

THE MISSIONARY HERALD.

SOOKHIRAM, THE NATIVE PREACHER.

A BIOGRAPHY.

BY THE REV. J. C. PAGE.

SOOKHIRAM was born in the year 1813, and, rather an uncommon thing among the rural population, he is able to state the year of his birth. His ancestors were *chandáls*, the lowest caste among those who would be called Hindoos, though, in truth, out of caste altogether, and by right not recognised among Hindoos. They came from Jessore very many years ago, and settled in the village of Narain Kháná, in the north-west of the district of Backergunge. They were among the first clearers of the land here, and in time rose to be the chief family in the place. Sookhiram was one of six children. His father and uncles aimed at being very strict Hindoos, attending regularly all the festivals, and observing, so far as a poor man can, all the rites of their religion. Kalee and Doorga were their favourite goddesses; and every year the *churuck pooja* was performed on their lands, and at their expense, in honour of Sheeb.

When Sookhiram was a little boy he was subject to fits, and this occasioned great alarm to his mother and aunts. These concluded that the eyes of Mohadeb were fixed on him, and that, therefore, he could not survive many years; he would be soon called away! They, therefore, with his father, made a vow that, if the god would spare him up to youth, they would have him to swing in honour of Mohadeb, or Sheeb. He got over his fits, and all praise was offered to the merciful deity!

Sookhiram's boyhood was spent in indolence, as his parents were well to do in the world, and there was no lack of rice in the house. But not a day passed, he says, without his having a fight, either thrashing some boy of the village, or getting thrashed, as the case might be. He recollects this propensity of his boyish days as very marked; but, as he grew older, he found other amusement in an "endless" round of wickedness. When about fourteen years of age his parents and relations, mindful of their vows to Sheeb, determined to carry out their long-cherished design of hoisting the lad on the *churuck-tree*. Sookhiram's account of what was done to him is briefly as follows:—

"The *pooja*," he says, "was celebrated near our dwelling-house on our own fields; and, after all the previous arrangements had been completed, I was compelled to fast two days and one night. On the morning of *the day* I had to proceed to an adjoining tank to bathe and purify myself, and had to carry the hooks, with which I was to be pierced, hanging on my neck. Returning from the tank, I was initiated into the art of hanging decently and comfortably when suspended, by being stretched out in proper form over a fire, on which incense was ever and anon thrown. After this, I was brought to the front of the place where Sheeb's praises were being sung, laid on my stomach, and four iron hooks were forced through the skin and flesh of my back. I was in great dread before this cruel operation was performed, and trembled exceedingly when the hooks were brought near me; but I was reminded repeatedly that the patient endurance of this insignificant torture would, after this life, be rewarded by an entrance administered to me into Sheeb's happy abode! And then the beating of drums, and the horrible shouting of scores of people all around me, so bewildered me that I felt nothing till the iron was entering my flesh. I was hoisted up and swung round; but was allowed to complete only two and a half circles, for my relatives saw I could not endure more. When being whirled round, I lost all consciousness of everything above or below, and, indeed, for the moment,

suffered no pain. When taken down I was led to the same spot where they pierced me, once more placed on my stomach, and the hooks were extracted. Some sugar was applied to the wounds, and two men then stood on me, and stamped all over my back! After this operation I was taken up, made to salute the place of Sheeb's worship and the attendant Brahmins, and managed to walk home. A burning fever ensued. I could not lie on my back, and with difficulty obtained sleep, turning on one side and then the other. In about a month, however, I recovered, and was able to get about."

When Sookhiram was sixteen or seventeen years of age he was employed, with a cousin of his, by one of the chief zemindars of that part of the district to collect rents; and in this man's *kutcherry* he was initiated into every kind of chicanery and deceit. Here he received his first and principal lessons in matters of the zemindaree and police; here he was taught how, at any cost, he must serve the landlord, and deceive or bribe the policeman. He remembers his first essay on behalf of his master. This honest gentleman had a grudge against a Brahmin, and sued him in the Moonsiff's court for a debt of 200 rupees. There was no truth in the plaint, but Sookhiram and others were sent into court to substantiate the false claim. Sookhiram, without any compunction of conscience, took the water of the Ganges and the toolsee leaf into his hands, and deliberately swore to what he perfectly knew was an undoubted lie. His master required a false oath—no matter if the Brahmin was ruined! Worldly considerations, even in his case, overcame all religious or superstitious regard for his twice-born teacher. The zemindar gained the case, the Brahmin was reduced to beggary, and the false witnesses were received into high favour at the *kutcherry*. I particularly questioned Sookhiram as to whether his conscience did not trouble him previous to his uttering so palpable a lie, whether his tongue did not stammer, or his limbs tremble, on this first appearance at court in so bad a cause? His reply was this:—"I had been previously fortified, Sir, by being taught the following couplet:—

“ ‘Támá ámár mómá, Toolsee ámár bhái;
Gangár jal ámi nitya nitya Khai.’

The copper (*i. e.* the small copper vessel in which the Ganges water *used* to be ‘served’) is my uncle; the toolsee (plant) is my brother; the water of the Ganges I am continually drinking.” And thus, thought this witness, where is the harm of swearing falsely by *these*? And yet, strange fact, there are, at this moment, not a few Government officers who would once more introduce the Ganges water and the toolsee into our courts! Such men have actually lately recommended this return to downright folly and wickedness, because, as they sagely imagine, the Hindoo mind venerates and adores a few drops of water, and a few leaves, above God, and fears them more!

