HOW TO IMPROVE OUR CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

The two first books placed in the hands of our Native converts and their children are the Bible and the Hymn-book. To use the first they must be taught to read, to use the second they must be able not only to read but to sing, and, in the case of English metres, to sing if possible in our English style.

What is the ordinary mode of procedure in teaching our tunes? As far as my own experience goes such work is usually shirked by the missionary and handed over to his more patient wife, who gathers the learners round the harmonium or piano and plays the tune over once with all parts, treble, alto, tenor and bass.

Now, however harmonious this may be to a trained English ear it is simply unintelligible to our native friends, and they doubtless wonder why the lady confuses them by striking several notes at once while they have to do with only one; in other words they cannot separate the air of the tune from the other parts as we can.

The next step then is to play the air only, very slowly, two or three times, after which all are told to join in.

But alas! their memory cannot stand the strain, out of
Our Congregational Singing.

the whole class only two or three can remember the sounds and follow the teacher; to keep the hymn going, and to inspire courage, the teacher sings louder and still louder, and plays as "staccato" as possible — to conclude this painful subject, at the end of half-an-hour the class may have obtained a dim notion of the new tune, and if brought together for another practice before too many days pass, may be able to improve that knowledge by repeating the learning process, but at what a cost of time and labour has this result been secured!

The half hour was anything but pleasant; the teacher may have lost patience and accused the children of being stupid and inattentive; almost certainly she left off with a strained voice; possibly with a headache for the rest of the day. In India one cannot try to out-sing twenty children for half-an-hour without paying some penalty.

But a more common way is for our native children to learn the tunes in vogue from parents or teachers, who were themselves taught many years ago by our revered predecessors, and the result is striking. Not only do we find tunes in use that were already old fashioned in the days of our boyhood, but those tunes, through the forgetfulness of their custodians, have become strangely altered, and, what is serious, there is little hope of correcting errors of such long standing.

We clearly want a system that shall enable our people to learn, and the Missionary to teach, any ordinary hymn-tune, without straining the voice and losing the temper and wasting time, and, if the Native Christians can be put in the way of reading such tunes from a cheap printed book, we shall be safe from any of those gratuitous additions and alterations to which I have referred, which indeed are inseparable from any system of tradition such as that on which we have hitherto relied.

I think the case is exactly met by the Tonic Sol-Fa system of singing. I am not desirous to enter into any lengthy account of the method, for doubtless many of the readers of the Harvest Field know more about it than I do, but I propose stating briefly the result of about six months' trial of this mode of singing with a class of 120 village children from our Famine Orphanage.

It may encourage others, to know that the system was quite new to myself. The book used is, however, so well written, and the details of teaching are so thoroughly
explained, that any one, with a fairly good ear, ought to be able to teach a class without serious difficulty.

We began our class in July 1881, the lesson lasted usually three quarters of an hour; there have been many unavoidable breaks, sometimes of a couple of months or more, but the time actually employed has been not more than six months.

At the end of the first month the children knew all the notes not including flats and sharps, and could sing them from the modulator, the teacher dodging them, and confining them to easy intervals. They knew the first eleven exercises, containing rounds for three and four voices. They had learnt a duet, sol-faing it, not singing the words, as they are in English. They knew a new hymn tune from Sankey's collection, having learnt it from the black-board. They had also acquired a slight knowledge of time as well as tune.

This was a good result, and I am confident that, teacher and children being equal, nothing like it could be obtained from the old way of teaching music. Hitherto we had used Kanarese letters for our practice, but as such a step would have closed all English tune books to the children, I acted on the advise of my friend the Rev. Ellis Roberts, a first rate Tonic sol-faist, and now taught the ordinary English letters d, r, m, f, &c.

Now, too, we divided the children into two classes, after a careful oral examination, and the sharper scholars, being no longer encumbered with the "tag-rag and bob-tail," made very rapid progress.

