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A Bazaar in an Indian country town,

[Frontispiece.

MENDING AND MAKING

By

W. H. P. and M. ANDERSON

THE MISSION TO LEPERS
33, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN
LONDON, W.C.2

“Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.”—MARK I. 41.

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He hears me pray to Him, upon the deep,
When masts are gone, and tattered sails are
blown
By winds that drive my frail boat out to sea;
He hears and sends the wind that wafts me
home.

No grief that comes shall bring despair to me,
Gaining in all things more than victory.

NEGATA SAN

(A Japanese Leper Poet—*Translated*).

Foreword

IT is startling to many people to learn that there are great numbers of lepers in the world. There are more lepers probably in Asia than any other continent, but Africa and South America are sorely affected. Leprosy is also prevalent in the numerous islands of the Pacific Ocean, and few, if any, countries of the world are quite free of it. The disease finds most favourable conditions for spreading among people of low standards of living, because of their poverty and their ignorance of even the simplest laws of health.

Vigorous measures against leprosy have been possible in the Hawaiian and Philippine Islands, and if no new cases should be imported the prospect of those islands becoming free of leprosy is hopeful. No country, however, especially in these days of freedom of movement of people from one land to another, is free from the menace of the disease, particularly

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those countries most easy of access from the seriously infected parts of Asia. In lands like our own, where higher standards of living obtain, with strictly enforced health laws, the danger of leprosy gaining a foothold is negligible. It is, therefore, a cause for thankfulness that, except for some isolated colonies, leprosy is not prevalent in Europe and North America. This alone should provide a reason for our seeking to stamp out the disease in those parts of the world where it is still a serious menace.

It is natural to ask what is being done to make less dreadful the lot of the immense numbers of lepers of the Eastern world and elsewhere. An answer is found within the pages of this little book, primarily intended to present a composite picture of the life of adult lepers and little children in the asylums and homes in India of the Mission to Lepers. It shows incidentally what devoted men and women are doing to solve the leper problem in the Indian Empire. Commenced in the first instance out of Christ-like compassion for

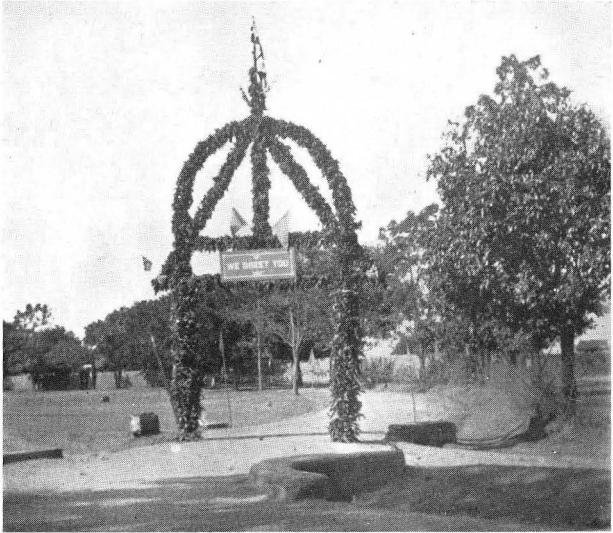
FOREWORD

the lepers in their dreadful and loathsome suffering, the Mission has brought to them not only physical alleviation of bodily distress but also a message of deep and precious comfort which has been eagerly heard and joyfully accepted. Thus, where we might expect to find despair in its most grievous form, the atmosphere is rather one of contentment and hope. We see how the divine spark of love can brighten the lives of the most miserable of our fellow-beings, and how Christian sympathy calls forth response from grateful hearts, while unsuspected qualities are revealed in lives hitherto overshadowed by affliction.

These results already obtained would be sufficient to commend the work of the Mission to respectful admiration. It has, however, far-reaching significance in its constructive effort and in its example. Public opinion in the countries concerned is being influenced to an important extent and a better day has dawned for the lepers. It is even more necessary therefore to strengthen and to extend the beneficent work of the Mission, and to

FOREWORD

respond to pressing appeals to go forward. The satisfactory results of the latest treatment for leprosy have changed the whole outlook, and at a number of the asylums of the Mission provision will have to be made to meet adequately the new situation. Lepers are coming in increasing numbers for treatment. This will be a growing feature of the Mission's work, especially in China and Korea. The field for service which is thus opening up is a very wide one, and we appeal to all to share in the privilege of ministering to those who now look to us so pathetically for help. For only as men and women, everywhere, rally in the spirit of Christ to the support of the Mission with their prayers and lively interest can these opportunities be used to the full.



"We Greet You,"

An arch of greenery constructed by the lepers
in honour of visitors.

Ready to Perish

THE heat of the sun is relentless. The land lies gasping. Silence and oppression prevail. Man and beast have sought already the shelter of a friendly hut or the thin shade of a tree. Along a hot, dusty Indian road a poor creature drags himself painfully. No hand offers to help; not even a drink of water can he get. It is well on to mid-day when he sees in front of him the place he has sought. Putting forth his last remaining strength he reaches the main gateway and drops fainting.

Who is he, this poor leper? There is little to tell. Just another victim of leprosy, ignorant of how he contracted the disease. For him it has meant the breaking up of his home and the loss of his few small fields and cattle. Long since he has been compelled to leave his village and to become a wandering beggar. Lack of sufficient food and resulting diminished strength have hastened

READY TO PERISH

the progress of the disease. The desire to live is strong even in the heart of a poor miserable leper. Someone told him of the "Leper Home" and in his bitter need he hoped to obtain mercy there, and not in vain.

This little sketch might be repeated over and over again, with slight change in detail, to describe those who have been "ready to perish," but have found refuge in the Asylums and Homes of the Mission to Lepers. Women also, some with their little children, occasionally leprous like the mother, but for the most part untainted, have been among the hundreds of sufferers admitted. Bidoo was the wife of a blacksmith and the mother of three sons and one daughter. She became a leper. Then her husband turned her out of his house but allowed Bidoo to take her little three year old daughter, Jamini, with her. Jamini is apparently free from any taint of disease. She is a bright little girl, full of fun, and is now in the home for healthy children of lepers near the asylum where her

READY TO PERISH

mother is an inmate. Quite young boys and girls have also been brought by relatives, or have been found begging in the bazaars or elsewhere.

A glance at some of the entries in the Admission Register of an asylum is sufficient to show that when leprosy is contracted by one person in a family it is likely to be communicated to the other members. We read of six people, all of one household, who were brought in a bullock-cart to one of the Mission's asylums. They included husband, wife and son, a brother of the husband and *his* two sons—all lepers. Again, the case of a young woman, only 26 years of age, is noted. Her husband was a leper, also both parents and her brother and sister. Such records as these, and they can be supplemented, show that it is not only the beggar lepers in the cities and towns which constitute the leper problem of India, but those lepers in the villages where the disease finds favourable conditions in which to spread from one person to another. In these simple village homes the people are

READY TO PERISH

often living in most unhygienic surroundings. They are very poor, quite ignorant and live crowded very much together, using the same eating and drinking vessels, sharing the hookah (pipe), wearing in turn the same clothing and using the native charpoy (cot) as a general article of furniture. Only when an infected person comes to the ulcerated stage is any notice taken, and even then, if he or she is able to do something to add to the common support, the leprous member continues to be one of the family without restraint of any kind. Can we wonder that leprosy is so prevalent? Is it rather not a wonder that it does not prevail to an even greater extent? In time the diseased person becomes a burden and a nuisance. It is from these villages the lepers come who, alas, find their way, if they do not perish meanwhile, to the larger centres, a danger to all with whom they come in contact.