When nineteen years of age, Sookhiram was married; but his marriage did not prevent his becoming more than ever violent in oppressing, and deceitful in circumventing, his neighbours. He acknowledges that, to the end of his career, it was at the zemindar's *kutcherry* he obtained all his lessons of guidance. About this time his landlord set his eyes upon some land belonging to another party, and proceeded at once to take steps to get possession of the coveted fields. When the harvest was at hand he instituted a case against the rightful owner, complaining that the latter had seized and carried off Sookhiram's father and a neighbour. Sookhiram himself was made a witness again, and swore to the truth of the false charge. His father was removed out of the way, and the police put upon the tract, which, it was alleged, they who had carried him off had taken. After some three months, what with Sookhiram's evidence and that of his father, the landlord gained his point, succeeded in putting the owner of the fields into prison, and took possession of the lands he had set his heart on.

The next ten years of Sookhiram's life were spent in all kinds of engagements and employments. He was, in turn, a carpenter, a *ghramie* (a worker on bamboos and thatched houses), sugar-maker, trader in beetle-nut, rice shopkeeper, trader in earthenware, and once, for the fun of the thing, as well as for any other reasons, he went down to the great Sunderbund to hew timber there.

But he characterises his course in these words:—"Nothing afforded me so much satisfaction as obtaining 'the pre-eminence,' oppressing my neighbours, cheating market people, and living at the expense of others." He acknowledges having several times fought out a battle with the *latyal's* club; and owns, with sorrow, that on two or three occasions death ensued from such engagements; but, somehow, he escaped from both his enemies and the law.

When, some fifteen years ago, Christianity began to be known and spread in these parts, a few of the "new Christians" went to Sookhiram's village, and endeavoured to hold some discussions, and engage in conversation with the Hindoo inhabitants. But they were regarded as deceivers and destroyers of caste, and by Sookhiram and his friends were hunted out of the place. Yet this opposition on his part did not continue long; it was too violent to last. Nor did the Christians discontinue their visits. These they followed up by introducing tracts, and other books, into the village. At first Sookhiram would receive nothing in the shape of a book, being afraid that it might exercise upon him some secret influence. There might be some awful *mantra*, or some dreadful incantation, or some magician's formula in them! But this fear, too, died away, and the books were received, though to be made light of, for they were converted into kites and sent up into the air. One day, however, he happened to set eyes on a neatly-bound Bengali New Testament, which one of his uncles had obtained somewhere. The appearance and size of the book interested him, and he commenced to read in it here and there. For days and weeks he could make nothing of what he read, till, coming to the 3rd chapter of John's Gospel, the doctrine of the *new birth* attracted his attention. One thing appeared very clear to his mind: he must undergo some radical, serious, mysterious *change* ere he could expect it would be well with him in the other world. He received also three tracts ("The True Refuge," "Epitome of the True Religion," and "On Salvation"), which he read, with one of his cousins, over and over again; and these helped him greatly in understanding his spiritual necessities, and arriving at "the truth as it is in Jesus."

Soon after this, Mr. Parry, our missionary at Jessore, receiving charge of the stations in this district, visited, with some of his native preachers, Narain Kháná, and the places around it. He found Sookhiram more than once among his most attentive and also most captious hearers; but he was the means of removing many doubts from the inquirer's mind, and of encouraging him in his search after the way of life. In October, 1847, preparations were made in Sookhiram's house for the yearly feast in honour of his deceased father; but his mind began to trouble him, and he could not manage to silence his conscience. He heard a voice—"the still small voice"—saying, "You are about to become a Christian; what, then, does all this mean?" He could resist no more, but abandoned all further arrangements—nay, the carrying out of all that was arranged for the feast. Though all things were in a state of readiness, nothing more was done in honour of the dead. The zemindar's people walked off with all the vegetables, fish, &c., the Hindoo assembly was dismissed, and the few Christians of the neighbourhood were invited to witness Sookhiram's rejection of Hindooism, and his profession of the religion of Jesus! This was not, however, so easily to be witnessed; for the uncles and elder members of the family gathered together their dispersed friends, created a serious disturbance, and beat off the Christians from their homestead and lands. But Sookhiram's friends—his new Christian friends—were as determined as his enemies. They rallied the next day, and contrived to get him clear off, out of the hands of his relatives and neighbours, and to convey him to another village, where a native preacher was located. This man, attended by a number of Christians, returned with Sookhiram to his house. But the heathen a second time joined force, and, assembling in double numbers, determined to get possession of the new convert. At the time they made their attack, the Christians were engaged in their usual mid-day service, and being thus taken by surprise, were speedily dispersed, while Sookhiram and a cousin of his, who was following him, were seized, shut up in a separate house, and guarded night and day without. For some days after, Sookhiram's relatives used to hold meetings

with their heathen friends, and then come in to him, and, by promises as well as threats, urge on him the wisdom and the necessity of returning to caste. He says that he was literally so bothered, so harassed by their continued talking, that, merely to get rid of them, he allowed them to call him once more one of themselves, while he would not put on a second time the discarded necklace. But this state of things was only for a fortnight; for Mr. Parry paid a second visit to the village: and though this rendered the heathen more cautious, the Christians took courage, and one night outwitted Sookhiram's custodians, and carried him off a second time. He had a long interview with the missionary, and finding in him both a good teacher and a firm friend, he once for all finally and decisively cast in his lot among the Christian people. Of course there ensued the usual disturbances and threats of evil, and oaths of vengeance. The Christians in a body should be swept from the earth, and so forth! But Mr. Parry remained the determined protector of the new convert, in his turn threatened the uproarious heathen with proceedings at court, and succeeded in making them acquiesce in what they could not prevent.

From this time Sookhiram was allowed to go in and out among his chosen associates, no man making him afraid. He was now one of the Christian community; and when our brethren, Pearce and Wenger, visited these stations, he seems to have attracted their attention by his intelligence and earnestness of manner. In 1848, I came to this district, and found him still a mere nominal Christian; but the next year he was a candidate for baptism, was accepted by the Church, and baptized by me in the village of Sooagam. He was the first baptized in the village, and the first baptized by me in Backergunge.

