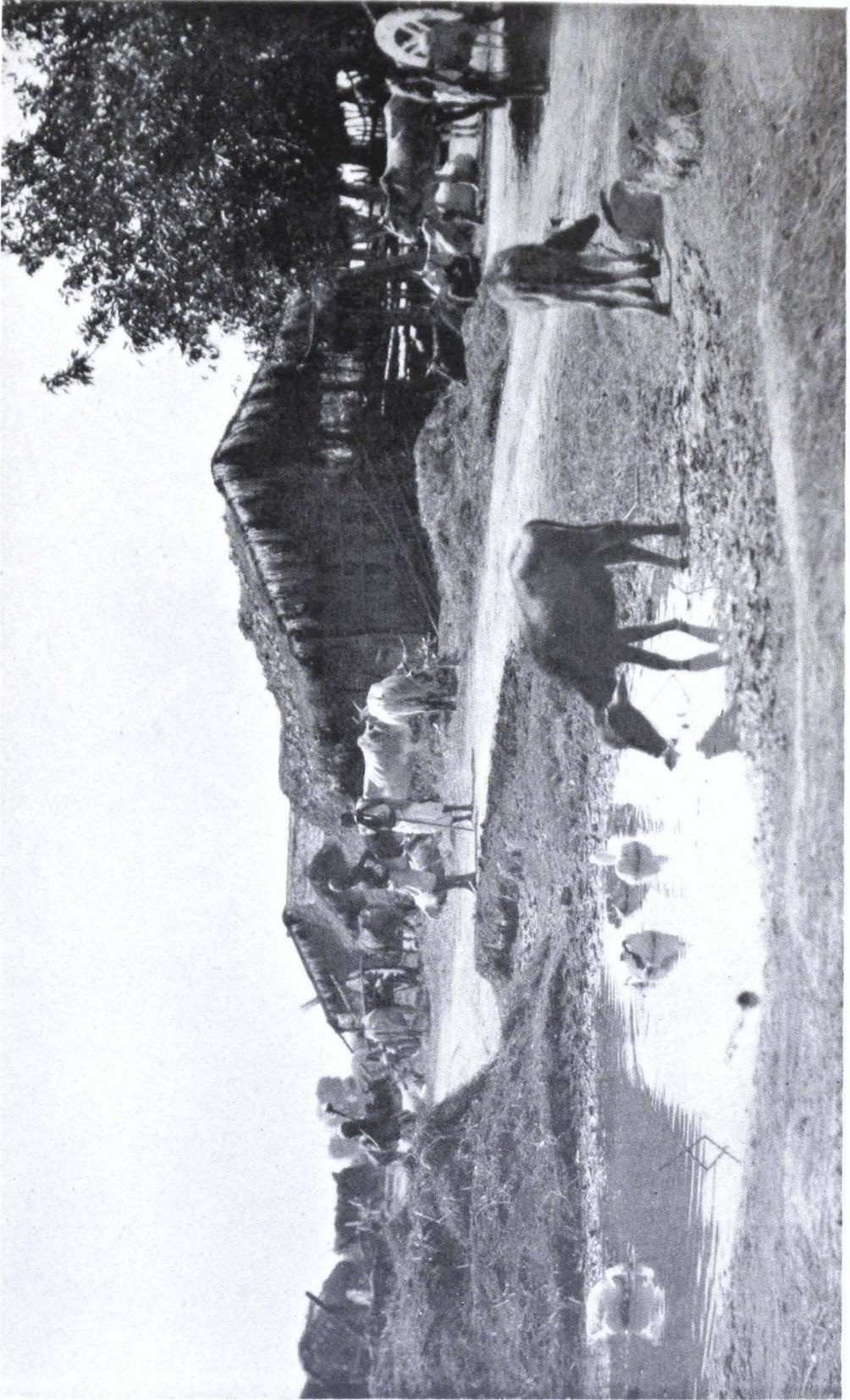
This illustrates rather aptly the way the Arya Samaj are trying to set men against Christ. They take simple details which can be easily grasped by the ignorant villagers and make them into stumbling blocks in the way of Christianity. The country folk would gather that the Virgin Mary was no better than the more unfortunate in their own circle. They would have their old prejudices roused, and militant, feeling that Christians cared nothing for sacred animal life, but that their God-Jesus ordered them to kill sacrifices and eat cows. As far as their simple minds understood, they would be confident that the most ordinary country farmer was able to get the better of the Sahib in a religious discussion. In each cleverly raised point he had made the Padre look a fool. He had exposed the fact that he was not following even the teaching of Jesus, and that the peace he was so fond of offering others did not exist. For Jesus, the most quarrelsome man of all, lived in heaven, where the angels spent their time fighting. He is convinced more than ever that Christianity is a lie for fools.

But when the Sahib really does come out in person to find an Arya Samaj selling such pamphlets, the whole aspect changes. If the people are quiet enough to listen, they will appreciate the Sahib's reply, and may even be prevailed upon to exchange the Arya tract for a Christian gospel. All too often, the crowd are roused with the indignation of half a thousand generations behind them. Then they tear up the gospels and fling them in the face of the Sahib. Sometimes, even, they drive him from the village with their

jeers ringing in his ears. But to his heart there comes louder than the tumult of the Arya Samaj, the triumphant song of Victory :

“ He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.”





A FRONTIER VILLAGE.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE VILLAGE LANTERN SERVICE

WHEN the boys had emptied the old boat and paddled us all over the river, the sun was already beginning to set. We wanted to have a service in the near-by village before the light was gone ; then there was the lantern to be shown as soon as the darkness would allow, in a larger village beyond. We did not hurry across the fields, because we knew the gloaming would linger quite long enough for the first service ; but we enjoyed listening to the merry chatter of the twenty boys who had come to help with the singing.

The village seemed to be almost empty ; most of the men were still in the fields. A friendly relation of one of the boys brought a string bed and a crowd of interested children began to gather as Moti Kennedy, our leader, arranged himself on it cross-legged. Held between his feet were two drums and propped up before him was an open hymn book. Disregarding the feelings of the old bed, Stephen Matthews, his assistant, seated himself beside Moti with a small harmonium. The boys were soon grouped around and the service had started.

There was nothing Western about the scene. The background was formed by half-a-dozen mud huts, whose walls were plastered with manure made into

cakes and drying for fuel. Behind the huts rose a group of slender palms, as graceful as the Indian maidens who were standing near, nursing their tiny brothers. The blades of corn were beginning to spring up as if they were wanting to have a peep at the fast gathering crowd.

The boys are beginning to start the third hymn. They sing with more gusto than before, because the beating of the drums and the Indian melodies have attracted the attention of the men. These pause, as they pass with great loads of dried grass on their heads, and after quietly taking in the scene, some of them decide to return. Others wonder what it all means as they resume their steady homeward gait.

Those who return, find the singing over. A young lad of about eighteen is telling the story of the prodigal son. His voice seems monotonous, but his heart is on fire. Nepal is his home, Christ his Love. Later on that week he was speaking to the Mem Sahib with tears in his eyes. With his hands pressed against his heart and his eyes on the ground, he asked : " How can I forget the pain in here, which is always there when I think of the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross ? " Now he is telling of the pain in the Father's heart over the boy who is far from home.

As he stops, we look round again to find that the crowd has grown. There is intent interest on the faces of those who are squatting on the ground behind. Can we doubt that He who told us to pray has helped some dark heart to find the light ?

Another talk and another hymn close the gathering

none too soon, for the western sky is making us catch our breath with wonder. The wealth of colour comes and goes ; the crimson and purple give place to the softer shades of evening. We who watch seem to see beyond the dying glow the great heart of Love seeking to woo us to Himself with a tenderness ever new, though older far than Calvary.

It is all very well to let our fancy roam for a few brief moments as the meeting breaks up, but if we don't hurry away from the crowd of children and dogs we shall be late for the lantern service in the other village.

We stepped out with a good will, a tiny child acting as our guide. Through the scattered houses of the village he leads till we come out on to a narrow path between the fields of growing crops. With the deepening twilight the world seemed to fade away and heaven to draw very close as the stars began to appear. Ten minutes before, not one was visible, but now the whole sky seemed to be alive with them ; twinkling with merriment as they watch our goal. We were grateful to be met at the entrance of the village by a man with a lantern, but we did not know how grateful we ought to have been. The lane down which we were led was quite dark as it wound its way between the deep shadows of the mud huts. Stretching out our hands we could touch the walls on either side. Suddenly our guide halted with a grunt and I saw with my eyes what I had already smelled some distance away. An open drain carrying all the sewage from the huts was running down the centre of the path !

Stepping carefully, first to one side and then to the other, as it twisted along, we drew near to the open space in the middle of the hamlet.