Many of these wandering destitute lepers eventually come to the Mission's asylums. In some districts the Asylums



A new arrival—"just another victim of leprosy."



A village mud-built house of mid-India.

READY TO PERISH

are so well known that those who are unable any longer to support themselves come direct to them. A typical case of the former is that of a leper man now called Æneas, who was of the cultivator caste and lived in South India. His mother and a younger brother were lepers. At the age of 17 he noticed patches on his body where the skin had become lighter in colour. His marriage had been arranged, but as he believed himself to be leprous he decided not to be married. Certain of his village people now prevailed on his parents to ask him to leave his home, which he did. He went first to one of the great places of pilgrimage. Here he fell ill and was befriended by a Christian teacher. The leprosy now began to develop rapidly and ulcers appeared. For the past fourteen years, Æneas has been an inmate of one of the larger asylums of the Mission. When he first came he was quite illiterate but he soon learned to read and write, and in turn taught the leper children in the Home. He became a fine Christian

READY TO PERISH

character and the chief Elder. The other leper men hold him in much respect and his decision in any dispute is accepted without protest. As Æneas can neither stand nor walk, a roughly made four-wheeled cart has been provided for him in which he is drawn about the Asylum or to the Church. He attends the services in the latter regularly and takes a special joy in speaking about his Saviour to non-Christian lepers.



Æneas and his cart.

A "City" of Compassion

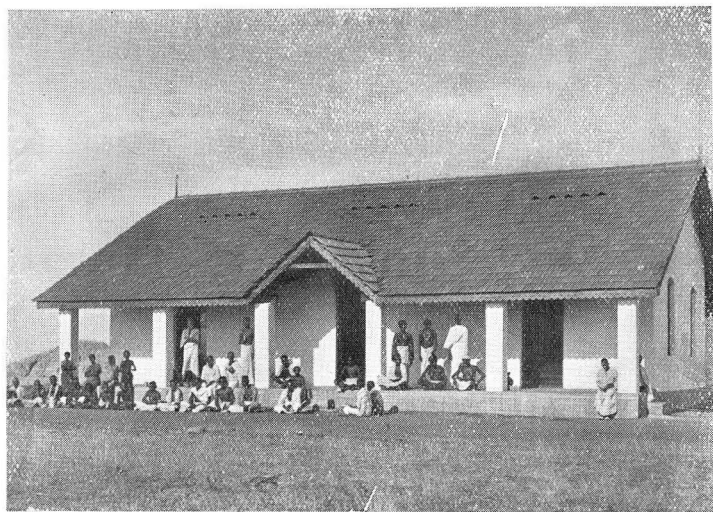
A LITTLE group of men were looking over a piece of waste land. It was apparently a particularly unpromising bit of land. Scored here and there with nullahs (old water-courses) and bestrewn with a liberal supply of large and small but very hard boulders, it was certainly not land to attract the cultivator. A few lean cattle grazed over it and curious villagers speculated on what there was to interest the strangers. The latter, however, were busily taking rough measurements and staking out possible boundaries. Would water be obtainable? This was one of the questions frequently asked among others.

Later it became known that the land was to be the site of a Leper Asylum. Orderly rows of stakes were driven into the ground, coolies began to dig trenches and some of those great boulders were to provide building material.

A "CITY" OF COMPASSION

It is but a few years since, but what a change has taken place. We drive up a neatly curved roadway, flanked on either side with vigorous young trees, to a well-constructed building. There are other buildings of similar type near by, but facing another road. The ground about them is level, and shrubs and even flowers add to the pleasing appearance of the place. It is that part of the site of the leper asylum reserved for the houses of the Superintendent and Indian workers.

A little to one side is a home for the untainted children of lepers, and further along the road by which we have entered is the leper asylum proper. A small office building, a dispensary and a church stand out prominently, while on either side of a fairly large open space of ground are rows of cottages, the homes of the leper folk. A closer inspection reveals much thought for the comfort and convenience of the inmates. Each cottage contains three rooms, well-lighted and ventilated and large enough to accommodate three or four people in a



A house for leper men in a South India Asylum.



An attractive corner of a "City."

A "CITY" OF COMPASSION

room. A good verandah furnishes protection from the sun and rain alike, and a place in which to sleep in certain months. At the rear of the cottage a similar verandah, but closed in, serves as a cook-house. Convenient of access are the water supply and bathing places. Concrete drains which can be easily disinfected carry away surface and other drainage. Many of the leper people have sore and wounded feet, and in a kindly consideration of them the paths are covered with sand, making them soft and agreeable to walk on.

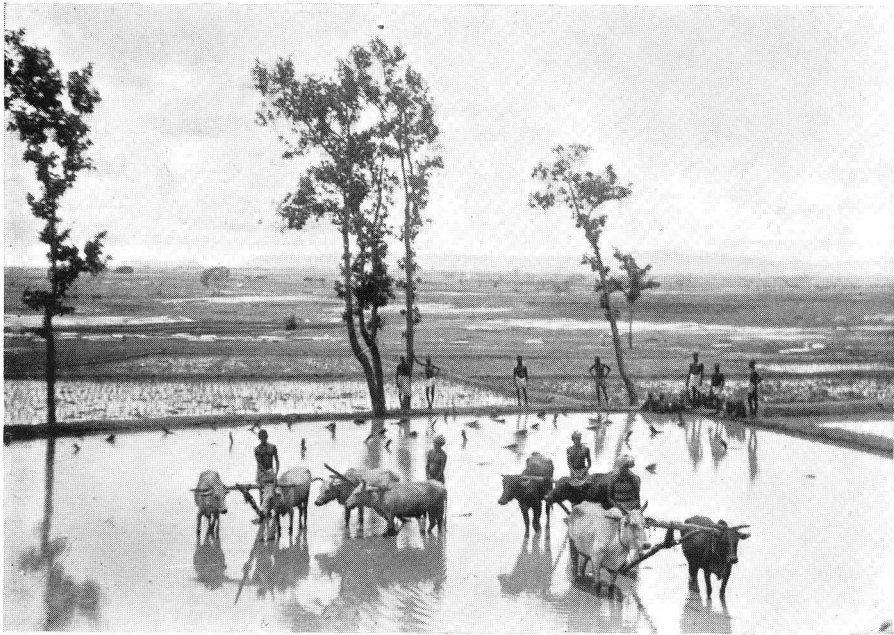
The general organisation is worth looking into. We soon find that one inmate of each house is the headman, or headwoman. These exercise a certain authority and are responsible for the good order of their houses. They also see that the weaker inmates have such attention as they may need, look after the distribution of food and in other ways do much useful service. Perhaps their most important function is to represent their respective houses as members of the Asylum "council of

A "CITY" OF COMPASSION

Elders," of which more will be told later.

It seems difficult to believe that the contented groups of people who greet you so cheerily were once repellent, loathsome creatures broken with suffering and despair. An old leper man grows reminiscent of his coming to the Asylum and with manifest pride tells how it has grown. Here and there a special case is pointed out in whom unsuspected qualities have been discovered. One is the wit of the place; another is a born leader; while others have displayed winsome qualities of heart and head which have won for them the affection and respect of their fellows. No one thing is more striking than their unfailing sympathy for the new-comers and their willingness to be discommoded in their limited accomodation, or even to share their food, in order that one more fellow-sufferer may have the benefits they enjoy. Various forms of light occupation such as gardening, also help to fill their lives with interest.