I soon discovered that there was an amount of intelligence, zeal, and self-denial about my brother, that might be turned to account, and therefore did not hesitate to encourage his wish to become useful. I placed him, after a little particular instruction, in one of the villages more to the south, where the Christian people required a teacher. He was the best man I could find; and even at the outset he nowise disappointed me. But his zeal soon got him into trouble. Some miles removed from his station there is the village of Sorbaree, in the zemindaree of Baboo Ram Roton Roy of Jessore. Here two families expressed a wish to embrace Christianity, and though it was known to be a dangerous experiment to make converts in the Baboo's estates, Sookhiram and another native preacher, by name Ramjubon, started off together with two others to encourage them. They were not unsuccessful, for both families gave up their caste, took the preachers into their houses, joined them at worship, and entertained them as guests. At daylight next morning, however, the houses of these people were surrounded by a band of latyals; and though they escaped, the preachers were seized, bound, and carried off to the Kutcherry of the Baboo's at Bandabatee. Here they were kept, almost always bound, for some sixteen days. They were occasionally beaten, and oftener threatened; but their courage never failed them. Every day, and particularly on the Sabbath, they sang hymns in praise of their precious Redeemer, and prayed to him to help them in their need. To all who came near them, they spoke only of their new faith. Nothing could quiet their tongues; talk they would, sing and pray they would. In the meanwhile we were not idle. I resorted to the law, but the Christian people threatened retaliation; and not a little alarmed were the up-countrymen who guarded the Kutcherry and the prisoners. But, withal, it was Sookhiram's and Ramjubon's determination, courage, and firmness, their faithfulness to Christ, which triumphed over their bitterest enemies. The head man of the Kutcherry got literally disgusted with their obstinacy, and finally cried out, "Turn them out, turn them out; they do nothing but sing and pray!" But ere he released them, he took forcibly a paper from them, to extenuate in part the course he had pursued! Still he accomplished no good to his own cause; for there followed the preachers one of his Hindoo ryots, and this man turned out, and has continued to be, the best barber among our people, who were once not a little in want of such a man.

Sookhiram once and again has been involved in like troubles, but with equal courage and steadfastness has he been enabled to endure them. Some four years

ago he was, with some of the people of his charge, falsely accused of maltreating and plundering the same Baboo's people, by whose agents he had been already so ill-used. They carried their case, with a host of lying witnesses, to Tunedpore. But there Sookhiram appeared, defended himself in court, preached in the bazaar day after day, and returned in a month and a half, having completely thrown his antagonist. His own zemindars were so delighted with his skill and boldness, that they wished to bring him home in a palankin; but he declined the honour. He could use his legs as well as his tongue and wits. His later course has been, all through, consistent. He is at present stationed at Holigaon, our most northerly station, and has charge of a congregation and church which, though small, are really examples to those in several other villages. He is respected by even the Brahmin landlords in his neighbourhood, and looked up to as a friend and adviser by the poor ryot. He has for years tried his hand in administering medicine, and even, in some of the more simple attempts at surgery. And he has succeeded in a measure we could hardly anticipate. Indeed, the brethren call him "our sircar," (sircar is the title our native preachers have had given them,) and "our kobiraj" (doctor); while the Christian community respect and love him, obey and help him, and would grieve to hear that he was to be replaced by any other teacher.

AFRICA.

DURING the absence of Mr. Saker in England the charge of the station at Cameroons fell upon our excellent native brother, Joseph Fuller, assisted by Mrs. Saker. Mr. Pinnock occupies Victoria, where his labours find much acceptance with the people. An occasional visit to Bimbia, and journeys to the native towns along the river, occupied much of the time of Mr. Fuller. The Divine blessing followed their labours. Many inquirers from the heathen presented themselves, so that often from morning till night Mr. Fuller was engaged in conversation with those who were seeking the way of life. Through the interposition of the British Consul, the people at Abo were induced to return the boat they had stolen from Mr. Pinnock, to give up a bullock as compensation for the injury they had done, and to promise the restoration of the articles they had seized. But in the midst of these labours of peace, war had broken out among some of the native chiefs, and the Mission families had been horrified by the slaughter of a native, and the parading of his head and limbs, dripping with blood, through the settlement. Nor were they without anxieties from the hindrance given to their work by the oppressive kidnapping of girls and women by an European trader in the river. It requires unceasing watchfulness on the part of the cruisers of Her Majesty's squadron to prevent the revival of the slave trade in the river.

Mr. Saker, with Mr. Diboll, arrived at Cameroons at the end of the year, after a very pleasant voyage in their little bark, the *Wanderer*. The accession of Mr. Smith and Captain Milbourne to the Mission has enabled the brethren to extend their labours, and to arrange for the preaching of the word in several neighbouring towns. The following is the present location of the missionaries. Mr. Saker, with Mr. Diboll, live in Cameroons—Mr. Diboll, both on the Lord's-day and in the week, visiting the neighbourhood. Of these, John Aqua's Town contains a large population. The family connections of King Dido are also large, and afford a favourable field for missionary labour. Hickory Town is situated across the river, and is also visited by Mr. Diboll. Here it is proposed to erect a cottage, and eventually to settle a missionary.

During the process of acclimatising, Mr. Smith will live in Cameroons; but, as he is able, will visit the towns around, first with an interpreter, and then alone as his acquaintance with the language improves. To its acquirement he gives much attention, and is very successful in his attempt to learn it. He is also very useful in the school, the classes, and public services.

Mr. Pinnock labours in Victoria with the aged Johnson, whose feeble health

betokens the advance of a period when his useful labours must close. He has long been a consistent Christian.

Mr. Fuller, in addition to his engagements at Bimbia, and in missionary work among the pagan people around, gives much time to the printing department, and enjoys the able assistance of Mr. Diboll's son, who accompanied his father on his return. The New Testament has been completed at press up to the Epistle of Jude, and the Book of Revelation was at press. Thus this important step in the evangelisation of this portion of Western Africa will have been made. The people will have in their own tongue the oracles of God.