On three sides, the houses faced inwards, but on the fourth the well was all that stood between us and the fields. A line of cows was tied to stakes beneath a great spreading tree. Close beside, the lantern had been set up. The bustle of getting the sheet secure, aided by the arrival of our party, had collected quite a crowd. They watched everything as if they had never seen a lantern before, contriving to stand always just in the way.

Between the lantern and the sheet the boys squatted, waiting to start their Indian melodies as soon as the word was given. Just as we were about to begin, an ox burst out of the nearest hut, and dragging his master after him, scattered the people to right and left. Nobody took any notice; it happened every day. Dim lights from the doorways of other dwellings revealed calves and goats within. Beside them, lying on rude string beds, were the older men of the place resting after the toil of the day. The presence of the beasts with their strong odour, telling of many a wallow in the reeking mud pool, seemed to pass unnoticed. The holiness of the sacred cow adds dignity to the meanest dwelling.

Such was the beginning of the evening's lantern service, and surely as Orion lifted his head above the horizon behind us, Orion's Creator looked down in tenderness and love.

The story opened with another scene the stars

had watched. The angels were telling the shepherds of Bethlehem the news we had come to bring to the country folk of Bihar. So, while the noises all around began to die away, the villagers saw and heard the life of the Village Carpenter, the Son of God. As the old, old story unfolded, the fire-flies danced till the moon rose above the roofs of thatch. Hard by the lantern a man was standing with his arms folded and every muscle of his face tense. His eyes never wandered from the pictures : his face expressed a great hunger, somehow coupled with a sturdy independence. The other side an old man was crouching on the ground, with his little granddaughter clasped between his knees. His eyes were roaming all the time : from the child to the sheet, from the sheet to the preacher, from the preacher to me. Our eyes met and we quietly measured each other. There was prayer in my heart, but all I could see of his was the grave enquiry of his eyes. The child toyed with her necklace of charms, hugging his neck the while, till her face was hidden in his beard. . . .

Was it during the raising of Jairus' daughter that the first girl was called to bed ? The father had been growing impatient, and after calling two or three times from his fireside, he came out thoroughly cross. His scolding voice drowned the preacher, till a slight figure rose from behind the curtain to follow him reluctantly indoors. Perhaps the next intruder was encouraged by this interruption. Be that as it may, he made the most of half-a-dozen sentences. He was a self-important old Mohammedan who wanted to know how his women

folk dared to waste their time over this foolery, instead of working at home. One thought that it was not in the least surprising that they should steal away from this querulous old fellow for a few minutes. Besides, what was it they were hearing? The True Teacher was killed? After all that life of loving goodness? Could this be true? Oh, the shame of it! Oh, to have been alive then, even if only to weep over His dear body as they took it away. . . .

For over half-an-hour the Sahib has been speaking, now he sits down to let a son of India drive home the final message. Andrew Thomas picks up the brush where the one who has loved and tended him since his early childhood has put it down. He knows what will appeal to the heart of his fellow countrymen. He is versed in all the tricks of their local patois. Every word tells. The Prodigal Son is brought before you with such vivid colour that you cannot be quite sure that it was not from this very village that he went off to waste his fortune. The whole crowd ripples into laughter at the description of his feeding the pigs. He asks the fathers present if they would have been willing to receive the boy home again; and the answer comes with no uncertain voice. Can they understand the longing of the Father? They can. Then, he urges, "*You* are the lost sons; the Father is watching for *you* with His broken heart. *You* are feeding pigs, starving, instead of enjoying the comfort of the Father's home. Return to Him to-night! . . .

Who is praying that his talk should have such weight? Is there some one in England who has given

one of these very slides, who is on her knees, saying :  
 " Father, bless that gift I gave Thee, and use it to bring  
 some hungry, wandering soul back Home this day " ?  
 Powerfully he presses home the meaning of the Cross  
 and Resurrection. The triumphant Saviour is not a  
 dead dream, but a vindicated, living, active Friend.  
 There follows the solemn appeal of Holman Hunt's  
 picture, " The Light of the World." Hearts are  
 softened, eyes are filled with tender longing, and we  
 are glad for the message to be gathered up in the  
 simple appealing words of an Indian hymn. The  
 voices of the boys are hushed in sympathy with the  
 words. The refrain seems to rise and fall with a  
 wistful sadness. " The river is wide and the boat is  
 old, who will take me across ? "

The sufferings of Jesus ; His agony and Cross :

To tell them fills my eyes with tears, my heart with utter loss.

The enemy who seized Him, dishonoured Him with shame ;

Like any thief they bound Him, and spurned His sacred Name.

The face that smiled on lepers, they reviled and smote with palms

They took Him like a robber and nailed His outstretched arms.

To Calvary they led Him, His raiment was their pay ;

For shame, ye men, to mock Him ! What of the Judgment Day ?

Oh, wonder of all wonders, the sin He bore was mine ;

And with it all He passed through death, the Son of God divine.

Oh, trust in Him, ye people, and listen not for nought ;

Throw all your faith on Him alone, for with His Blood you're  
 bought.

As heads are bowed and the Sahib leads our hearts in  
 prayer, there are some in that village who realise for  
 the first time, however dimly, that the loving heart  
 of the Father wants them. In their dark way some of  
 them respond.

The meeting breaks up and the boys start home, leaving the operator to pack up the sheet and lantern. The moon is up, for which we are truly grateful, for we have no guide across country. Single file we went along the ridges between the fields, a line of about thirty with a couple of lanterns swinging their gleam in the middle. Winding to and fro along the narrow track, the sheets round the boys reflected the whiteness of the light above, and, being tired with the lateness of the hour, their silence added to the effect. Thus we came to the water once more where the ancient boat had slowly begun to fill. Watching them, youngest first, being taken over to bed and their rest for the night, one's mind was taken to the great heart of India. Her sons and daughters come daily to the river, but all is dark and cheerless, with no ferryman near and no hope of rest beyond on the other shore. The cry is low, for hope there is none : " The river is wide and the boat is old, who will take us across ? " Another voice joins with theirs. He who faced the River in all its darkness and alone ; who knows, as none other can know, just what the awful wideness of the River was, speaks with them. Together they ask us to tell what we know, to show them the way Home.

## CHAPTER VII

### A LAWYER CAME TO JESUS

IT is hard for an English Christian to grasp what it is that is preventing so many Indians from surrendering to Jesus Christ. We become easily impatient at the mention of "caste." "If a man is truly honest there will be no hesitation," we say, and marvel that missionaries should be unable to win more converts.

Could we but see and hear an Indian in the dark hour when generations behind him are pulling one way, and the Man Christ Jesus the other, then light would dawn.

We had the revelation of witnessing such a struggle the day after our arrival at an Indian city. The old Indian missionary in charge of the station had arranged for us to visit one or two Hindus during the afternoon, and at four o'clock we were due in the home of a prominent lawyer. Two hours before the time, the lawyer was up at the Mission bungalow, so eager was his desire to talk of the life in Christ!

Our old cab rattled us to the door at the appointed hour to find a warm welcome from the kindly host. He conducted us to his best room where we were soon comfortably seated, facing him across the table. When three people are all thinking of one great theme, and not unduly shy, the conversation soon ceases to be

vague. We were talking about Jesus within five minutes.

It was our host who did the talking : graciously allowing us to share his inmost thoughts. He was an M.A. and a Bachelor of Law, educated in one of India's foremost universities. Somewhat naturally, he had left college frankly sceptical as to the truth of the Christian religion. The Holy Trinity was more than a mystery, it was folly to him. But now, after many years of search and hungry reading, he could earnestly tell of his rational belief in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. With compelling reality he spoke of his acceptance of this truth without reservation.

“ I do not understand it perfectly, but I accept it. I believe Jesus Christ was the Saviour of the world : the only Saviour, and the only way to God.”

We could hardly believe our ears, for we knew these words were spoken by one who was an orthodox Hindu. They came from the lips of one who had refused to become a Christian, and we were silent with surprise. But he was speaking again.

“ I believe in Jesus Christ. I trust Him to forgive me by the great sacrifice He made.”

This was no mental assent, but a soul's trust in One who had become to him a living reality.

As he led us through the history of his heart's change, we could not move in our chairs, though the hands of the clock had moved twice round before he closed. This was a glimpse at the heart of an Indian, one of thousands, on whom the spell of Christ had fallen.

We asked him if his faith in Christ had brought him real peace of heart, for we felt perplexed.

He leant back in his chair and an ineffable content spread over his features ; strangely attractive he seemed.

“ I know Christ’s peace,” he said, putting his hand to his heart. “ Often I spend an hour alone with Him in prayer and meditation, and those minutes are the most precious in my life ! ”

Talking together about these times with our Saviour, comparing our experiences, we found the East and the West were one. He confessed, as many would at home, that he only read the Bible when he had time ; that he only prayed when he did not oversleep ! But, in spite of that, he was conscious that when he did meditate on Jesus early in the morning hours, the reality and nearness of His Presence became the greatest thing in his life. The Invisible became more real than the material.