The simple country folk speak of any



Lepers preparing Asylum rice fields.

A "CITY" OF COMPASSION

one of the larger leper asylums as a "city." A free rendering of the vernacular name of an asylum of the Mission to Lepers in South India is "City of Compassion," and such it really is. There is nothing else quite like one of the Mission's model leper asylums. They are not hospitals or of the construction and plan usually associated with such institutions. Model villages more nearly describes them; and the destitute lepers who come to them for help and shelter find within these places of mercy freedom to follow the simple village customs they know so well, but under hygienic and sanitary conditions. They can have the food they have always used and a sufficiency of it. One poor woman when she received the usual allowance of rice for an adult became hysterical with joy. She had never known before what it was to have sufficient food in any one day to satisfy her hunger. Little wonder is it then that the Asylum with all its provision for the physical comfort of the inmates and all its orderly arrangement expresses for them their idea of a "city."

A "CITY" OF COMPASSION

Yet in all its organisation, it is its simplicity which secures the willing co-operation of the leper in making its kind discipline effective. There is something more, however, than organised care, valuable and necessary as that is. The newcomer soon realises that he has found a new fellowship in an atmosphere of sympathy which brings him comfort and peace.

Settling their own Affairs

SITTING out of doors in the clear morning sunlight, a group of earnest-faced men and women are in solemn conclave. The Leper Town Council, or Panchayat, is in session. The members are the heads of the various cottages and are chosen by their companions. The first item of business is to receive the weekly allowance of cash for the inmates of their different houses. Afterwards various matters concerning the personal well-being and happiness of the community are discussed. The missionary is there to preside and to act as guide and counsellor.

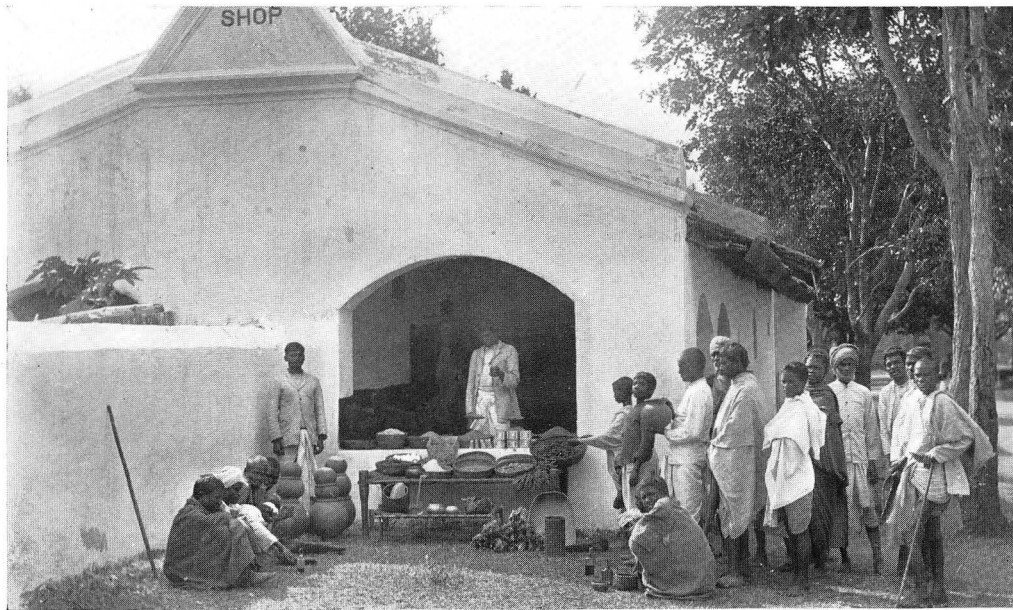
Piles of copper coins are arranged on the table in the office verandah, ready for distribution. Each Elder gives the number of inmates in his or her house and receives the requisite amount of cash. This "pocket money" is greatly prized. It is a very small sum that each receives, but it enables the poor folk to purchase

SETTLING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

trifles at the little shop within the Asylum grounds which is run for their benefit. It is some exchange for the lost joy of chaffering in the bazaar, and gives them a lively satisfaction. In the front of the shop is a novel cash-box—a little earthen vessel containing disinfectant into which the customers drop their coins.

Reports from the various cottages are now called for. "Sahib, such a man took rice belonging to his neighbour!" "Well, and what punishment do you advise?" A brief discussion, then, "Sahib, let him be fed from the children's kitchen for two weeks." Oh, dire disgrace! Not to receive his allowance of food to cook how and when he pleases, as becomes a free man, but to be dealt out a daily portion of children's fare from their kitchen!

A woman speaks next, giving evidence of a certain sister prone to rough language. Friendly admonition has apparently failed to effect a cure. The council decides that a fine of four annas shall be levied. And thus suitable disciplinary measures are taken as occasion requires.



The shopping hour.

SETTLING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

One item of the morning's business is not without its pathetic side—the disposal of the possessions of two or three lepers who have died during the week. Clothing and blankets, being Asylum property, after proper cleansing go back into store and are used for new arrivals. The more personal articles, such as cooking-pots, bowls, etc., are put up for sale. A sweet-faced and wrinkled old man, bent almost double, appraises the goods. Lifting each article with his fingerless stumps of hands, he turns it this way and that, notes defects or otherwise, and fixes a price. He is the senior Elder, trusted and revered by all, and his judgment is accepted as fair. Only once is there some demur, and then a cooking-pot goes for the quarter of a farthing less than he had said! There are eager buyers at this strange auction, and the poor bits of household gear speedily find new owners. The money thus received goes into a fund known as the "Elders' Fund," and which is disbursed by them for special needs of the community.

SETTLING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

Business being ended, the missionary asks if there is anything about which they particularly wish to speak to him. Are there any complaints? It is a frank and friendly conference, this! No, there are no complaints, but the senior Elder has a petition to present on behalf of all the lepers. They are grateful for food and clothes and much mercy shown them, but—and here the old wrinkled face takes on a wistful look—they would be more deeply grateful still if their father, out of the goodness of his heart, would increase the weekly dole. Their “father,” while confessing that he is unable at present to grant this boon, treats their request sympathetically. He acknowledges that the anna has not the purchasing value it once had, but he reminds them of the many other Homes throughout Hindustan where leper people are also looking to the Mission for their daily needs. There is no grumbling; the explanation is quietly accepted.

Heads are bowed for a few moments in prayer to the Giver of all good gifts, and then with many salaams the Council



Crippled women elder leaving the Panchayat.