Several instances of the power of Divine grace had much cheered the missionaries in their labour. One of these was a chief who died in the faith of the Gospel. Long had he lived as a consistent follower of Christ, and with firmness and kindness suppressed heathen customs in his town, while his own house had been converted into a house of God, the place for prayer. Mr. Diboll thus writes respecting him:—"In my heart I am in mourning for a chief, to whom the Word had lately become very interesting. He seemed also to wish that his people should be benefited by it. In his last interview with me he talked of a plan by which he hoped to bring them all under its influence. He died suddenly. I have preached to his people several times since, and at present they hear attentively."

The wife of one of the deacons also died in March. She was a member of the church; but the effect upon her husband was very interesting. While his friends and neighbours were weeping and crying aloud, he was calm, and resigned to the will of God. Yet this man was once a great persecutor, and most hostile to the Mission. Thus the word of the Lord is glorified; and among the degraded races of Africa are found many to take a place in the kingdom of God.

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE.

CALCUTTA.

At the time of going to press with the Annual Report, we had not received the usual annual statement of missionary labour in this capital of the Indian empire, nor of the progress of the native churches in the district to the south, called the Twenty-four Pergunnahs. The report of the Calcutta Auxiliary has now reached us, and from its pages we extract the following items of information. The two English churches in Calcutta—the Circular Road church and that in Lall Bazaar—have enjoyed a degree of prosperity during the year. The Lord's day congregations have been good. At the Circular Road there have been nine baptisms, and at Lall Bazaar four. Harmony and peace have prevailed. Sunday-school instruction is being vigorously carried on. At Circular Road there are from sixty to seventy scholars in the Sabbath-school, and probably an equal number at the Lall Bazaar.

DUM-DUM.

"An evening service for the benefit of the soldiers temporarily located there has been carried on without interruption by Mr. Lewis, as in previous years. The congregations have with some few exceptions generally been encouraging, especially in the cold season. Good is doubtless being done, and Mr. Lewis has been cheered by the attention given to the word; but the work here is rather to sow than to reap, as the stay of the detachments at this dépôt is generally too short to afford opportunity of witnessing the effect of the word dispensed among them. Brethren at other stations have sometimes reaped the fruit of the seed sown here."

Besides the two English churches in Calcutta, there are two native churches, each having its native pastor. One meets in the chapel connected with the mission premises at Intally; the other in South Colingah, a locality much inhabited by Mohammedans. They were both formed by the missionaries in years past, but for some time have been left in the hands of the native brethren, and are interesting efforts to establish self-supporting native churches. The Auxiliary Report thus speaks of them :—

“The Colingah Church seems to grow under the care of our young brother Goolzar Shah. The other has not been so prosperous. The health of its aged and esteemed pastor, Shujáat Ali, entirely failed in September last, and it is now in consequence without a native pastor. For some months in the middle of the past year there might have been seen a body of native soldiers, with a native officer in charge, marching from the Fort to the Intally chapel every Lord’s day. These men were all professed Christians; they were ministered to in their native language, the Hindustani, and while they continued in the Fort, three of their number, who were Seiks, avowed the Saviour of the world in baptism at the hands of the native minister. Christianity has therefore now a recognised standing in the native army. Satan’s walls have been breached. ‘This is the Lord’s doing: it is marvellous in our eyes.’ This body of men, twenty-five in number, belonged to an artillery corps raised in Agra during the mutiny. They are now located at Dacca, and their connection with the army has been rendered permanent in general orders by the Government.”

INTALLY SCHOOL.

“The English school at Intally, under the supervision of the missionary residing there, is still carried on, and has had about an average of eighty on its books. The boys pay four annas per month for their schooling. The masters seem to have been diligent, and the boys to have made pretty good progress, but Mr. Sale has left no report of this establishment.”

Of direct missionary work in the city the Auxiliary speaks with regret. It is far from being in so promising a condition as might be wished. One native preacher and one schoolmaster is supported by the Auxiliary, and one other native brother, a member of Intally church, by the Society. They attend at Jaun Bazaar chapel at stated seasons for preaching to the heathen, and at several other localities in the eastern part of the city. A member of the local Committee also devotes many of his evenings to wayside preaching. These labours are of course in the vernacular, but are extremely inadequate to the wants of a city containing 600,000 inhabitants. There is great need of the prayer, “Lord, revive thy work!”

BARISAL.

This station is about fourteen miles from Calcutta, to the north, and is the chief town of the district. An effort is being made to establish here an independent native mission, under the superintendence of our esteemed native brother, Ramkrishnu Kabiraj. He speaks of having received a good deal of encouragement in his attempts to call the attention of the natives to the Gospel, and thinks that he may have soon to report some fruit to his labours.

THE TWENTY-FOUR PERGUNNAHS.

“The Society’s stations in the districts south and east of Calcutta are Narsiedarchoke, Bishtipore, Rosh Khali, Luckyantipur, Khari, and Tamboulda, with one or two out-stations attached. Concerning the work at these stations, Mr. Pearce, in whose hands this department lies, has supplied the following account :—

“During the past twelve months, I have made six visits to them, including a period of forty-five days, and I trust that my labours have not been without effect. In comparison with other years, the past has been somewhat a promising one. Considerable numbers have been added to the congregations, and seventeen persons have been united to the churches by a profession of Christian faith in baptism. Most of the schools also have flourished through the year, and the attendance of boys on two of them has averaged about fifty daily. The masters, with one exception,

are all professed Christians. The Gospel has been preached to the heathen at all the stations, but at Tamboula and Bishtipore more regularly and widely than at any others. On the whole, the people have been at peace among themselves, and have received little molestation from the heathen without. It is encouraging to report a gradual improvement generally in their temporal circumstances. The dire poverty to which many were subjected in former years has passed away, and not a few have risen to a condition of ease and comfort. As a proof and effect of this, I am happy to say that the exhortations to liberality on behalf of the Gospel have of late been responded to more readily and to a larger extent than ever before. Nearly 200 rupees have been spontaneously contributed, which, although but a small sum considering the number of the people, may still be regarded as a hopeful germ of promise for the future. It is now, I hope, understood among them that such contributions are to be repeated from year to year.