This faith of heart had not been unreflected in his life. A year before, he set out from home to visit the missionary at his bungalow : but as he reached the gateway he saw a group of fellow lawyers approaching. Courage failed and he passed by, as it were, on the other side. This year, however, the missionary was stopped by the astounding sight of the same man speaking to his legal friends about the Lord Jesus : confessing to them that He was the supreme figure in history and one of the realities of his own experience.

Yet he was an orthodox Hindu : none more so. He had been brought up in a village without being

taught any religion. He had accepted as a youth what other village youths accepted. He did pujah (worship) at the village temple and joined happily with the other lads in the observation of the holy days. Once a year he went mad with the rest at the Holi festival, flinging dye on his friends and neighbours and indulging in the usual obscenities of the day. He bathed in the Ganges on the full moon when the year was young : he let the hair on the crown of his head grow long till it had to be tied up in a knot : he venerated the cow and never took life.

“ But of Religion,” he said passionately, “ I knew nothing, for Hinduism is no religion. It contains all creeds and practices. A man can be an Arya Samajist or an agnostic : he can be an Idolater or an Atheist : he can be orthodox, theosophist or pantheist and yet remain Hindu. The only binding tie is caste.”

So it is. The only religion he knew was mere ceremonial, hardly affecting the heart beliefs of men. So long as he observed the festivals and kept caste ; so long as he avoided anything unclean in food or man or beast : so long as he treated India's sixty million outcasts as untouchable, he was a good Hindu.

He freely acknowledged his life was bad, but explained that Hinduism did not mean cleansing from these sins nor the forsaking of them. He could be a correct Hindu and an unfaithful husband.

“ I have to tell lies,” he acknowledged, “ or my practice as a lawyer would end.” Many Indian lawyers, he told us, fake the evidence to suit the case and hire witnesses to swear away the life of an

adversary, if needs be. Outside every court house you can see these false witnesses squatting in the shade as they wait to be hired ; willing to swear anything on any oath—for their rupees. As a lawyer he could not pick and choose his clients ; he was equally ready to defend guilty as innocent. Yes, this was wrong—but had nothing to do with the orthodoxy of his faith. So, also, he could admire Christ, speak well of Him, declare his faith in Him ; but so long as he observed his ceremonial, he remained a good Hindu.

But outward profession often hides a wandering heart. He related how his faith in the religion of his fathers had wavered as he sought to satisfy his thirst for God at other fountains. At college he had turned to the faith of the Buddha. But there he found only a dry code of laws, not the living religion he desired. It seemed hopeless and impossible ; so he remained a Hindu.

For his Degree he studied Islam, which soon began to exercise the extraordinary fascination over his mind, which has made such thousands hail the Prophet. He wrote a history of Arabia in Hindi ; he was enthralled—but somehow unsatisfied. Neither could Hinduism hold him, as he recognised how futile and even immoral many of its practices were. Sadly, but impatiently, he turned away—and then came face to face with Christ, the Christ who is so fresh and real in His attraction. Here at last he felt his quest was reaching its goal as he read and read again the pages of the Gospel story. It was the dawn of faith and he tasted some of the joyous expectancy of those who journey long and find

themselves on the borders of new and unknown lands.

With the growing faith came the question of open allegiance to the One who was beginning to exert such a powerful hold on his heart. This would mean revolution in his life, and the fear of the inevitable consequences became an agonizing dread. His conscience seemed to be going faster than his prudence could allow, for he could not confess Christ openly or join the Christian community without breaking caste. To break caste meant the loss of everything. His friends would regard him as worse than dead; probably his wife and children would be separated from him for ever; his clients would cease to entrust their cases to him. His relations would no longer greet him in the street; his colleagues would treat him as an untouchable. If he had no private means, it would mean starvation or else accepting work from the Mission till he could get some government post open to a Christian. All his sons were under the strong influence of an orthodox Hindu headmaster, whose power was making them more anti-Christian every day. His wife was too uneducated to be able to change the whole influence of her upbringing in a moment. She could not follow her husband. He would be isolated and cut off from those he loved and lived for, did he openly become a follower of "The Way."

Almost as cogent as these thoughts was the knowledge of the demands full Christianity would make on his life. He admitted quite readily that he could not continue to practise as a lawyer if he became a

Christian. Even if clients did continue to come, a Christian could not practise the immoral customs of the courts. A follower of the truth could not fabricate evidence and deal in falsehood. His conscience was clear that once he became a Christian he must cease to be a lawyer.

Besides these inducements to conceal his spring-time faith, there were many insidious arguments pressing him to remain a secret disciple. He would be far better able to influence his friends, he thought, than if he forced them to ostracise him by being baptized. He would be able to teach his family and live the life of love. If he were to join the Church it would merely cut him off and end his witness.

How aptly Paul described the conscience of mankind, excusing and accusing the workings of his heart. All through, he really knew that baptism was the acid test of sincerity, that it was the ultimate proof of unconditional surrender. Yet he was unwilling to throw over Hinduism, to cross the Rubicon, associating himself publicly with the Crucified One and His followers.

He was also influenced by the vague, loose thinking on these subjects that is familiar to all who are ready to admire Christ, but go no farther.

“Surely Christ never really commanded baptism; and even if He did, cannot faith be true and real without? Even the Apostles were not all baptized. The law of love is Christ’s true teaching; we can love Him and love our neighbours just as well without becoming Church members. The love of Christ is far more

effective, preached by the casual word in a friend's house and the consistent life before the eyes of men, than by a despised convert talking in the bazaar."

I opened my New Testament and led him to Christ's baptism, to the world commission, to the exhortation to repent and be baptized in Peter's sermon at Pentecost. We thought together over Paul's experience on the Damascus road; we remembered he counted all things but loss that he might win Christ; even those things that were gain, his orthodoxy and Jewish prestige, were the veriest refuse compared with Christ. We wondered at His love, who counted His life not dear to the death of the Cross.

As we talked, the expression on our host's face became more tense. He drew his feet up into his chair and sat cross-legged, swaying to and fro in his fear and longing. The darkness had fallen and a servant placed a lamp on the table between us, revealing the full intensity of his desire stamped deep on every feature. Beside me the old Indian missionary had his head bent, with his long beard showing white against the greyness of his coat. We were all praying in our hearts, so why not audibly, on our knees? Hindu as he was, the lawyer gladly joined, but as we pleaded with our Saviour to lead him into full confession, we could hear him groaning with the agony of longing. The conflict was oppressive and pregnant with infinite possibility. We were wrestling against principalities and powers.

As we rose from our knees he pressed my hand,

insisting earnestly that God Himself had sent me to him.

“You live in England,” he said, “so we shall never meet again.”

“Perhaps not on earth, friend, but why not afterwards in Heaven.”

“If God counts me worthy we shall meet there,” he replied, looking down rather sadly.

“We dare not hope in our own worthiness,” I urged him, “but, we plead the merits of Christ. Through Him we can rest in Eternal Peace.”

“Ah, Sir,” he answered passionately, “if Christ speaks to me and leads me by force, as He led Paul, then I shall follow Him wholly. If He gives me a great revelation I could not doubt.”

“But,” I pressed, “He has spoken. You have already heard His voice. It is for you to reply to Him, like Paul: ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?’”

So we parted; but he felt the price too great to pay, almost too much to ask. Our last words reminded each other that He who asked all had given all: that if Christ did demand our whole life’s devotion, He had already given His life for us.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TREBENI MELA

SOME sixteen miles from Harnatar Mission station, the jungle path suddenly opens out on to the broad sweep of the river Gundak, at Trebeni. Leaving behind the captivity of the narrow valleys of Nepal, the stream rushes triumphantly towards the freedom of the plains below. In passing Trebeni she leaves behind a parting gift to the land of her birth, a perfect riot of beauty. Standing on the summit of a great creeper-covered cliff and looking up the river towards the hills of Nepal beyond, the wild magnificence of the scene can never be forgotten.

The name describes the place, for this used to be the meeting of three streams, before one disappeared and the other evaporated into a mere brook. The meeting of the streams becomes the meeting of the clans once a year ; for at the new moon in January tens of thousands from all along the border gather here for a great Mela. A Mela is a religious bathing festival and fair combined, held where particular merit is attached to the ceremonial washing and worship. Traders are quick to take advantage of the opportunity and come in their hundreds, as they used to come in old England to the Stourbridge Fair.

The crowds are thickest on the Nepal side where the beach and foreshore throb with life : but the great



A VILLAGE BAZAAR DAY, giving the impression of India's gigantic population—one quarter of the world's total; and a group of Gurkhas taken in Nepal.



expanse of sand, left uncovered by the river on the Indian side, made an ideal camping ground too.

We pitched our tents on the cliff overlooking this sandy stretch, close under the walls of a temple. Past us, as we straightened out our goods, there poured a seemingly endless stream of pilgrims, bearing their chattles in a variety of ingenious ways.