We reviewed the first month's work with care. My wife gave valuable help in attending to their voices and getting the children to open their mouths properly. Best of all, it was now possible to write out, on the black-board, any tune in which they made mistakes, and effectually to correct them. For example, in the tune "Hursley," usually sung to "Sun of my soul," they were sadly wrong both in time and tune (as very many English folks would be without the organ to help them), and they had been wrong for two or three years, but half-an-hour with the black-board set them right.

It soon became tedious to have to do so much copying and to depend so largely on the black-board which was often required for other purposes — a printed tune book was required, and we obtained a supply of "The new child's own tune book" in the Tonic sol-fa notation, from...
Our Congregational Singing.

Messrs. Curwen of London. This book costs 6d. and contains about a hundred tunes arranged in four parts.

We are now reaping the practical benefit from all our labour. With the tune book in their hands and the words of the hymn, in Kanarese, in their head, the children can learn any ordinary tune after two or three lessons; singing of course only the air; the second, or alto, they will I hope be able to sing in a few weeks more.

I promised that any boy or girl who could, unaided, sing a new tune from the book, without serious mistakes, at first sight, should receive the book as a reward; in one week six girls have taken this examination and own the much coveted prize!

I need scarcely add anything to prove the advantages of such a system. To myself it has been most useful; though frequently a sufferer from a delicate throat I have found no discomfort in teaching this large class, since a fundamental rule of the method forbids the teacher ever to sing with his pupils. He may therefore show what has to be done as softly as possible and then, without any vocal effort, make the children do the same.

Energy and effort no doubt there must be on the part of the teacher, but any fatigue that may result is felt generally, and not, as is usually the case locally, in the unfortunate man's throat and head.

To any one objecting that such teaching will interfere with the native style of lyric singing I would reply that it is about time we did interfere with that style. By all means let our people sing their Christian lyrics, but by some means let us try to induce them to sing with the mouth and not through the nose. We have two classes of music, vocal and instrumental; our Native friends know only "instrumental and nasal." In practice, we find our orphans, who are gradually learning to sing through their mouths, have improved almost as much in their lyric as in their hymn-singing.

The least hopeful of our congregations are the old people, and, I fear I must add, our Native Ministers and Catechists. It is not their fault but their misfortune. I have not hitherto heard any sweet singing in any Native Christian congregation. Surely, in such an important work as the service of praise, it is time we took our people in hand, and to do so with any hope of success we must attend to our young men and the children.
Our Congregational Singing.

I had no idea of writing so fully on this topic, but, in the hope that there may be some who, like myself, have felt the difficulty, and are disposed to make the effort to improve our congregational singing, I will conclude my paper with a few hints as to the apparatus needed and the actual task of teaching.

"The standard course of lessons on the Tonic sol-fa method" price 1s. 6d., is invaluable: it contains all the information needed. A "modulator," that is, a scale or diagram representing the notes in their places and at the proper intervals. This must be large and clear. At first the letters may be charcoaled on a white-washed wall, but a cleaner way is to make one from a long narrow board, pasting letters on it, say white paper letters on a ground of blue paper. A tuning-fork is desirable, and, in the absence of an instrument, indispensable. An ordinary black-board and plenty of chalk. The black-board cannot be used too frequently.

So much for the modest apparatus. In teaching, it is needful to insist strictly and always on pleasant faces and open mouths; the latter is obvious, but the former is of more importance than at first sight appears.

The children should be made to sit in lines, or in separate batches, and each set must be frequently exercised alone to prevent them from leaning on the others for help. No shouting should be tolerated: I have found it very difficult to get them to sing softly, but the improvement is immediate when once this point is gained.

I find Native children begin to yawn after ten minutes of sustained attention. It is therefore of vital importance to make the lesson lively and short. The same rule applies to singing and sermonizing!

I put the most important hint last, that is with regard to the "modulator." This seems to me the beginning, the middle and the end of Tonic sol-fa instruction. No exercise must be taught, and no hymn tune learnt until it has been rehearsed over and over again with the large modulator.

All further information can be got from the "Standard Course," every sentence of which contains some useful hint.