SETTLING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

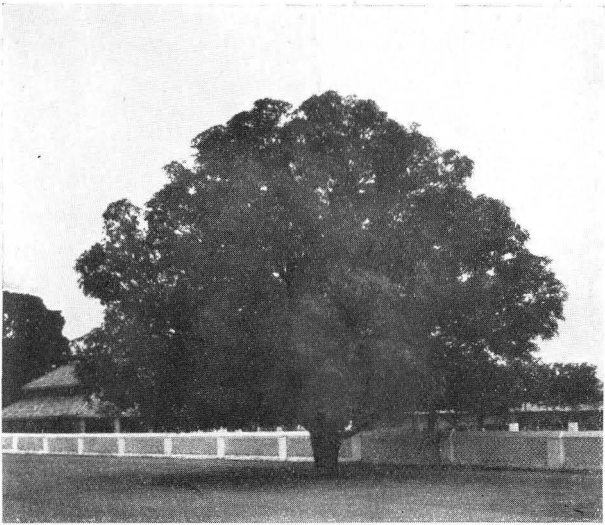
slowly disperses—slowly, because some members can only hobble painfully along on their stumps of feet. The old leader and the senior among the women are both so crippled that they are drawn in little handcarts to their respective quarters.

The visitors had nearly finished their tour of a leper home in Mid-India. They had talked with men, women and children, had seen the school and dispensary, and the chapel already too small for its needs, when they came upon a dilapidated erection near the women's quarters, quite out of keeping with its neat surroundings. "What is this?" they asked, curiously surveying the gipsy-like tent of rough matting. The group of leper folk following them were seized with such convulsions of laughter that no coherent answer could be given at first. Then an old dame, shaking with merriment, explained that this rough shelter was really a house of correction. When any woman becomes refractory and quarrelsome, disturbing the peace and comfort of others, she is

SETTLING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

banished to this hut by those who share the same room. This apparently has a tranquilising effect, and after a night or two the delinquent—now in a repentant frame of mind—is glad to return to her corner of the home. Whether the men folk had devised similar disciplinary methods for refractory members did not emerge.

To a well-ordered Home in a country district, there came one day a band of leper men and women who had been living very much a law unto themselves in a big city. Perhaps fewer coppers had come their way of late, or they were weary meantime of the beggar's life. At any rate, here they were demanding and expecting to be admitted. (As long as there is a corner for them, no destitute leper under ordinary circumstances is turned away from the Mission's asylums.) There was very little room for them, and under the circumstances they were admitted conditionally. Among them were some who had already known the shelter of a similar institution, but the craving to wander had lured them forth again.



The Mango tree under which services for the lepers were held previous to the erection of their church.



The "house of correction" (p, 29).

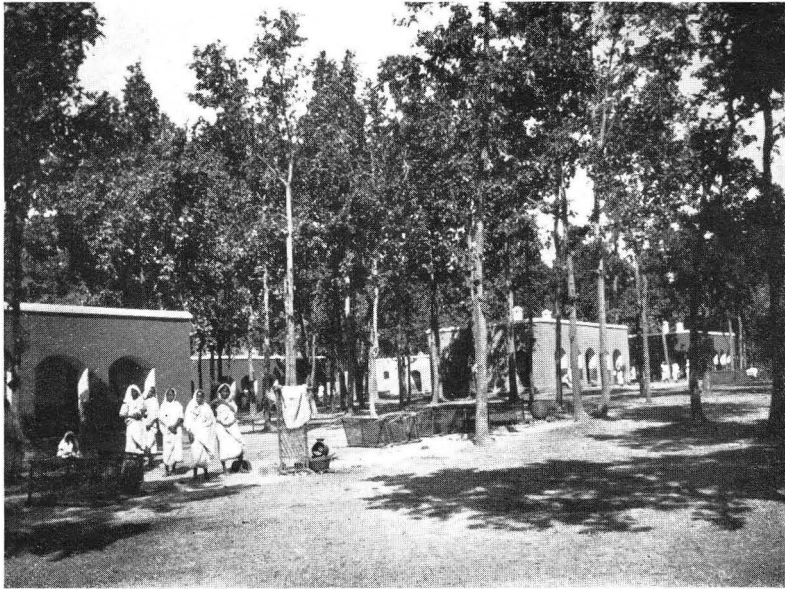
SETTLING THEIR OWN AFFAIRS

All went well for a short time. Then certain unruly spirits among these new arrivals sought to ignore the regulations necessary for the well-being of the community. They wanted to stay, but on their own terms. When a more serious breach of moral discipline threatened, the missionary laid the case before the older residents of the Asylum. Their verdict was clear. "Sahib, they know the *dastur* (custom) of this place; if they will not obey, let them go. Already the peace of our Home is disturbed." This had a salutary effect on these stubborn ones.

These are passing incidents, but they show the pride the lepers take in the Homes and the real public opinion which has been developed, causing them to deal on their own initiative and in their own way with various matters pertaining to the common welfare.

Must I Become like These ?

“**M**UST I become like these?” With bitter tears came the question from a young girl who on her arrival in a Leper Asylum looked at the disfigured faces and sorely diseased bodies of the women around her. Till a short while before, life had seemed so full of promise for her. Then just when her teacher’s training course was complete the blow fell: she was found to be suffering from leprosy. Just how she had become a victim, no one could say. Home and friends left behind, all the happy associations of her school-life broken up and the horror of a terrible disease upon her, is it any wonder that despair filled her heart? They have their hopes and aspirations as we have, these young men and women of another race. To be overtaken by the grim disease of leprosy in the springtide of their days brings that tragically wistful look to the eyes, never forgotten by those who see it.



Some of the women's houses in a large Asylum.

MUST I BECOME LIKE THESE?

To have something to do—that is their salvation. A variety of occupation is possible, such as reading and further study, carpentry, gardening, teaching in the leper school, assisting the doctor with dressings, etc. Here and there in the Asylums young people are found with shadowed lives it is true, but saved from despair; happy even, because they can still be of use; brave and strong, because with them is the great comrade, Christ.

Not all are so deeply conscious of the tragedy of their condition. It can be said quite truthfully that there are *happy* leper children. See these boys chasing a much repaired football with eager shouts. There are lame feet, maimed hands, disfigured faces in the little group, but there is the happy abandonment of boyhood in their play. The game is shared with zest by a black pariah dog, the boys' devoted companion. Pets, within limit, are allowed: they give companionship and interest. At one Asylum some of the inmates find great pleasure in rearing pigeons and have constructed with much ingenuity

MUST I BECOME LIKE THESE ?

underground pigeon-cotes, hollowed out of the clay.

“ Fairyland ” is the name given to a home for leper girls in South India. The senior occupant, a Christian High-School girl, came in her reading of Kingsley upon the definition of Fairyland as “ a place full of love, loyalty and lofty purpose.” Thenceforward the Home, then just completed, was known by that name. To “ mother ” and teach the younger girls gathered there is the gladly accepted task of that brave young woman whose student life had been so sadly interrupted.

The Sweet Singer who never told a lie —thus does one who knew him, speak of the little lad Sukhram. He was badly affected by leprosy. Nearly all resemblance to boyishness had gone from his face which had become painfully old with grotesquely hideous swellings. Although the disease had attacked his throat, his voice was surprisingly sweet. He loved to sing. When a breakdown threatened in the singing at the Church service, it was Sukhram who “ raised the tune ” and led the husky voices of the



Leper children who have benefited by treatment.

MUST I BECOME LIKE THESE?