The more prosaic contented themselves with staves in their hands and great bundles wrapped up in cloth on their heads. The greater part trudged along in groups of thirty or forty from the same village and encouraged themselves as they came with song or story. These groups were led by the Kawarthus carrying all their needed supplies on their shoulders : the women and children followed behind.

A Kawarthu is a man bearing a bamboo pole suspended across his shoulder, to which is attached at each end a basket full of small bottles for the sacred water. On to these two baskets they fasten all the odds and ends they will need for their two or three nights in camp : blankets, cooking pots, axes and knives. These are bound skilfully to the neat structure and the whole is crowned with a couple of flags on bamboo sticks. Very often they will bend a bamboo from front to rear in an arch over the Kawarthu, and to this they will tie bells which set up a very merry tinkle as the company jogs along.

As these parties arrived they pushed past the crowds thronging the paths by the temple and made their way straight to the beach. Here they settled themselves in orderly encampments, placing their loads

on the ground so as to enclose the camp with a kind of barricade. Within, the different families of the party settled themselves to prepare the evening meal.

The men went to the jungle to cut firewood, which the boys carried back : the rest of the lads went down to the river to fetch water while the women cooked the supper. To cook in water where the purity of the mountain stream has been fouled by the feet of thousands of men and oxen is not inviting. The fact that elephants and bullocks were being washed in the water they were drawing did not seem to deter those who were constantly filling their red earthenware pots. The rice and ground grain never tasted so well to the weary travellers.

In the centre of these camps the men built great fires whose roar and blaze dimmed the several smaller fires round the outside of the ring. But it was from these that the savoury smell of cooking called the men, when they had gathered enough wood for the hours of cold and darkness.

The meal over, pipes are lighted and handed round the groups, the women taking their turns with the men with obvious relish. But it is hard to pick out individuals now, for the night has begun to fall, making the hills appear more distant through the purple haze that has slowly settled down. The smoke from ten thousand fires hangs over the river, transforming the crimson of the setting sun into a blood-red shroud.

The cliffs above the river are alive with people, as party after party still continue to appear along the jungle path. One man leads his pack-horse laden to

the danger limit with a great pile of earthen pots for sale. Hundreds of bullock-carts are drawn off the track into the trees beside the road when they could get no farther along the thronged approach. Owners, who are not too tired, rub their weary oxen down with straw, while the other sleepy travellers turn out from the pile of baggage inside to prepare their quarters. Some settled for the night under their carts; others within; but the most part lighted their fires beside the old cart and made a rude shelter with some sackcloth stretched from the roof to a pole or two made fast in the turf.

Down by the river there is a huge village which has sprung up, gourd-like, in a night. The houses are only grass shelters put up for the pilgrims to occupy on payment of a small tax. These were mostly occupied by the traders who thronged the bazaar by day. The bazaar was on the open beach—just two lines of shops—and would disappear the day the Mela closed. Behind the bazaar, and scattered among the crowd at the water's edge, the barbers are doing a thriving business. No pilgrim can accomplish the ceremonial without having his head shaved first, so they sit quite happily awaiting their turn. No soap is used—true a little grimy water, that has already served several people, is rubbed into their hair—and as the razor would not grace a heap of scrap iron in England, it is not surprising that the pilgrims will probably wait another year before repeating the process. The only part left unshaved is the sacred Hindu “topknot”—the tuft of hair on the crown of the head. To cut this off is a renunciation of faith in caste.

It is only just twilight, but already many are asleep, snuggled well into the deep beds of straw around the fires : they know the day will open its full programme at three or four o'clock next morning. As they sleep, the corner of their robe is pulled over their heads and the general impression is of a sack of potatoes wrapped up in a very ancient blanket. It seemed incongruous to see sleeping figures in that throng, for everywhere noise and confusion were making the scene appear a very Vanity Fair: A score of parties were making pandemonium on drums and guitars ; men were singing the wailing Indian melodies with intoxicating fervour, their voices mingle with the ring of axes, the shrill cries of complaining merchants and the sobs of children who have lost their parents.

At the stalls in the bazaar, slow-earned and long-treasured money is changing hands very rapidly. The Indian is always ready to strike a bargain and knows to within half a farthing the value of every treasure he desires. It was fascinating to watch the holy-water jars being sold. An old bearded pilgrim, after weighing half-a-dozen carefully in his hand, selected his bottle and dropping an anna (penny) made as if to leave. The merchant, who had never taken one eye off him all the time (the other was watching a lad of 16) raised his voice, as if a brother had stolen his blessing. For ten minutes they wrangled over a farthing and possibly would still be there to-day had a subtle suggestion not come to the merchant. He filled the pot with water to prove its soundness ! The pilgrim was apparently so overcome by seeing that the water pot could actually

hold water that he capitulated. They separated, each confident that he had cheated the other.

Beside the stall of water pots stood the Christian book - stall. Here all day long the evangelist, Raghunandan Das, had been hard at work singing, talking, preaching, cajoling, persuading : but now he and the Sahib were tired out and packing up for the night. They had sold many portions and Gospels and hoped to get rid of still more on the morrow, as that was the chief day of the festival. The preacher, seeing a Nepali gentleman interested in a New Testament, told him the cost and urged him to purchase it. But he refused and told him of a certain Nepali who had bought a Bible there the year before. When this man returned with his Nepalise Bible to Katmandu, his new treasure was seized and he was thrown into prison for six months for his sympathy with Christianity. After that, others who wanted to read Bibles were nervous and fearful of buying them. They knew the Government of Nepal was utterly opposed to Christianity.

It had been suggested that the Sahib from England could not cook, but the odour that awaited the tired missionary on his return proved that the insinuations had put the new chef on his mettle. That supper has become famous. The soup he produced to vindicate his character will not easily be forgotten. The ground-work was condensed milk and bovril, but when salt, pepper, tomatoes, and indeed almost anything else that could be found had been added, the result was sublime. One person enjoyed it, anyhow.

Down by the bazaar, which we visited after a rest, we found men had also been feasting well. The excellent service of freshly cooked foods was reminiscent of London's luncheon hour. As you wait your meal is cooked. Grain and nuts are roasted in a sand oven or chapaties (unleavened cakes) and potatoes are fried in boiling butter. Other oriental dishes were ready prepared and almost inviting, even to a Westerner. Fruit and sweetmeats abounded on all sides, while friendly flies swarmed over everything, sampling it all for the purchasers.

The bazaar was made up of long rows of stalls retailing a thousand interesting trifles : mirrors, bells, rings, bracelets, bangles, ear-rings, nose rings, toe rings, all were inviting your inspection. If you were a man, razors, cigarettes, mouth organs, tools and money changers might appeal ; but the women gathered near the brightly coloured nothings that were displayed on every hand. Garlands of flowers for man and cow ; dye to put on your caste-mark fresh after bathing ; something there was for every taste. The market stretched to the water's brink. From where the shopkeeper of the last stall sat, he could put one hand in the river as it flowed past. Having been over once to the orange market on the far side, we did not cross again but turned back along the shore towards our camp. Every now and then we paused to watch a group. One woman was supremely happy. She sat back laughing, playing with a tiny pink celluloid doll some five inches high ; the sort of typical bath plaything in England seemed out of place held against the

dark brown face. The two colours showed in sharp contrast. She had the red spot on her forehead which showed her to be married, and the huge ring in her nose, with the magnificent silver ornaments in her ears, showed her to be fairly well off. A few paces away was another Hindu woman, no less happy, but showing it in a strangely different way. She had met again her brother or father after some time of separation and was sitting at his feet weeping and wailing as if her heart would break. She rocked herself to and fro while he stood quietly above her with one hand placed kindly on her head. Where an Anglo-Saxon would have been quite satisfied with a handshake or possibly a kiss, these dear folk must needs call the attention of all within earshot of their mutual joy.

Opposite these two was a man from Nepal. He did not understand Hindi and was trying to bargain an orange for some cigarettes he wanted. He received no sympathy and was sent off disconsolate. The short, stocky Gurkha from Nepal was in striking contrast to the Bihar country folk; he was more akin to the Mongolian-featured Tharus who live near Harnatar. Their high cheek-bones and slanting eyes are not unpleasing and their women folk seem less confined. They are not afraid to appear with their faces uncovered at the Mela and are quite proud to show off their elaborate head-dresses.

Leaving the bazaar, we wend our way through the crowds on the river bank, where people seem to be too busy to make much noise. Our enjoyment of the peace was short-lived, however, for suddenly a great

cry ran along the whole length of the shore, like the cheering which comes up the Thames in the boat-race. As the men by me took it up, I could distinguish the sound, "Bolibam! Bolibam!"—the English equivalent would be the Hallelujahs of a Welsh revival—"Glory to Shiva! Glory to Shiva!" was their exclamation.