“The adoption and growth of Christian principle, wherever seen, is worthy of notice. An incident illustrative of this I must not keep back. Early in the past year the district of Khari was sorely visited with the cholera. It raged all around the habitations of our people, and soon two of them were attacked and died; two others also were prostrated in a hopeless manner by the disease. Seeing this, the native minister of the place, feeling no confidence in human remedies, invited the people to meet together in the chapel for prayer, which they did in large numbers, and spread their case before Him who has said, “Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” These meetings were held repeatedly, so long as the visitation lasted. It is to be recorded in token of the Lord’s goodness to these poor people, that the two persons whose case has been mentioned, speedily recovered, and no one of our Christian people was afterwards attacked. The people recognised the hand of God in their deliverance, and made a contribution as a thank-offering, which they requested might be spent in the purchase of hymn-books, and given away at my option.

“At these village stations, there are twelve pastors and preachers and eight

school-masters. The nominal Christian community, small and great, numbers upwards of 1,200 persons. The members of the church, to the latest date, are 207, and the children under instruction exceed 300.

“ALIPORE.

“I am sorry to say we have had no baptisms during the past year. The word of God, however, has been preached almost daily in the station and neighbourhood. Tracts we have sparingly given away, but some have been sold, together with a considerable number of the little monthly periodical called the ‘Lamp of Truth.’ The congregations by the roadside have been generally good, and for the most part our addresses have been heard without objection, and often have elicited approbation. It may not be without advantage to mention that I have frequently sent forth with the native preacher a band of singers, who, before the address was delivered, sung a Christian hymn. This has generally excited great attention, and I have myself observed persons of all classes listening with evident deference and pleasure. On one or two occasions, our singers have been invited to the houses of respectable persons to repeat their song.

“THEOLOGICAL CLASS.

“At the beginning of the year, I made arrangements for the resuscitation of the Theological class, which had been in abeyance in 1859. Before the directions came from the Parent Society for Mr. Kerry’s removal to Barisal, several young men had joined it and commenced their studies; I deemed it proper therefore to go on with the class, and do with it as well as I could under existing circumstances. The students were five in number, gathered entirely from the Alipore and south village churches. As all were new, the course adopted was necessarily elementary; it comprised the improvement of their knowledge of their own language, geographical instruction, readings in History, Hindu Mythology, Biblical History, and other subjects, special portions of Scripture, Church History, and practical Christianity. On the recurrence of the cold weather vacation, two of these youths went to labour at Tamboula, and two others among a congregation recently formed in the extreme south, bordering on the Sunderbunds. The remaining one went to his home.

“ALIPORE GIRLS’ SCHOOL.

“It only remains for me now to give some account of the Girls’ Boarding School at Alipore, in which I am happy to say Miss Packer has continued her diligent and

not unsuccessful labour. The pupils have numbered twenty-seven boarders, and two or three day-scholars. The satisfactory progress of the children may be gathered

from the fact that when the school broke up at the end of October last for the annual vacation, there were five only that had not learned to read. A long list of books was in use in the several classes, most of which have been read repeatedly. The division of labour has been reading and writing in the morning, and needlework and arithmetic in the afternoon. In respect to needlework, good progress has been made, and some of the elder girls can now cut out and make up native garments without assistance. The singing exercises

on Wednesday afternoon have been carried on throughout the year, with some interruption. Every Sabbath afternoon has been devoted to scriptural instruction. I regret to add, that during the past year so marked a spirit of serious inquiry has not been observed as in the previous year, and there have been no baptisms. Of the girls trained in this Institution, six have been married since the last report, viz. two in the early part of the year, and four since the vacation."

Although Mr. Pearce has been compelled to remove to Intally, two native brethren have been left at Alipore, who will visit the several preaching stations and carry on Christian service on the Lord's day in the small chapel which has been erected near the magistrate's court. A Christian friend in the neighbourhood has kindly undertaken to render them his countenance and support. The income of the Auxiliary has been during the year £326 17s. 4d.

INDIA FAMINE FUND.

As many of our friends have liberally contributed to this fund, we have much pleasure in laying before them the following interesting communication from the Rev. J. Gregson, of Agra, to whom a portion of it was sent. His letter is dated June 5, 1861:—

"I just send a few lines in acknowledgement of your kind letter of May 2nd, accompanied by remittance for Rs. 1,132 12s. 9d. Although we have no very urgent or immediate demand for it at present, yet it will enable us to alleviate the sufferings of a large number of native Christians, who, owing to the very high price of food, are unable to procure clothes and other necessaries, all their pay going in the purchase of food. A month or six weeks ago, I received a draft for Rs. 960, from Major Conran, for Delhi, Muttra, and Agra. Of this I sent 760 to Delhi, only retaining 200 for Agra. I have also received Rs. 250 from Monghyr, and 62 8s. from another quarter; total, Rs. 612 8s., independently of the draft you have sent.

"The distress in this district is not so great as has been represented. The wheat and barley crop about here has turned out better than expected, being in many districts a fair average crop. Gram was very deficient, and some other grains also were failures; still prices have fallen fifty per cent. from the highest point. I see the money now received is not exclusively for native Christians; but for the present my expenditure will necessarily be almost confined to them. The general Agra Relief Fund is so rich that the money cannot be spent. Food is provided for all the sick and infirm; employment for all the able-bodied. Still funds are accumulating; and last week upwards of four and a

half lacs of rupces (£45,000) were in hand for the Agra district alone.