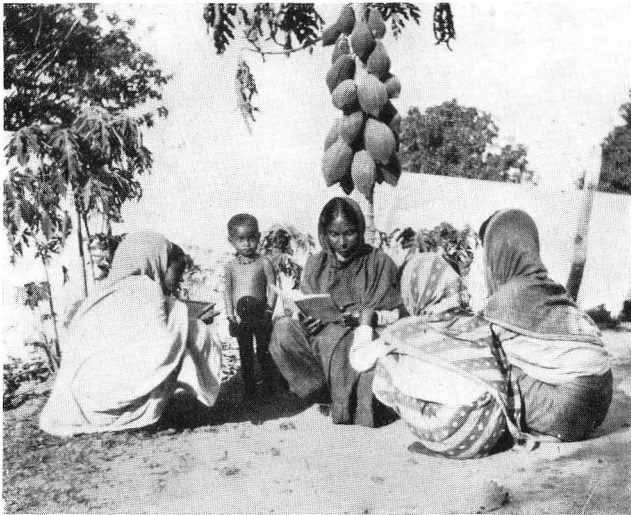
leper congregation. There was a transparent honesty about him which was very attractive. He owned up promptly to a fault, an unusual virtue in boys of his class. Withal he was a real boy, fond of games and fun and interested in his school work. Like a jewel in an ugly setting, a peculiarly sweet character shone in that disfigured lad. Although a great sufferer he was wonderfully cheery and always appreciative of what was done for him. There was that about him which seemed to say he had not long to live and that fact endeared him yet more to those who cared for him. Sukhram was mercifully spared a life of suffering, for he passed away while still a lad, leaving behind him tender memories.

Eight years ago a young girl was brought to one of the Homes in the Central Provinces—another promising student from a Christian school. Her friends thought a bright future lay before her. She had a natural aptitude for teaching, knew English in addition to three Indian languages, and was clever with her fingers. Then—and how often

MUST I BECOME LIKE THESE?

is the sad story repeated—it was discovered that she had in some way contracted leprosy. So they brought her to the Home, a young girl with crushed hopes, almost stunned with the shock.

A veritable messenger of God is sometimes disguised in the crippled body of some poor leper. Such an one was old Elizabeth, many years a leper, but uncomplaining and with a bright spirit unconquered by suffering. She it was who took the lonely, bewildered girl to her heart, mothered her and sweetened as far as she could for her the bitter cup. That was eight years ago, and—to-day? There is to-day in that Home a young woman whose dark eyes are haunted with wistful sadness, but who greets you with quiet dignity and a welcoming smile. The leper children gather naturally about her; she teaches them and is their friend, in school and out of it. The influence of her Christ-like life is felt throughout the institution and the missionaries turn to her for help as they turned in days gone by to old Elizabeth, now gone to her rest.



“She teaches them and is their friend” (p. 36).

MUST I BECOME LIKE THESE?

Buddhu was a bright young lad and promised well if a certain patch on his arm, suspiciously like the beginning of leprosy, did not increase. He was under observation and was keen to be pronounced free of taint. For a time it was thought that any fears concerning him were groundless, until an ulcer developed in his hand. Looking from the Asylum toward the healthy boys' home, he could see them going off to school. Very pathetic it was, quietly to observe him following with eager eyes the little company until they passed out of view. He did so want to be well. Just that small wound which was so slow to heal. Then he would go to the dispensary to have it dressed. Some days it appeared to be really better and he would come to the missionary superintendent to ask if he might not go to the healthy boys' home next week. It was hard to refuse the lad's request. Finally some work was found for him in connection with the dispensary, but ever in his heart was the deep longing to be well. No murmuring,

MUST I BECOME LIKE THESE?

but just that silent appeal expressed in his clear dark eyes, dispelled for a little in hours of play, only to return when he was left to himself again. Inexpressibly sad, but thank God, today we feel that such as he have a fighting chance in the new treatment now available even if we cannot yet speak of a cure.



“The Jewel.”

A Christian leper woman whose beautiful character and worth have earned for her this distinction.

When Misery Smiles

SHE was a leper woman, weary in body, sad in spirit and full of fear, who, after weary fruitless pilgrimages came to seek as a last resource the refuge of a Mission leper asylum. The sight that met her eyes filled her with astonishment. Within the Asylum grounds was a crowd of happy-faced men and women. There was the sound of laughter and music and the beating of drums. Some Indian games were in progress. There seemed to be joy everywhere; and they were all lepers like herself, but how different! It was the day before Christmas.

How heartily all had entered into the preparations for the festivities. The whole place had received an extra clean-up and had been made gay with festoons of green leaves. On every side there was joyous, infectious activity. The "great day" was at hand and well they knew its meaning. Few there were of the

WHEN MISERY SMILES

leper people who could not tell the story of the Saviour's birth.

It is well when misery smiles and the surprise of the newly-come leper woman is felt also, though in different measure, by those who visit a Christian leper asylum on similar or other occasions. In fact, at any time, the difference between the people the visitor expects to find and those actually seen, rarely fails to impress one, because of the manifest brightness and cheerfulness of the inmates. An official of Government, speaking of one of the larger leper asylums, said that he had seen more happiness there than in all the villages of his district.

Among the sources of entertainment for the lepers, gramophones and lantern views are very popular. Best of all, perhaps, are those forms of entertainment of their own devising. Drums—always a joy—cymbals, wind and string instruments of Indian design and make, provide all the material for an orchestra, though here and there the Western-made small two-octave, box-like harmonium is

WHEN MISERY SMILES

a favourite addition. The player sits on the ground and picks out the air with one hand, while the other controls the hinged back which operates the bellows. Thus equipped, numberless lyrics are sung to the accompaniment of the "orchestra." Many of these lyrics are composed by the lepers themselves, and have a refrain in which all can join, the leader singing in a chant-like tone the different verses. If the visitor has a knowledge of the vernacular and a quick ear, he will hear his praises sung in quaint verse and it may be a slightly veiled reference to some personal characteristic or circumstance.

Entertainment of a more intellectual order is sometimes the result of long hours of patient committing to memory and reciting of passages from the book of Job, or of one of the beautiful parables of the Gospels. The former seizes the imagination of the Christian lepers: the problem of human suffering touches their lives so closely. Similarly, the Eastern setting of the parables appeals to them greatly.

WHEN MISERY SMILES

Thus the sacred stories are written on their hearts and in their minds.

We recall an incident of the hot season. The closing in of kindly evening has brought a welcome measure of relief from the glare and heat of the day. The carts creak by on the road, a jackal gives forth his harsh yelp from the outskirts of the village ; other sounds break the stillness ; but now one hears the singing of young voices. They are those of the leper children over yonder in the Asylum, and the hymn they are singing is a children's hymn. The words are in Hindi but it is the familiar " Childhood's years are passing o'er us." Some are all unconscious of the blight on their young lives, others have forgotten it for the time. And so comes a sweet curfew to the sped day. The village watchman takes up his rounds, now and then calling to his fellow, and we are left musing over the children and the tragedy overshadowing them. Would that always they might wake on the morrow to laugh and play.



Leper women about to run a race carrying water pots on their heads.



The Lepers' "band" with harmonium (p. 40).

Out of their Poverty

IT was the Master Himself Who “sat over against the treasury and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury.” We remember that He commended the poor widow who “threw in two mites” because “she of her want cast in all that she had, even all her living.”