In front of me, as I stopped to listen to this outburst, was a pile of stones supporting a tall bamboo flag post, which was flying a small red flag; the whole standing at the junction of the two rivers. This was the Mahabiri Jhunda, the flag of Shiva, an erection to the glory of Mahabir, which has come into use the last few years and is the cause of much of the communal trouble. In the summer, Hindu processions carry these around the villages, attacking all Mohammedans who attempt to stand in their way. Here they offered water to the Mahabiri Jhunda and worshipped. . . .

I was about to continue my way when a Hindu who had been watching me, spoke in broken English, to ask me if I understood the purpose of the Mela. He was a watchmaker from Bettiah and told me how he hoped that if he bathed to-morrow he might receive salvation. I pointed him to the salvation of Jesus, showing how impossible it was for water to give the inward cleansing so vital for forgiveness. I spoke to him of Calvary, where flows the only stream of cleansing. He said that he fully believed all I said and wanted to follow Christ, but was going to be on the safe side and do his ceremonial bathe as well. A glimmer of light in the darkness! Perhaps the Gospel of

John will bring him into the light of Christ. He promised to read it and pray for understanding each day; if he is really in earnest we shall surely meet again.

So back to camp; with the firelight on the faces and the dogs flitting to and fro like silent shadows; hobbled ponies; grunting oxen; eternal washing of pots; with the extraordinary spectacle of an English merry-go-round and its strident music in the distance.

We fall asleep with the voices of Indian singers rising and falling in our ears—and in our dreams.

In the darkness before dawn we were up at the river's edge. In the cold greyness, multitudes were coming down to bathe. The whole atmosphere had something of the simple devotional character of the country folk, in striking contrast to the licentious corruption of Benares or Allahabad.

Down they went into the waters, which were tinged with the redness of the fires and the rose of the sunrise, and made their offering of flowers or money, bathing the while with simple devotion. They washed themselves to the tune of "Sita Ram, Sita Ram," chanted quietly, then they submerged themselves two or three times, rising to pray with hands together and heads bent. Coming up out of the water, they went through another ceremony on the bank. Placing their pot of holy water on the ground they turned round six or seven times, sprinkling a few drops and praying to the sun, then, the rest poured out, they changed into clean dry clothes. Filling the jar afresh, the pilgrims

made their way towards the two temples, past the innumerable sadhus and beggars lining the way.

The country folk carried rice and money which they gave to the various mendicants, who kept up steady supplications for mercy. These poor creatures each had a piece of sacking in front of them, which gradually became covered with rice and dotted with a few small coins. Some of them were lepers, whose wounds were open to the sun and flies; others, one suspected, had made their sores on purpose to excite pity, like the beggars in Mark Twain's "The Prince and the Pauper." But gifts satisfied both parties, the one being glad in the belief that they were amassing merit and the other certain for once at least of a good, satisfying meal. In the temple they repeated to stone what they had already done to the holy men and beggars. They placed their gifts of money or flowers before the idols. In the temple courtyard was a small red bull cut out of stone, covered with garlands, where a cow was happily munching the gifts the people were leaving there. Within, the scene was sad and foul. The idols here were meant to represent the human organs of fertility and a constant stream of worshippers sought for blessing by their acts of devotion. Garlands and holy water were scattered on the stonework, while mothers stretched their crying children for a few moments' blessing before these degrading symbols.

This pilgrimage ended, they tolled the bell in the courtyard to register their presence and attract the final attention of the gods; then steps are bent to

break up camp and return to the humble round of village life for another year.

Few steps are light or hearts glad, for even after this their desire is accomplished, they say some of them, with sadness, that they can only *hope* for salvation : assurance can never be. . . .

Hunger reminds us that our midday meal is overdue and we retrace our steps to the welcome rest of the tent. During the meal we hear quite a new type of singing. A band of men seem to be chanting a part-song, not untunefully, to the accompaniment of the beating of several drums. It is the last farewell of a pilgrim band to Trebeni. Under the jungle trees they stand, some fourteen of them, all men and naked save for their loin cloths (dhoties). They are grouped in a circle round the men with drums, bells and cymbals ; their knees are bent, their bodies swaying, clapping with their hands to the time of the song they sing. The leader was a fine athletic Brahman, who kept the tune going at a great pace :

“ Bom-bom-bola ”

“ Bom-bom-bola ”

seemed to be the chorus, repeated, as refrains are the world over, any number of times without wearying. After singing for about fifteen minutes, the leader left the group and taking some burning sandal wood in a spoon, he visited each of the holy water baskets in turn and held the fragrant fire under the load. The ashes he dropped under his own and pushed the spoon inside one of his bundles. On rejoining the others, they brought the song to an end with a thunderous shout

which shook the jungle. Then shirts were put on again, a few garments lying on bushes to dry after the morning bathe were hastily packed away, an axe and an odd bundle of oranges were slung on the already laden bamboo pole and they are off. For the first time since their arrival the fire is let out, and the women follow their men along the jungle path.

The pilgrims have finished their cleansing, have accomplished every detail of the prescribed purification, but as they return they know they are still unclean.

God grant that some, as they swing along, maybe remembering words they heard at the Bible stall : maybe wondering if it is really true that the Blood of Jesus Christ *can* cleanse us from our sins. The gospels one or two carry will water the precious seed and through them surely the Eternal Word will do His perfect work.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LIVING WORD

A FAMOUS infidel left instructions that he should be buried in a tomb made from great slabs of hewn stone, cemented together and bound with bands of iron. It was his boast that the eternal permanence of his resting place would prove the folly of the Resurrection.

But lo ! after some year or two the stone cracked and through the widening fissure appeared a tender shoot of green. Springing up towards the sunlight was the herald branch of a tree, whose tiny seed had lain unsuspected in the soil. In a few years the roots had broken through the grave and the whitened bones of him who mocked at God were visible to all.

The kingdom of God is a seed : India is the hewn stone grave. The work may be slow, it may seem impossible, but finally in the shade of the tree's branches the fowls of the air shall find their rest.

At Harnatar the work seems to have met with but little response as yet. The aboriginal tribe who inhabit the district of the Harnatar Mission Station are a shy and retiring folk. They are named the Tharus and their country is known as the Tharu-hat. Their

features are Mongolian, closely akin to the Nepalese folk who live just across their border.

They are Hindu in religion, but do not follow the full severity of many of the Hindu customs. Their women, for instance, do not observe strict "purdah." A dear old Tharu man took me through his house where his women folk were working, a gracious act that very few ordinary Hindus would have done.

But in spite of this, they are very slow to embrace Christianity. Six years' work, with all the medical advantages of a hospital, seem to have slipped by without more than two openly confessing Christ in baptism.

It has been a lonely vigil those six years. To Jacob the seven years were as a few days for his great love for Rachel: but he had her there to encourage him every day. The Rachels at Harnatar are scattered among the villages; they give no encouragement to those who labour to win them. Indeed, they are so fearful and shy that it has taken these six years to win the people's confidence and break through their reserve. So timid were they that the iron bedsteads in the hospital went unused while the patients lay on the floor, as they always did at home. So suspicious were they that on one occasion a whole village came to the Mission bungalow to tie up Mrs. Wynd as they feared she was causing a famine.

Mrs. Wynd will not forget that afternoon for many years. The Sahib was out some distance away from the station while the Mem Sahib was busy here and there with several duties. The crops were failing for lack of

rain and famine was hanging a dread spectre over the land. Only the Eastern peasant knows the paralysing fear of drought, for drought means famine, and famine may mean starvation. They were utterly dependent on rain for all their crops, for until the water had softened the ground they could not sow their rice. Now the rain was weeks overdue and anxiety had given way to despair. They believed, possibly, that the foreigners were somehow implicated. But the precise object of their strange behaviour is difficult to understand. Dressed up in men's clothes, the women of the nearest village invaded the Mission compound. They streamed round the corner of the bungalow, shouting that they had come to take the Mem Sahib and tie her up. Mrs. Wynd was alone and helpless, but lifting her heart in prayer to Christ she made a brave front and faced the women, trying to think whatever they wanted to do with her. Would they take her away and hold her ransom till the Sahib gave sufficient money to propitiate the gods? Or were they going to worship her? She could not tell.

She noticed, however, that with them they had brought the sticks they used in their country dancing, and after talking with them for some minutes, she was relieved when they decided to have their strange dancing before tying her up. Mrs. Wynd did not care for the Indian wrestling and dancing but praised God for the respite it gave her, knowing that Mr. Wynd would soon be returning.

They were quickly engrossed in their country folk songs and (what would be in England) Morris dancing.

About a dozen each side faced inwards and began a really beautiful unsophisticated folk-dance. Feet keeping time with hands and sticks, they stepped to and fro with all the grace that Nature reserves for her own children.