"We have had most early and refreshing rains, though the weather has cleared up, and only in very few places has the ground been sufficiently soaked to admit of sowing. Still I cannot but regard this noble outburst of benevolence in the English nation as somewhat premature. Should Providence favour us with early and abundant rains, it will not be needed, and at present appearances are promising. If, however, another scarce harvest follows, then all your sympathy and benevolence will be taxed to the utmost. In the meantime, please express our sincere and heartfelt thanks to the noble donors of this liberal and spontaneous gift, and tell them the money shall, to the best of my judgment and power, be carefully and judiciously expended. For the present I shall husband it, and should *all* not be required by the necessities of the Famine, it will in the course of time be found very useful, as we always have a large number of deserving poor to whom relief is alike acceptable and necessary.

"In the meantime, I am spending a portion of this sum in a way that will gladden and relieve many native Christians in very straitened circumstances, and others not Christians who are in absolute want. Immediately on the receipt of your draft, I sent off a messenger to Mr. Williams, of Chitoura, placing Rs.

100 at his disposal for the poor. He has no native Christians, but has daily many applicants, chiefly travellers on their way to Agra, for relief. I requested Mrs. Gregson to inquire after all the needy in our Christian village. She has already done so. A large part of our native Christians are in employment that barely brings them in the necessities of life. Several families are absolutely destitute, owing to sickness or other causes; others are out of employment. Now to give *money* is not usually a judicious mode of relief. We are therefore going to assist in other ways. We can count about ten men,—three or four being heads of families,—twenty-two or twenty-four women, and *forty-nine* children, including orphans, who need clothes. Mrs. Gregson has already bought cloth, (though your letter only came last night,) and has summoned some of the native Christian women to make up clothes for the number. Others, who have been obliged to sell articles of household utility to buy food, shall have the articles replaced; and when it is really requisite, food or money to buy food shall be given. Now, if the worthy donors could really see the joy which these little acts

of kindness will impart to scores of souls, I am sure they would feel amply repaid for any sacrifice they may have made. To several also who have been forced to get into debt—a thing which I perpetually and most earnestly admonish them not to do—I may render some aid; and finally, I suppose I shall not act contrary to the wishes of the donors in giving a small sum to several widows, (East Indians, not natives,) or poor people who have seen better days, but are now, chiefly through the pressure of the famine, much straitened. Still, when I have done all this, the great bulk of what you have sent will be still in hand, to be subsequently applied as may seem best. In the distribution of alms, it should, I think, be our great object to render really efficient aid without destroying the spirit of self-reliance or fostering a spirit of pauperism. In this country as in all countries, and as so painfully exemplified in the Irish famine, this is very difficult.

“I conclude with tendering to yourselves and the Committee, and all the kind donors, the sincere and heartfelt thanks of myself, my dear wife, and all the benefited ones.”

In Delhi the distress was much greater; but very efficient measures were taken by the local authorities to meet it. Our two brethren, the Revs. Thomas Evans and J. Parsons, were made Secretaries of the local fund, and have most laboriously and efficiently discharged the duties devolved upon them. A similar sum to that sent to Agra was sent to Mr. Evans, and he states that the gift of Major Conran, with the donations of others, has enabled him to meet the distress of all the native Christians. They have also, in common with others, been relieved from the general famine fund.

From the Report published by the Delhi Relief Committee, we find that for the relief of the destitute a large enclosure outside the Delhi Gate was fixed upon as the place of distribution of food to those furnished with tickets. In the buildings around was found an asylum for the homeless and infirm. Five hundred and eighty-six persons were relieved on the 1st January, and ere long nearly six thousand persons were in daily receipt of food at this place alone. Other places were also fixed upon for the same purpose. At the Ede Gah Asylum, where Mr. Broadway superintended the distribution, about eight thousand poor were daily fed. Nearly all received cooked food, while bread was given to a few of the higher castes. Some of the scenes of distress were very painful. One instance is mentioned when four cartloads of poor, starved, aged, and sick persons were picked up in one morning between two of the city gates. It is gratifying to know that the liberality of England at this juncture is producing the most pleasing results, in the allaying the animosities in the native mind produced by the mutiny, and in rendering the people more willing to listen to the word of life.

JAMAICA.

BROWN'S TOWN.

In a former Number we gave some particulars of the remarkable events transpiring at this station, and of some extravagances which had attended the work of God. In a letter, lately received, Mr. Clark informs us that these evils have subsided. He says, “I have received upwards of 400 inquirers and applicants for restoration to church fellowship, and have had probably 200

more to talk with me about their souls. Our services are not now interrupted, nor are so many persons prostrated. But the chapels are crowded, and the people listen to the truth with the deepest interest, join with earnestness and importunity in prayer, and sometimes tell of what God has done for their souls with gratitude and joy." In the manifold labours attendant on other services and events, Mr. Clark has enjoyed the assistance of Mr. Webb, one of the Calabar students. His labours have been greatly appreciated by the people.

FRANCE.

BRITTANY.

Our esteemed missionary, Mr. Jenkins, has completed the purchase of a piece of ground in the neighbourhood of Tremel, on which to erect a house, and a Breton place of worship. It was in 1858 that he visited Wales, and collected a sum of money for this purpose. The locality is very favourable for missionary work. The district has been visited for several years for the purpose of distributing the Scriptures, and it is the centre of considerable movement towards the reception of the Gospel. The teaching goes on well. There are thirty persons taking daily lessons. Marie Ricou devotes her time to this work. Writing on the 15th February, Mr. Jenkins says;—"We go on with our labours with considerable encouragement. The Scripture reader finds everywhere good access to the people in the country, and opportunities to read and explain the Gospel in a large majority of the houses. Often he has interesting conversations. He also succeeds in selling Testaments, and in distributing tracts. I am able to say that the Protestants are esteemed in the country as religious good people. Our Scripture reader has not been insulted anywhere. No thanks to the priest, who used to say that the Bas-Breton detested Protestants and the English. I preached lately in Maesgonnez Chapel to a large number of people. The priest of the parish preached violently against us. The Scripture reader will shortly visit this parish. No parish has been more powerfully shaken than this one." Mr. Jenkins will be happy to receive contributions towards the erection of the chapel at Tremel.