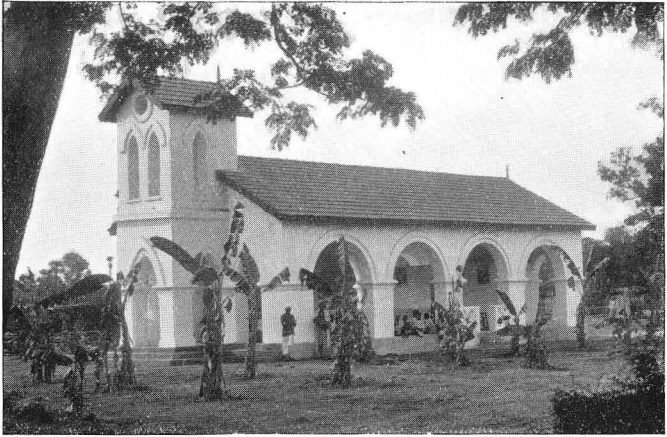
“Out of their poverty” may well describe the gifts of the lepers, for they are like the widow of old in this respect. A paisa is normally equivalent to one farthing. It is the currency of the poor. How often in the bazaar is it the subject of haggling, or dispute. In a number of leper homes a weekly dole of fourpence or fivepence is allowed each inmate to buy fuel, vegetables, and little extras of food. Out of this small allowance the weekly Church offering is made. It may be the visitor will notice in the houses of the people a number of small earthen vessels; one of the smallest has

OUT OF THEIR POVERTY

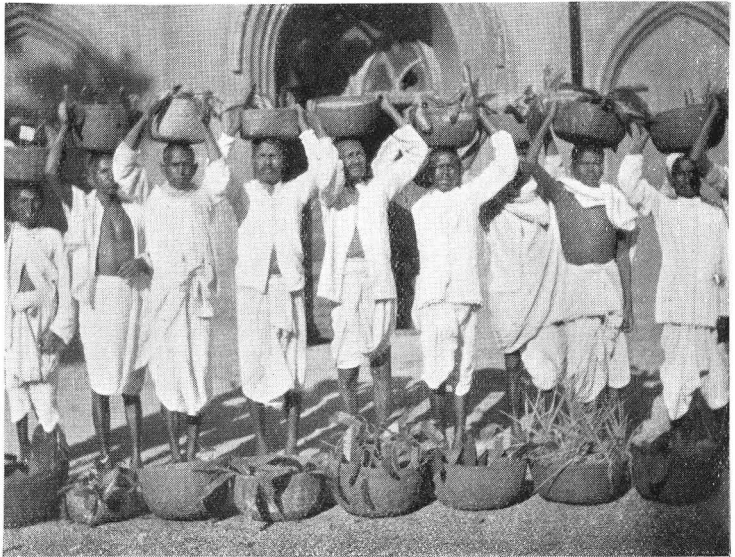
a special use. In it is placed a little of the weekly rice allowance, and this is taken to the church on Sunday, there to be cast into the rice basket, for a basket is passed from row to row, as well as a collection box, to receive in money or kind the offerings of the leper Christians.

One of the women has been very ill. For several weeks she has been unable to leave her room, much less to attend any service. Now she is better and strength is slowly returning. Out of gratitude to God for sparing her life she wishes to make a thankoffering in His House. Quietly and reverently she comes forward to offer her gift, remaining a moment or two in prayer. Among the copper coins is found later a silver rupee which represents much of self-denial. Surely the Master beheld that gift of love and thanksgiving and granted to His lowly servant the joy of His peace.

A little fellow was picked up in the bazaar. His leper mother had taught him to beg. It became as natural to him as to eat. Presently a stern necessity added strength to his importunity, for he



An Asylum Church.



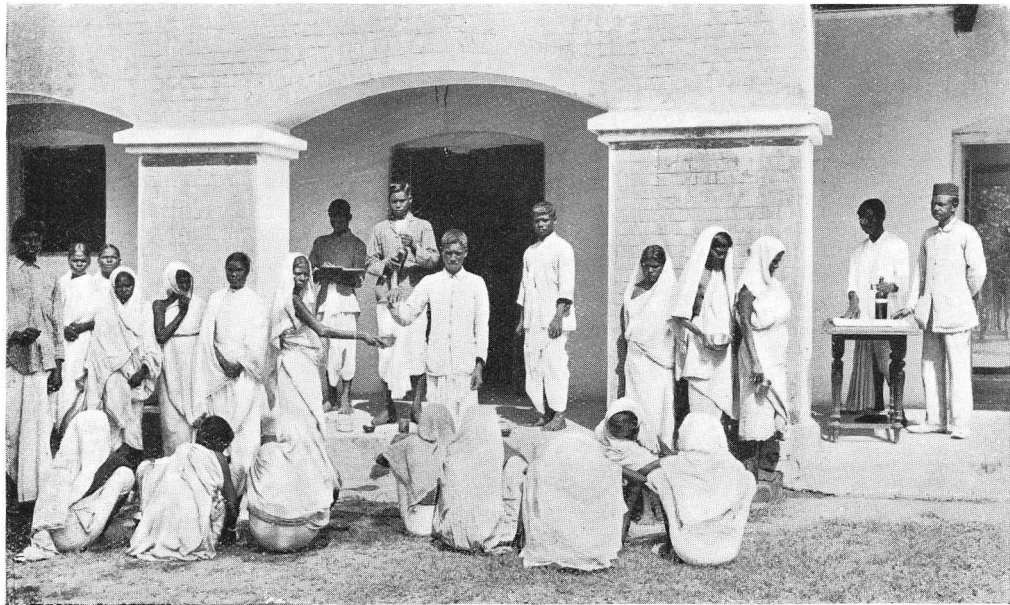
Thankofferings of rice at a Harvest Festival in an Asylum.

OUT OF THEIR POVERTY

was now a leper and left to fend for himself. After his admission into the Home the ingrained beggar instinct could not be suppressed. His hands were ever extended in appeal for money or a gift of some kind. There came a day, however, when the Christian influence of the leper Home had overcome the old desire to secure for himself alone anything to be had. One day a visitor to the Asylum moved with pity at seeing this young lad, and knowing nothing of his history, offered him some money. The boy was reluctant to accept it and, on being pressed, explained that he did not want to take the gift unless the others could share it too. It was in this same Asylum that the inmates were told of the suffering of little children in Belgium. Later, when a special gift of money was made to provide a treat for the lepers and they were told about it, there was some discussion among them, and then one, speaking for the rest, expressed the desire that the money should be sent to help the children in Belgium who were in greater need than they were.

OUT OF THEIR POVERTY

It is of much significance that any appeal for sufferers like themselves always meets with a generous response and that, in particular, they are ever ready to give for the upkeep of their church building and for any expenditure incident to its ministry. Is it not to them the symbol of that blessing and peace which has come to them so abundantly? Is it not the place of worship and thanksgiving, the place where so many of them have found entrance to newness of life in Christ Jesus?



The Doctor Babu and his patients.