When their competitions were over, they returned to the veranda to accomplish their original purpose of tying up the Mem Sahib. The Sahib, however, had now returned and was able to talk gently with them and pacify their suspicions. He sung some Indian bhajans (hymns) to them and offered to pray to God for the rain to come. So the distant Himalayan snows watched just such a scene as the snows of Hermon had beheld twenty-seven hundred years before : a servant of God praying for the life-giving rain. After the prayer, the Sahib assured them of the certainty of the answer with enough confidence to satisfy them and take them home. On the way, however, they visited the servants' quarters where they tied up the nervous men and secured all their money. Within an hour the rain came with a great deluge, flooding the earth and saving their crops. In the rain was set God's bow, stretching its protecting arc of glory right above the bungalow. If it was a glorious vindication of God's faithfulness for the missionaries, it was certainly a most convincing sign for the Tharus. The Mem Sahib was never really able to find out if this miracle was regarded as an answer to the Sahib's prayer ; but probably it was. In any case, signs were not wanting to show that the missionaries were beginning to inspire some confidence. The medical treatment was opening up many hostile

villages. When a bear had leaped out on your own nephews and opened their heads to the skull, what could you do but take them to the hospital? At the hospital—even though the doctor was on his holiday and the terrible wounds had to be dressed by the Mem Sahibs—their lives were saved. This was a miracle of love, for the villagers realized that only the daily care and tending had prevented otherwise certain death.

Then, too, an old and much misused Brahman woman could show which way the tide was running, like a derelict barge slowly swinging round on its rusty anchor in the Thames.

One day she appeared at the dispensary excited and obviously half distraught with her emotion. Her husband had just died, so the priests were seizing her goods on the pretext that cash was needed for puja (worship) on his behalf. Her property was simply disappearing and she wanted protection from the Mission. She would stay there always.

Lovingly the old soul was calmed and was made to understand that she had an assured haven with the kind Mem Sahib. After a few weeks' peaceful resting, she decided to go to live with a brother. She returned to her village where she gathered all her remaining goods into her bullock carts, setting off with her brother to his home. He was a brutish man and bullied her on the road; but greater brutality was awaiting her at the journey's end. She, poor soul, had two great sins. She was a widow, and since sixteen she had lost her caste through the contamination of marriage with a lower caste. The women of her brother's house

eagerly seized the opportunity of having some legitimate object for their persecution.

As she suffered under the scorn and insults of her own relations, of those who worshipped her own gods, she bethought her of those others, strangers and followers of Jesus, who had warmed her with their love. One happy day Mrs. Wynd welcomed her back to Harnatar, where her old roots have struck so deep that she will never more be wrenched away.

After a time the old Brahman lady wanted to become a Christian. But hours and days and months of patient teaching were needed before she could be baptized. From Mrs. Wynd, as they sat together on the stone steps of the bungalow, she was always glad to learn, though her old mind had set in fixed channels and the progress seemed very slow. Mrs. Wynd would ask her if she was a sinner, who needed Jesus for a Saviour, and the old soul would reply that she was, telling of the sins that troubled her most. Once she had killed a snake, that was sin : she had slain many insects, that was sin : she had broken caste—yes, she was a sinner !

So from the very bottom the foundations had to be settled and brick by brick the temple slowly grew.

There was great joy one day when the old woman stopped Mrs. Wynd in her teaching to astonish her with : “Mem Sahib, the answer I gave you a minute ago was wrong. I have told a lie.” They knew conscience was being educated and a true sense of right and wrong appearing ; the light was driving out the darkness.

Whether her theology was true or not, at least her life proclaimed the reality of her change of heart. She would go to the dispensary service in the morning to drink in the gospel message and then she would spend her day assisting the patients in all their trouble. Tenderly she would help an old woman to eat and drink, feeding her with her hands and pouring the milk drop by drop into the open mouth. She was not too proud to help sick beggars even though she was a Brahman.

With infinite labour, too, she learned to make her letters in an attempt to master reading : but the task is too great. Probably she will never be able to read the Bible for herself. Happily the condition of Church membership is not ability to read, so as her faith was clearly shown in her works, Mr. Wynd had the joy of baptizing her in the spring of 1928.

If the old Brahman lady was an example of the gradual way the missionaries were gaining confidence at Harnatar, another woman who was baptized earlier, illustrated quite a different story. Her story shows how one may reap where another sowed, years before, in patience and with sadness of heart.

She, like all Indian women, was named after her son—Jagadeo's mother—and came from Chapra. The beginnings of her conversion lay back in her childhood, when she and her sister used to attend a girls' school. The seed then planted in her heart was never seen again by those who sowed, but the husbandman was God. Her sister had become a Christian very early and went to live with the Christian ladies at the school.

While she was there her mother died, leaving the two sisters orphans under the care of relatives and friends. Jagadeo's mother was only eight or nine and was not unkindly treated by them. Her sister at school longed to come home for a visit, to see the old place and tell her family of the joy she had in Christ.

The journey was arranged and the girl came home and had the joy of leading her younger sister to Christ, but on the day fixed for her return, she failed to appear. Enquiries were made to which the relations replied with evident reserve that she was ill : that she was worse : that she had died. Nothing could be done : the maiden had been poisoned for the shame she caused the family in becoming a Christian and breaking caste.

Her younger sister, Jagadeo's mother to be, was horrified. Yet the attraction of the Saviour was so great that soon she proclaimed her desire to become a Christian too. That very day she was taken into the inner courtyard of the Zenana and shut up in room, which she never left for two years. Was it any wonder that she gave way at last, renouncing the faith for which her sister had been martyred ? When she had been forced into this fresh obedience they married her to a widower with a little son—Jagadeo, whom she soon came to love very dearly. This lad grew up with the other boys of the town, worshipping with them and not questioning the faith of his fathers. One day, however, his greatest friend told him about Jesus and begged him to read His life. Jagadeo was moved by the sincerity of this one-time Hindu who

had become a Christian and determined to enquire further into these matters.

He looked for some one to help him in this great quest and thought of Mr. Basu, whose reputation as a missionary and a man of God was known throughout Chapra. He enquired for him, only to find he had gone to Siwan to look after the school ; but following him there, he obtained books which showed him where to find peace. At Calvary he knelt in utter penitence and trust to find there forgiveness and a love for Christ so great that he was gladly willing to die for Him. He asked Mr. Basu, who had taught him so patiently, if he could be baptized, and after further teaching he had the joy of confessing his Saviour in the waters of baptism. But once he had taken this step, Chapra was no longer safe for him. He went in danger of his life. So Mr. Basu sent him away up to Harnatar, where he found a safe retreat and was soon happy teaching a group of village boys to read and write. Under Mr. Wynd's care he grew in grace and loved teaching the village lads of the love of Christ.

He had not been at Harnatar very long before letters began to come from Chapra asking him to come and fetch his mother to be with him. At first he feared a trap, scenting a ruse to bring him into his family's power again. He determined to run the risk in the end, for nothing could be worse than to leave his mother shut up in the Zenana, if she wanted to come to him, and to Christ. He reached Chapra while the sun was still high but remained hidden until the moon was throwing deep shadows from the houses. Creeping

silently through the streets close under the protecting walls, he was outside the old home at midnight, the hour he had fixed with her in his secret message. As he stood in the stillness of the narrow lane, with the inevitable odour of uncleaned drains, he wondered swiftly if all was well. The sight of a figure in the doorway reassured him and in a moment he was leading his "mother" towards the safety of the Mission compound. She had not been able to gather even a few garments together, but came empty handed, glad to have even her life.

All that day they lay in hiding while relatives raised the hue and cry: towards evening the missionary conducted them in a closed carriage to the station. They entered the train just as it was about to leave, with sighs of relief, rejoicing during the twenty-four hours' journey of their newly-won liberty. At Harnatar, Jagadeo's mother proved a ready pupil, learning eagerly more about the Saviour she had started to follow so long before. Gradually the meaning of the new birth in Christ came to her and one day she had the crowning joy of confessing her simple trust in Jesus her Saviour by being baptized. Mr. Wynd had the joyful privilege of tasting the fruit of the seed planted in faith years before. Those early missionaries may have searched in despair for evidence of their labours, but the hidden seed was tended by the Father.

Harnatar has been the sowing ground of six long years, yet still the field is bare and few shoots of green appear to gladden the watchful gardener. Jagadeo's mother is a witness to the secret growth. Her presence

is an earnest of the sure and certain hope. Despite infidels and Satan, God cannot be mocked; their mouth filled with laughter and their heart too full for words, faithful workers shall one day return, laden with their precious sheaves.

## CHAPTER X

### THE ROAD TO KATMANDU

THE traveller on the road to Katmandu can lift his head and see the coolness of the virgin snows ever lying at his journey's end. The long rows of palms on either side remind one of a Flanders' road, with its straight-limbed poplars keeping watch. But these sentinels on the Katmandu highway have but little work to do, for the weary pilgrim has no desire to make his path more difficult by any excursions into the paddy fields to right and left. He hastens on towards the smoke of a train in the distance, which marks the border town—Raxaul. Here at Raxaul the immemorial trade-route leaves the protection of the British Empire to enter the secluded independence of Nepal. There are other roads leading into Nepal, but no other road is of comparative importance, because of the unique geographical situation of the country. Nepal lies sandwiched between Tibet and British India, being some 400 miles long and 150 miles wide. Its northern border is formed by the natural rampart of the Himalayan range, some 25,000 feet above sea-level; but the ground drops gradually away until the paddy fields of India and Nepal lie side by side in the fertile lowland.