EDUCATION IN JAMAICA.

DURING the recent visit of the Deputation of the Baptist Missionary Society to Jamaica, the question of the education of the people received their serious attention, especially in connection with the churches planted by the agents of the Society. The statistics of the day-schools connected with the various stations show that there were existing seventy-two schools, having on their books 4,144 children, with 3,128 in average attendance. On the other hand, more than *ten thousand* children are found in the Sunday-schools of the same stations.

Pleasing as is this last fact, it shows, however, that the proportion of children under daily instruction is far beneath what it ought to be. The proportion would be found still more deplorable if the numbers of the general population were brought under consideration. The causes of this low condition of daily instruction are various. It is to some extent attributable to the great distance at which the people live from the schools, while during a portion of the year the rains render the schools difficult of access for young children. Then again, as in England, many parents are attracted by the wages the children can earn, or the work they can do, to send them to the field, and some are too poor to avail themselves of the means within their reach. There is also a very considerable difficulty in obtaining good teachers; and when obtained, they are often soon drawn off into more remunerative employments, as their salaries are both precarious and small. In some instances, the schoolmasters have been partly supported from the funds devoted to the maintenance of the

pastors, and in a few cases, the schools have been given up, because this could no longer be done without sacrificing altogether the services of the minister.

The schools in question are supported, partly by the fees of the children, by very limited local subscriptions, by the contributions of a few friends in England, and in the case of three or four only, by grants in aid from the Island Treasury. The members of the Society of Friends in this country, have been the most liberal and persistent helpers in this good work. But while the European ministers have been able partially to sustain their schools by appeals to England, this resource is scarcely open to the native born ministers, who are generally unknown to the advocates of negro education here. These especially feel the want of assistance in their struggle to elevate their fellow-countrymen.

But although the want of further means of education is obvious and peremptory, the efforts of the past have been both most useful and considerable. As an illustration may be quoted the instance of Salter's Hill day-schools, under the direction of that constant and ardent friend of the education of the negro, the Rev. Walter Dendy. The number of Scholars who have been admitted into that one school in the twenty-four years of its existence, is 1,023; and into the schools at the out-stations, 2,052; making a total of 3,075: a number nearly equal to that reported as being under instruction throughout the whole island in the year previous to Emancipation. The influence of this on the neighbourhood may be seen in the fact, that when Mr. Dendy first settled at Salter's Hill, twenty-five years ago, he found only *three* persons who could read among *five thousand*. Two years ago he made inquiry among the same number of individuals, and found that over 1,700 could read.

The value of the education already given has been strikingly seen during the progress of the recent religious movement which has traversed the island. We quote the following from a letter addressed by the Jamaica Baptist Union to the Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society:—"The truth seems to have lain dead in the minds of many until the showers of the Spirit descended, and now in many places it is springing in beauty and strength. While the still greater multitudes who have received no religious training are the victims of superstition, or indulge in the wildest excitement, never were the evils of popular ignorance, nor the good effects of religious teaching, more strikingly manifested than during this great revival. Never, therefore, did we feel more deeply the necessity of placing the means of Christian instruction within the reach of our people, many of whom have no schools within eight, ten, and even twelve miles of their home."

The Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society, yielding to the wish of their friends, propose, therefore, to make themselves the medium of conveying to the schools such assistance as they may be furnished with by the friends of education in Jamaica. For this purpose they solicit contributions and annual subscriptions, to be appropriated as the wants of the schools may require.

The schools are carried on, on the plan of the British and Foreign School Society, and are open without distinction to children of all denominations. The "Jamaica Day School Fund" will be kept entirely distinct from every other fund of the Baptist Missionary Society, and a separate report of its administration will be forwarded annually to all contributors. Appropriations will be limited to the amount of funds entrusted to their care. Soliciting your kind support, we remain, yours most truly and obediently,

FREDERICK TRESTRAIL, } Secretaries of Baptist
EDWARD B. UNDERHILL, } Missionary Society.

HOME PROCEEDINGS.

MR. HEWETT and Mr. Sale have attended meetings at Tewkesbury and Westmancote; and Mr. Trestrail, joined Mr. Sale at St. Alban's. Mr. Hewett has also been the Society's representative to the West Gloucestershire Auxiliary. Mr. Phillips has visited a large part of the West and North Ridings of Yorkshire, forming Auxiliaries where they have not hitherto existed, and seeking to revive those that needed a fresh stimulus. In this work he has had a goodly measure of success. Mr. Underhill has visited Ireland, and his journey will extend into the first week of the current month.

During the past month a designation service, in connection with Mr. Kingdon's departure for Jamaica, was held at Dereham, in Norfolk. We are informed that Mr. Kingdon's statement was very interesting; that the charge was given by Mr. Whitley; the field described by Mr. Hewett; and that Messrs. Williams (Independent), of Dereham, Woods, of Swaffham, and Wigner, of Lynn, took part in the service.

It is intended to hold a similar service at Camberwell on the 5th inst., to commend our brethren, Page and Rouse, to the Divine blessing and care. We hope that Dr. Angus, Revs. J. H. Hinton, C. Stanford, and other brethren, will take part in the service. We are sorry to have to state that severe and prolonged indisposition will prevent Dr. Steane from uniting in the service, which will be a source of deep regret to our friends. May our beloved and honoured friend soon be restored to his wonted health; and enjoy, during his season of affliction, the presence and blessing of Almighty God!