The Doctor Babu and his Patients

FOR thirty years and more a man of silent, retiring personality has laboured from day to day in the alleviation of human pain and misery. So quietly has his work been done that his presence and help have been taken for granted, as a part of the institution. No one has wondered how things would go on without him, as well might question the morrow's food supply! And he who has loved and laboured is just "the doctor Babu."*

The plain little building with wide verandahs on three sides is the dispensary. One of these verandahs fronts on to the women's quarters, another is accessible from the men's section. It is really a dispensary, a surgery and a training school in one. In one room are registers and other records, even a cursory examination of which tells many a sad story. Not infrequently the entries show

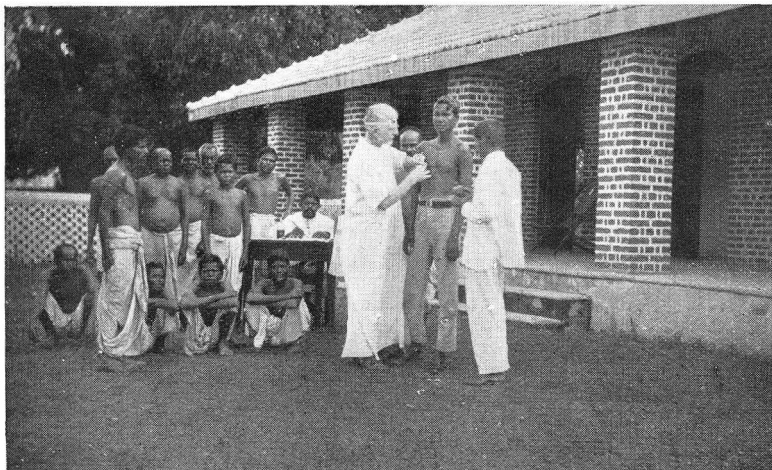
* Indian Medical Assistant.

THE DOCTOR BABU

cases repeated in the same family connection. What sorrow and tragedy lie behind these records.

We pass into the room opening on to the verandas where the doctor sees his patients. Then we have a look at the instruments and rows of neatly labelled bottles and finally see the actual dispensing, also the rolls of bandages, mollifying ointments and soothing oils. A number of young lads, bright, intelligent young fellows, are busily engaged under the direction of the doctor. They are the sons of leper parents but are themselves untainted by leprosy, and they are being trained here to be medical assistants. In the wards leper men and women have been taught to do much of the actual dressing of wounds and do it very well indeed.

Until within a year or two ago, apart from dealing with the hundred and one ailments to which the poor leper folk are subject in common with other people, the treatment of leprosy was chiefly that of alleviation. The grim disease itself defied successful treatment. In any of



Giving the new treatment,

AND HIS PATIENTS

the Asylums the majority of the inmates would be in the advanced stages of leprosy. The death rate was always high, and the simple cleansing and dressing of wounds and mutilations was all that could be done to make less dreadful the inevitable end. A period of experimental treatment a few years ago is recalled, when nothing but the personal persuasion of the missionary superintendent availed to get a small number of patients to submit to it. The lepers had no faith in it and painful re-actions only discouraged them. Now a new hope has arisen. In one large Asylum the greater number of the lepers are receiving the new treatment. New life is literally pulsating through their bodies. There is distinct and in some cases marked improvement in their condition. At another Asylum the lepers are full of happiness because of their improved physical condition. The future will reveal whether the hopes of curative treatment of the disease will be realised, but for the present there is no doubt that the results are very encouraging.

THE DOCTOR BABU

Chaulmoogra oil has long been a well-known palliative for leprosy, but has very nauseating qualities. On this account it is difficult to take in sufficient quantity to be effective. The new treatment of leprosy is by injection of the ethyl esters of chaulmoogra oil and also of other oils that have been found suitable. This treatment has already been considerably improved and simplified, as a result of continued research, and still further advance is confidently expected.

Owing to the long period of incubation in leprosy, which is from six to eight years, it is impossible to speak of cures in cases that have been pronounced "symptom free." Certain bacillistill in the incubation stage may be untouched by treatment and only time can reveal this. It is nevertheless apparent that a considerable measure of success has been attained.

It is necessary, however, to emphasise that there are large numbers of lepers who are not in Asylums or institutions of any kind. Very many of these are in the advanced and repulsive stages of the

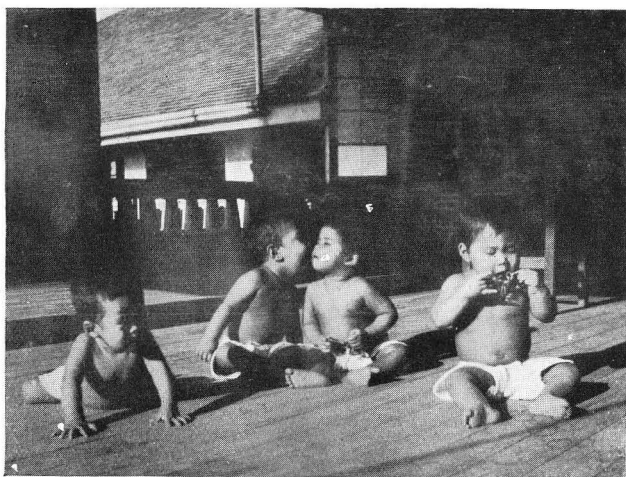
AND HIS PATIENTS

disease. All such lepers should be segregated not only for their own good, but for the protection of the healthy. Moreover, it is through organised care of the lepers that medical treatment becomes effectively possible. We need therefore to maintain all our Asylums and to open new ones in those areas where none exist. According to the energy with which this is done will the extinction of leprosy be brought nearer fulfilment.

Giving them a Chance

SUCH a dear baby! She is an attractive wee mortal with dimpled brown limbs and shy bright eyes. Yet look at the one who holds her tightly as if to say "No one shall part us." Her mother? Yes, this woman with ugly sores on her feet and hands and a disfigured face is her mother, a leper. One shudders to see that little healthy body caressed by leprous hands. The bonnie picture of wholesome childhood makes the contrast all the more horrible.

It is a common thing to have a leper woman ask admittance to an Asylum, bringing a little child with her who shows no taint of the disease, for children are not born lepers. Bitter are many of the partings the poor human heart is asked to make, but perhaps none are so bitter as that of the outcast leper mother from her healthy babe. Turned adrift by her husband, forsaken of her friends, smitten



Are these not worth saving from leprosy?



A Home for untainted children—Burma.

GIVING THEM A CHANCE

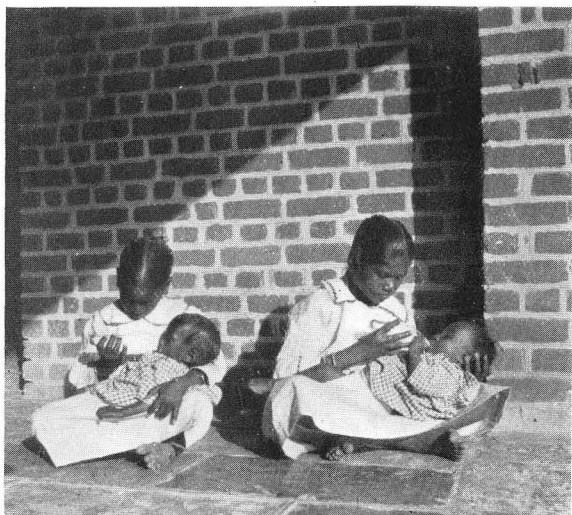
with a terrible disease, no wonder that the lonely woman clings passionately to the little child, who is all that remains to her of happier days. Her poor ignorant mind cannot grasp the danger that threatens her baby so long as it remains with her. She is a fatalist of course : what is to be, *will* be. Compulsion is useless ; were that tried she would be off to the beggar's life and the child would be in infinitely more danger, physical and moral. So the woman enters the Home with her treasure and the missionary is content to wait awhile. When the mother has become used to the new life, when fear and suspicion have given place to confidence, then patient kindly persuasion usually wins the day and the little one is transferred to the healthy children's home where the mother can see it at intervals. This result is gained sometimes only after much pleading. " I have to send my children very far away for their good. I only see them after several years. Your child will not be far off, you can see her often and watch her grow big and

GIVING THEM A CHANCE

strong." Thus pleads a missionary-mother with tears in her eyes, and from the other mother comes the cry: "Take her, Mem Sahib, take her; see, I give her to you." It is a victory of love on both sides.