In this land of contrasts there lies an isolated valley



BUDDHIST PRIESTS.



high up in the mountains, towards which the Raxaul railway leads. This is the very heart of Old Nepal, the seat of her government, the centre of her life, the shrine of her soul. It is only some fifteen miles across, but in that narrow enclosure all that is most precious and beautiful in Nepalese history is enshrined. There the three chief cities lie close together—Katmandu, the capital, with Patan and Bhatgaon, former rivals, near-by. Here, too, the most important and influential of Nepal's five and a half million people reside at the administrative headquarters of the kingdom.

The key to the exclusive and independent attitude of Nepal can be found in the inaccessible position of this sequestered valley. For generations it has been cut off from the Indian frontier by two ramparts of mountains, through which a solitary road wound its tortuous way round impassable obstacles. Few Europeans ever had the opportunity, let alone the temerity, to face these 75 miles of mountain pathway, but one who has, leaves a very vivid impression. "At an average rate of one mile an hour," he wrote, "the caravan scrambles over boulders, fords streams and skirts great fallen trees in its painful progress. Darkness soon sets in and it seems a never-ending phantasmagoria of large loose stones, huge dead trees and flaming torrents, some of which almost sweep the party off its feet. The leading group of coolies, stepping into darkness, dropped into a deep cutting, but with more damage to nerves than limbs, as fortunately the stream, which had humorously constructed this pitfall across their route, thought fit

to deposit a comparatively soft bed of sand and gravel before chuckling itself dry over the joke." With a road like this, having to traverse two mountain ranges before reaching Katmandu, it is not surprising that Nepal maintained her isolated medieval tradition. But in 1927 the railway was built to carry the passenger one-third of the distance, while the rest of the route was transformed by the construction of an excellent motor road—to say nothing of an aerial ropeway spanning the mountain range. Even if the railway track is only two feet six inches wide and the diminutive engine from the Midlands provokes a smile, yet that railway has ended Nepal's isolation, for it has connected her interests and thought with those of the larger country across the border.

The people of this sequestered land are not one. If the old-time traveller had paused at the head of the Chandrapiri Pass and watched the people slowly climbing the almost perpendicular track out of the valley of Nepal a thousand feet below, he would have observed several distinct types of faces. Two racial groups predominate, composed of Gurkhas and Newars respectively. The aborigines of the valley are the Newars who come of a Mongolian stock. They are men of peace and have accepted the lordship of conquering Gurkhas without real regret, being quite content to live as a subject race. Their strength and emotions have found a full and untrammelled expression in creative art, for they have translated their artistic genius into exquisite monuments of wood and stone. The valley is full of temples and palaces, whose

every detail of intricate carving is expressive of religious symbolism. Like the early English monk expressing his spiritual aspirations in the stone-work of Lincoln or Canterbury Cathedral, so the Newar has left the reflection of his faith in countless buildings in Katmandu or Bhatgaon.

If the Newars are peaceful, gentle, artistic and industrious, the Gurkhas, their conquerors and rulers, are their very antithesis. In 1768, they conquered the valley, and their supreme authority has never been questioned since. They are highland farmers and fighters of a very mixed stock which was mostly of Rajput origin. Even sport holds no attraction for the Gurkha lad, he is only happy when training for the war he will surely fight some day. They care nothing for art and commerce, but everything for blood and glory. Staunch allies they have been to Britain, for within a few days of the news reaching Katmandu of the Sepoy mutiny, 4,000 troops had left for our succour. In the Great War, too, the Gurkha, with the Sikh, was the most trusted Indian ally. Dreadful tales are told of nights in France, when Gurkhas would slip like shadows over the top, to return in the cold of dawn, wiping their kukris and chuckling grimly over their dark work.

It would seem to be inevitable that these fighting instincts should find an expression in their worship: and it is so. Every year, a day is set apart for the worship of the accoutrements of war. This day falls on the 9th of the Durga Puja, and is celebrated by the slaughter of thousands of bullocks. Every officer is

expected to present at least one victim for sacrifice, so when thousands are gathered together for the worship, the scene is appalling. Let Dr. Percy Brown, himself an eye-witness on one occasion, describe the amazing event. "From out of the crowded street we enter a narrow passage, and, passing through a doorway, a wild scene greets the eye. The sacrificial portion of the ceremony is nearly over, but what remains is a curious combination of a battlefield and a shambles. The participants in the festival are grouped around the four sides of the courtyard in different vivid costumes and uniforms, leaving the centre free for the sacrifice. Here are grouped the stands of colours, bright draperies in themselves, but made still more gay with garlands of flowers, and streamers. In front of each stand is the sacrificial post, and beyond that a great mound of decapitated animals, mute and gory witnesses of an inexplicable custom. As we enter, a living victim is dragged forward and tied by the neck to the post, fear naturally causing the animal to draw back, thus exposing and extending its neck. The executioner approaches bearing a weapon with a wide curved blade and, awaiting an opportune moment, dexterously severs the head of the animal with one powerful blow. This action is the signal for a blare of trumpets and the energetic firing of guns. This is continued until all the animals contributed are dispatched, when a procession is formed, headed by the band, and the "Blessing of the Colours" takes place. All the officers join in this, the principal figure being the Commander-in-Chief, who, accompanied by attendants

bearing a great brass basin of fresh blood, now conducts the ceremony. Marching up to each stand of colours, this fine-looking warrior solemnly dips both hands in the basin of gore, and claps these together with the fabric of the flag between, thus stamping an impression of a bloody hand on each side of the standard. Each colour is treated in this way, and the ceremony at this stage is dramatic in the extreme. Hot, glaring sunlight illuminates the scene, flashing on the brass implements, censers and lamps, which, strewn with offerings of flowers and fruit, lie tossed and tumbled about in reckless profusion."

This strange Nepali custom, quite unlike anything in Buddhism or Hinduism, is but one indication of the fact that different influences have contributed to the formation of a distinct faith in Nepal. Where this particular custom originated it is impossible to say ; but, speaking broadly, Hindu thought has been influenced more by Buddhism and far less by Islam in Nepal than anywhere else in the Peninsula.

Nepal, like India, started with Brahmanism supreme, but was profoundly affected by the teachings of Buddha in the fifth century B.C. Bihar, on the borders of Nepal, was the scene of Buddha's enlightenment ; and it was inevitable that his preaching tours should have taken him right into the heart of Nepal. He soon attracted a number of followers, and so firmly did his teaching take root, that its influence has remained a formative factor in Nepalese religious life ever since. But though important, it was not the predominant element in the national belief, because

Hinduism successfully reasserted its power. In North India, the same revival was strong enough to thrust Buddhism into a subordinate position, and cause the lovers of Buddha to take their unaccepted doctrines North and East, to Tibet and China. Buddhism in Nepal, however, was stronger, and the national faith became a mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism. The simple beliefs of the Buddhist Newars were gradually degraded as some of the Hindu saints became absorbed into their theology. Buddhist temples contain figures of Hindu gods and symbols, side by side with the expressionless Buddha.

Nepalese religion was spared the third factor which has done so much to modify Hinduism in the Peninsula. She was untouched by the Islam invasions. The conquering Mohammedans broke through the north-west passes and flooded the plains of India, profoundly influencing the whole religious feeling of the north. But no Mohammedan conqueror entered the valley of Nepal ; it was too remote and too difficult of access to tempt their marauding bands.

So to-day, the Brahman is left unchallenged, and if his opinions and practices are affected by the old Buddhist influences, he is unaware of the fact.