We have sincere pleasure in announcing that Mr. Peacock, a member of the Church meeting in Vernon Chapel, has been accepted for mission service in Africa, and will probably sail in about a month. Mr. Saker's duties are far too onerous for his weakly frame in such a climate. Mr. Peacock, who has passed some years of his life in the bush amongst the natives of Australia, will, we trust, be able to relieve Mr. Saker of some of the heavier portion of his manual labours, whereby he will be able to give more undivided attention to his higher duties.

We are very much concerned to learn that, owing to recent events in the United States, the missions supported in France and Germany by American organizations have been deprived of the assistance they have hitherto enjoyed. An appeal has been made by M. Dez, pastor of the Baptist Church in Paris, and forwarded to us by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel. The subject was brought before the Committee at the last Quarterly Meeting; and Mr. Oncken from Hamburgh was present, and supplied some deeply interesting information respecting the work now carried on. A long and anxious consideration was given to this painful subject, and all present manifested a strong desire to help these missions, so suddenly deprived of their accustomed support. But it was seen that the pecuniary assistance required could not be granted, and the Committee, though most reluctantly, felt compelled to pass the subjoined resolution:—

“That this Committee have heard with sorrow of the difficulties into which the Mission Churches of France and Germany have been thrown by the untoward events

passing in the United States; but at the same time have to express their regret that the state of the funds of the Society, and the demands upon them, preclude them from rendering any pecuniary assistance, or taking upon themselves the burden of their support."

We are glad to find some of our churches in Scotland are doing something to help our Continental brethren in this emergency; and should any friends who may become acquainted with these painful circumstances feel disposed to help, we shall gladly receive and forward any contributions which may be sent for this object.

FOREIGN LETTERS RECEIVED.

- AFRICA**—CAMEROONS, Diboll, J., Mar. 23, April 25, May 28; Fuller, J. J., April 30, May 31; Milbourne, T. K., Mar. 30, April 2; Saker, A., Mar. 29, April 2, 30, May 31; Smith, R., April 2, May 1, 30.
- GRAHAM'S TOWN, Nelson, T., April 15.
- VICTORIA, Pinnock, F., April 22, May 25.
- AMERICA**—ALBANY, Rycroft, W. K., June 10.
- NEW YORK, Brown, N., April 30; Haynes, B. C., April 9; Mezz, C. C., June 12.
- ASIA**—AGRA, Gregson, J., Mar. 20, April 3, May 1, June 3, 5; Rose, T., Mar. 20, April 17.
- BENARES, Heinig, E., April 30; Parsons, J., May 16.
- CALCUTTA, Cowen, M. E., Mar. 23; Lewis, C. B., Mar. 7, 7, 18, April 10, May 3, 8 (two letters), 22, June 3, 8; Lewis, C. B., and others, May 7; Rose, T., May 17.
- CHURAMONCOTTEE, Hobbs, W. A., May 18.
- COLOMBO, Allen, J., Mar. 28, April 29.
- DACCA, Bion, R., May 3.
- DELHI, Evans, T., April 20, June 5; Parsons, J., April 5, 30.
- DINAGEPORE, McKenna, A., Mar. 28, May 1.
- GYA, Greiffe, E., April 5.
- HOWRAH, Morgan, T., April 22.
- JESSORE, Anderson, J. H., May 17.
- KHOOLNEAH, Anderson, J. H., May 31.
- LANDOUR, Parsons, J., May 16.
- MADRAS, Steevens, G., and Thomas, W., May 11.
- MONGHYR, Gregson, J. G., April 3; Lawrence, J., Dec. 5.
- POONAH, Cassidy, H. P., April 12.
- SEWRY, Ellis, R. J., April 18.
- SHANGHAI, Hall, C. J., April 11; Kloekers, H. Z., April 13.
- SHUVANY HILLS, Claxton, W. A., April 30.
- AUSTRALIA**—MELBOURNE, Kerr, R., April 25.
- BAHAMAS**—CAICOS, Kerr, S., April 3.
- GRAND CAY, Rycroft, W. K., April 13. Littlewood, W., May 22.
- INAGUA, Littlewood, W. K., April 30.
- NASSAU, Davey, J., April 15, June 7.
- TURK'S ISLANDS, Rycroft, W., April.
- FRANCE**—MONTAUBAN, Monod, A. W., July 6.
- MORLAIX, Jenkins, J., May 23, June 21.
- PARIS, Dez, A., May 29; Monod, F., April 22.
- PASSY, Baumann, W., May 27.
- HAITI**—JACMEL, Webley, W. H., May 8.
- JAMAICA**—ANNOTTO BAY, Jones S., Jan. 22, June 7.
- BROWN'S TOWN, Clark, J., April 23, May 8, June 6.
- CALABAR, East, D. J., April 23 (two letters), May 6, 21.
- FOUR PATHS, Claydon, W., May 23.
- HAYES, Duckett, A., May 13.
- KETERING, Fray, E., April 8, May 8, May 23, June 7.
- KINGSTON, Merrick, E., April 24, May 23; Oughton, S., April 19.
- LUCEA, Teall, W., April 18.
- MANDEVILLE, Claydon, W., June 6.
- MORTEGO BAY, Henderson, J. E., April 22; Reid, J., April 8.
- MOUNT HEPHZIBAH, Oughton, S., no date.
- PORT MARIA, Day, D., May 15, June 6.
- ST. ANN'S BAY, Millard, B., May 23.
- SALTER'S HILL, Dendy, W., April 19, May 7.
- SPANISH TOWN, Phillippo, J. M., May 30; Phillippo, H. E., April 9.
- STEWARTON, Knibb, M., May 8, 23.
- SWITZERLAND**—LAUSANNE, Baumann, W., June 29.
- TRINIDAD**—Law, J., May 6, 24, June 6.
- PORT OF SPAIN, Gamble, W. H., May 8.
- SAN FERNANDO, Gamble, W. H., June 6.