At a safe distance from many of the Asylums are situated smaller buildings—Homes for children—which echo with the sound of happy child voices. The Mission is blessed indeed in the lives of some of those who act as house-parents in the Untainted Children's Homes. Of the Matron of a Boys' Home in North India, who recently passed away, it is written: "From the time that she came into the Home twelve years ago there has been a great peace and a great blessing. She knew the child heart and the child nature intimately and loved it from every point."

See this happy smiling woman with her own lovely baby in her arms. Both she and her husband might have become lepers like their parents. Instead, they are caring for the boys in one of the Homes as they were cared for in days



"Little mothers" (p. 55).



Scouts from an Untainted Boys' Home.



Saved from becoming a leper—a promising lad.

GIVING THEM A CHANCE

gone by. This mother will tell you proudly that she has a daughter training to be a medical assistant.

* * *

“ Mariyam is the despair of the Matron. She is always in mischief. She *will* climb trees and tear her clothes ! ” The culprit stands shifting one brown foot over the other, eyes demurely downcast but with a merry twinkle escaping through the long lashes. Her garments show a new rent and many signs of repair in the past, while stains around the laughing mouth suggest a reason for the tree-climbing. But Mariyam has another side to her character. A little later on we find her with a younger companion squatting in their easy Indian fashion on the verandah. Each girl has a baby cradled comfortably in her lap, whom she is carefully feeding. These tinies, the youngest members of the Children’s home, are much attached to the two “ little mothers ” who help to tend them.

In a cool shady dormitory three small chubby boys are turning over the gay pages of a scrapbook. They look at the

GIVING THEM A CHANCE

visitor with shy, bright eyes. Their lessons are over, but the older lads are still at school. From a creeper-covered building near by comes the hum of their voices. There are gardens all about this place and, later, one sees the youthful gardeners busy on their plots. A manly-looking boy dressed in scout uniform steps up and presents some fruit, two fine papaiyas. The gardens give healthy exercise and the vegetables and fruit are a welcome addition to the children's diet.

Boy Scouts among the sons of lepers? Why not? Everything that makes for the building up of virile manhood is welcome. So at a Christmas entertainment at an Asylum in Bengal, twenty boys from the Untainted Boys' Home were among the Scouts who gave a display of drill. In a Mandalay troop there are also boys from the Children's Home.

And so this stream of bright young life from such unpromising origin is healthy young manhood and womanhood in the making. Most of the present workers of

GIVING THEM A CHANCE

the Mission's largest Asylums have come from the Children's Homes. Others have found their place in life outside where they are self-supporting and contributing in one way or another to the welfare of the community in a variety of occupations. The Mission is justifiably proud of the success of its efforts in rescuing the healthy children of lepers from leprosy and in turning them out with sufficient education and training to make them useful, happy members of the general population.

The Gift of "Perfect Soundness"

IN the preceding sections an attempt has been made to sketch the salient features of the work of the Mission to Lepers in India. With little change these sketches might apply also to the Mission's work in the Far East and elsewhere. It cannot have escaped even a cursory reader that a work of much importance lies behind all that has been written. The waste of humanity is to be seen in many sad and dreadful forms. Some of these will continue despite every effort to prevent them. Here it is shown that the waste, leprous humanity represents need not continue. It is likewise shown that much of it which exists is transmutable into forces and qualities of usefulness and beauty.

Someone has said that our worship and prayer will be enriched by an intimate intercourse with the suffering and the poor. Thus, those who work among lepers find a deep joy in seeing human

“ *PERFECT SOUNDNESS* ”

souls re-act to sympathy and love. Lives which had seemed to have contracted are seen to expand. Old things pass and existence becomes new to those who have experienced the depths of misery and poverty. We are told that many shall come from the East and the West and shall sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, but none, we doubt not, will come with fuller joy than cleansed and redeemed lepers. But even now a better order is possible for leprous men and women, aye, and for little children unconscious of the dreadful thing which has come upon them. It can be brought about by multiplying Christian leper asylums and homes, with all that wise and sympathetic thought can devise to provide for the physical necessities of the lepers and the alleviation of their sufferings. Much more, we can bring to broken, diseased men and women the knowledge of Him Who came not to be ministered unto but to minister.

In lands where a corporate conscience in respect of suffering and destitution did not exist and where the leper was

THE GIFT OF

unquestionably the least likely to cause concern, our Mission asylums have been examples of what ought to be done. After the first seeking for an ulterior motive, wonder has been succeeded by admiration, and in certain parts of our field this has developed into helpful co-operation. The leaven is leavening the whole lump, and we look for a wider expression of this new corporate consciousness in the passing of indifference and apathy. Communities will not be satisfied with things as they are, but will see to it that wandering, uncared-for and destitute lepers shall no longer be a reproach to them. Such is the compelling force of Christian example.

A new factor in making for the cleansing of the lepers is the wonderful advance in medical research. It is a day of good tidings not only to the lepers themselves but to all who recognise the great possibilities of this latest treatment. How shall we bring to the lepers of the world the benefit of these discoveries of medical science? Who can say what the effect will be of an increasing number of lepers



All these young men and their wives were at one time in the Homes for untainted children of lepers. They have been saved from leprosy and are free from any trace of the disease as are their little ones.

“*PERFECT SOUNDNESS*”

coming into Christian Asylums for treatment and going back to their villages with cleansed bodies and the message of the Kingdom in their hearts, to publish it much, like that Galilean leper of old ?

So we close this appeal for a deeper interest in the lepers of the world, in notes of glad thanksgiving to God for all that has been done, and of eager expectancy of the greater things to be achieved. By faith we see the works of the evil one destroyed. We see the disappearance of the loathsome figure of the leper and the sad, uplifted face of his tainted child. We see instead, in the perspective of the years, the happy homes of those who have been saved from leprosy and hear the innocent voices of healthy children over whose future years the shadow of the disease shall never fall. The vision is not fanciful. It is the confident belief that the fight with ignorance and disease can be won and countries cleansed from leprosy if all the means available be used. We have, however, always to keep in

“ *PERFECT SOUNDNESS* ”

mind that only through the power of the living Christ in the lives of men and nations can concern for the weaker brother and citizen supplant cruel indifference, and neglect give place to helpful action. Only that supreme influence can cause men and women gladly to give of their substance and their service to right earth's ills. Thus by faith in His name shall sin and suffering give place to “ perfect soundness.”

"For the hope of eternal life for our souls which we have received through the death of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, and for our diseased bodies being thus cared for by the Leper Mission, so that we enjoy so much peace and happiness, we give thanks and thanks again."

"Our gladness and thanks are as high as yonder mountains, and as deep as the sea in front of us, and we wonder whether it is a happy dream or indeed reality,"

"We feel that it is a day in which we become alive for the second time."

"Cared for with grace such as that which cares for fatherless children, and rescues drowning men, our gladness and thankfulness causes tears of gratitude to come to our eyes, and for this and the immeasurable happiness of our souls, we give thanks and glory to God."

"Until this world passes away, please continue to save lepers."

From Korean lepers.

THE MISSION TO LEPERS

FOUNDED 1874.

International and Interdenominational.

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