With such depth of religious feeling among the Nepalese, and such an emphasis on pilgrimages in Hinduism, we should rightly expect to find some pilgrim centres of peculiar sanctity across the border. And as Tagore tells us how careful the Hindus are to select places of especial beauty to re-absorb the spirit of the Eternal, we should naturally turn our eyes

towards the trackless mountains for such sites. Nor would our instincts disappoint us, for due north of the valley of Nepal is an inaccessible, snow-covered mountain, where lies the sacred lake of Gosainthan. Hither every year, thousands of pilgrims struggle to gaze on a scene never yet revealed to western eyes, where below the surface of the waters a great stone lies, supposed to represent some ancient deity. " And to gaze on this natural wonder, the small shopkeeper will leave his place in the city bazaar where he has spent all the years of his life without a change, toil for eight days up the narrow, dangerous tracks, and eventually, if he has not perished from the severe cold, has the supreme joy of reaching the long-looked-for goal. Only those who have accompanied one of these Eastern pilgrimages, be it across the burning desert, packed in the pilgrim ship, or over the glaciers of the Himalayas, can understand the intense religious feeling which throbs within every one of the poor souls who is undertaking this self-imposed task. Whether it is due to a sudden impulse which causes the workman to cast down his tools, hurriedly wrap up a few necessities in a cloth, and join a party of wanderers already on the road; or whether it is the result of a lifetime of thought and saving for this one great penance, the spirit which permeates each individual is the same— one earnest, profound desire to reach the sacred spot or joyfully perish in the effort to do so. Follow in the wake of one of these great expeditions, strung out for miles along the mountain passes, and the lessons taught will supply much food for reflection. Of

all the thousands who annually undertake these adventurous journeys, men, women, and children, old and young, the halt, the lame, the sick, aged, and even the dying, not one turns back, but, ever pressing forward with bright, expectant eyes gazing from their haggard faces, they are sustained with but one thought, one aim, and one hope, to absorb in the prescribed manner some of the sanctity which enshrouds the mystical place they are determined to attain. One sees old women attempting to scale the heights, dragging their aged limbs a few yards, and then sinking down exhausted from the unusual exercise, gasping and palpitating from the rarefied atmosphere and shivering from the intense cold. Or mothers struggling on with children at their breasts, some of whom are even born at some stage of the pilgrimage ; but neither births nor deaths affect this slowly moving throng which daily draws nearer its goal. And when the cold, grey light dawns on the last morning, the foremost pilgrims are seen running like black specks across the final field of snow, and, as one draws closer, a shrill, weird chorus of cries can be heard, like a flock of seagulls around a wreck. As the last intervening crag is scaled a strange wild scene comes into view. Naked, the devotees are rushing into the ice-cold waters of the lake ; others, as if transfigured, stand fixed and dumb, seemingly overcome with religious fervour, while some, repeatedly leaping in the air, give vent to their joy in delirious shouts."

This is essential Nepal. The Nepal whose soul is on fire for God ; whose sons leave their work and

homes to satisfy a clamant inner call ; whose spirits are hungry but starved. This Nepal knows nothing of Jesus Christ who made the very mountains which cradle her home ; who watches her long pilgrimage to Gosainthan, and only longs that it might be to Gethsemane.

What does this essential Nepal mean to a Christian ? Can that great impulse Godward which makes a Newar craftsman drop his tools, leave a Christian quite untouched ? Our souls reply as one : " Nepal must have Christ. Nepal must have Christ at once." But why has Nepal not had Christ long ago ? The answer to this question is the saddest part of all : for the rulers of Nepal have made the great Refusal. They have denied Jesus, the humble Saviour of Nazareth, the right-of-way. . . . They are generous, enlightened men. They have built railroads and roads. They have made drains and established hospitals. They have started schools and released slaves. But Christ they will not have. By a deliberate policy they are trying to maintain their medieval seclusion. An independent state, they have the right and power to exclude foreigners. Though associated with Great Britain in a very friendly treaty, which establishes her sovereign independence while revealing the amicable relations of the two countries, Nepal is exercising her undoubted prerogative in excluding Christianity. Whilst remaining loyal allies, to whom Great Britain owes a debt that is not readily understood and cannot easily be paid, yet they do not desire the penetration of their home by alien

industrialists, educationalists, or propagandists. The Flag will follow the Bible (they declare), and they desire neither the patronage of the one, nor the enlightenment of the other.

Europeans therefore are forbidden access to this closed land, except when supplied with special permits from the central Authority. The missionary, should he disregard these orders, will find himself faced with Nepalese soldiers within a few yards of crossing the frontier. Even when we entered the train at Raxaul, in an attempt to go up the line a few miles to see the land, we were nearly arrested. As the train crossed the bridge which divides Bihar from Nepal, a soldier put his head in at our window enquiring our business and demanding our credentials. He never left us till he had conducted us back safely to India again.

The problem, therefore, for the Christian is how to evangelise this country into which we are not allowed to penetrate. Some four thoughts spring at once to our minds as we consider this question.

1. Prayer can penetrate anywhere. Long before we can enter the valley of Nepal, prayer can be doing a concrete work in laying the foundations for the future kingdom. When an entry has been prepared by years of patient, quiet, systematic prayer, the souls finally encountered will be found ready for the message. How often does the pioneer missionary mourn, "There is no spirit of enquiry here?" Prayer will act like the waters on the Indian plains, softening the ground for the planting of the rice crop. Penetration is vain without

preparation. When we have prepared the way with the Spirit of God in prayer, He will answer those very prayers in permitting us to occupy Nepal.

2. Where the spoken message cannot go, literature often can. A systematic distribution of Christian literature, all along the border, will gradually make the great truths known in the heart of the country. With the Gospel story in their hands, written in their own tongue, the educated classes have a vital point of contact with Christ. Utterly false illusions will be dispelled, conversions will take place, the latter task of personal evangelism will become immeasurably more easy.

3. Indian evangelists can preach quietly and effectively when European missionaries would have no chance of obtaining a hearing. Better than Indian evangelists would be converted Nepali evangelists, who could either live a simple life, wandering to and fro as they proclaimed the good tidings, or else make their headquarters on the border whence they could undertake preaching tours into the interior.

4. If a few strategic points could be chosen along the frontier, these could be occupied by European missionaries. If on these stations competent, qualified doctors could reside, their prestige would soon have the effect of drawing numbers across the border for treatment. As confidence increased, it would be highly probable that such medical men would be called into the valley of Nepal to treat important patients there ; very much in the same way as Dr. Pennel was

called into Afghanistan on the north-west frontier. In this way the love of our purpose would become plain, and even before we were permitted to enter, our message would go before us, borne by grateful men and women who had been restored spiritually as well as physically.

Looking at the map and asking ourselves what place on all the frontier of Nepal is most ideally suited for such a base of operations, we are forced to one conclusion. Where the ancient highway to Katmandu enters Nepal; where the only railway crosses the border carrying numerous important passengers to the heart of the kingdom; in a word—at RAXAUL. From Raxaul a doctor could be called to Katmandu or Patan in a few hours: from Raxaul Nepalese evangelists could set quietly out to tell their own fellow countrymen the saving news. At Raxaul the passengers on the little train could receive the literature which contains the dynamic of emancipation: at Raxaul the ever increasing stream of travellers could be helped and blessed in a border hostel for Nepali men.

If Calais was the key to France in the Hundred Years' War, and was said to be engraven on Queen Mary's heart, how much more is Raxaul the key to Nepal: and how much more should it be burned on our hearts who covet that land for Christ?

To each man and society, God gives a special work. Raxaul—the key to Nepal—He has given into our hands in the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. May we be found faithful!

## THE END OF THE QUEST.

WE have traced together the footsteps of our Master in Bihar and Nepal. With Him we have ascended the rugged path to Katmandu and have looked on the unopened valley of Nepal. With Him we have threaded the crowded bazaars and Melas, feeling our hearts moved with compassion as we realise how He loves these crowded millions. We have watched Christ changing men and children, we have seen the love responding in their lives : and perhaps, too, we have felt the great hunger of His seeking Love.

We begin to understand that whatever *we* may do, whatever may engage our time or fancy, He is on His quest. Christ is seeking for His lost children, and will not abandon His search until He find them. That quest started indeed long before the Cross was seen on Calvary, when in the dim years of the world's dawn God's heart was broken by the first rebellious sin. Since then, His love has sought, first with the Cross in His heart, and afterwards when that Cross was raised for man on Calvary.

But alone He cannot find the wanderers, and turns from the hungry multitudes to seek for those who will seek with Him. He seeks for seekers : for those in whose bodies He may complete His quest ; for those through whose hearts He may show His love ; for those through whose lips He may give the great Invitation.

The Quest of the Nepal Border ends then with us. To those who are working there He says, " Without

Me ye can do nothing," but to us who wait at home He adds : " Without your help I can do nothing." He is dependent on me ! If I fail—and my friends fail—He has no other plan : and they will never hear over there. He wants me—me, with all my weakness, all my doubts, all my hopes of faithful service. He wants to transform me and take me forth equipped by Himself.

My Lord !

Thy call has oft-times checked me,

Summoned me abroad ;

But still I'm here.

Still, still I love my sinful self,

And call me still my own.

My Lord !

And art Thou waiting still :

Until I hate and loathe

This selfish heart.

Until I look full well

On all I hold most dear and sweet ;

And turning from them—

As from poison vile—

Fling me before Thine Everlasting Love,

Content.

My Lord !

Wait Thou no longer !

I am here, at last Thine own :

A Seeker now with Thee,

E'en should our Quest

Mean agony and bitter tears.

But let me be with Thee

A Seeker still,

For those dear Souls whom Thou dost love,

My Lord !

And I shall ask no more :

Save that perchance

The agony of sins behind

May be forgotten

In some suffering for Thee.