As I am no professional musician the unfriendly critic will I fear find room for mirth in these pages, but herein is one great cause for encouragement, that without a musical training we outsiders may at least master for ourselves
and teach our Native children the elements of congregational singing. That which is so frequently regarded as a mysterious and occult science is thus brought within the reach of all; children taken at random from an Indian village are now able to sing the ordinary hymn music at sight. As a Native gentleman remarked after hearing my boys and girls "Why, Sir, in that case, even we may learn to sing!"

The promoters of the Tonic Sol-Fa method have well chosen the motto that adorns their publications which describes the system as EASY—CHEAP—AND TRUE.

A. P. R.

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE TIMES OF THE RIG VEDA.

By the Rev. W. O. Simpson.

(Continued from page 306.)

Nor unfrequently worse foes than the wild beasts, burst upon the herds; large bands of armed men, from the neighbouring and hostile tribes, burst upon the pastures or the cow-pens and carried off the cattle. Then the Aryans, calling upon Indra, would rush forth and there would be battles about the cow-pens. If the dark-coloured foes were successful, a search was instituted; attempts were made at recovery and reprisal. We have frequent references to an incident occurring in such an enterprise. The Aryans sought their stolen herds at night, when the sky was heavy with thunder; they skirted the foot of a range of hills, peeping into cavern and ravine for their kine; suddenly a vivid flash of lightning spread a momentary glare; it was enough, there were the frightened beasts; with shouts of thanks to Indra, they were recovered and driven home.

Sanskrit scholars tell us that in the language of the people we have testimony to this old pastoral life, even long after it had ceased to be a characteristic of the Aryan race. Words originally belonging to the fold, the stall or the pasture grew with the growth of the people and came to be used in reference to the relations of a much higher stage of civilization. Let me give you an instance or two. In Sanskrit, the word Go-pa means originally a cow-herd; it grew to signify the head of a cow-pen, a herdsman; lastly it came to signify a king; just as in other languages, we have
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

a monarch styled the shepherd of his people. Go-tra meant a hurdle, and was applied to the fences erected to protect the herd from violence or prevent them from straying. Around these hurdles as we have seen, frequent conflicts took place; the hurdles grew into walls, which enclosed people as well as cattle and the word Go-tra came to signify a fortress. But these fortresses clannned the people into sections and they spoke of each other as belonging to such and such a fortress; and the word Go-tra came to signify a tribe, a family, a race. The Brahman boasting of his sacred blood and divine generation, speaks of the particular Go-tra to which he belongs, little dreaming that the word is itself a testimony that the fathers of his race were herdsmen, its mothers butter-women and its daughters milkmaids.

We have evidence that the people paid also some attention to agriculture. They cleared the ground of trees by fire and the axe. They had digging tools and ploughs. Barley is frequently mentioned; the gods are intreated to bestow good crops of grain; there were granaries in which it was stored. We read of a waggon and its oxen, and of carts returning from the field laden with sheaves. As, further on, the Rishis pray that extensive lands might be attached to their cities, we may conclude that as the population increased and the colonies became more settled, greater attention than at first, was paid to the production of crops of grain.

Let us turn from agriculture to trade. We have allusions to the hard bargains of traffickers; to their niggardliness, and want of devotion: they sleep on, whilst their better disposed neighbours are busy, grinding the Soma plant for the sacrifice to Agni. We also read of merchants who, for the sake of gain, crowd the ocean in ships; altogether there is a tone of depreciation when these men of the world are spoken of. It is evident, however, that in process of time, shopkeepers and bazaar men became influential members in the community. In the latter hymns there are lamentable references to debt. One worshipper has evidently been threatened with legal proceedings. He tells Varuna that he is involved in his ancestors' debts and his own; that he has been alarmed and he prays to be delivered from a thief and a wolf, probably indicating by these polite expressions, his powerful creditor. Prosperity is anticipated from the rain of heaven: a hint perhaps, that debts were contracted before sowing season to be cancelled after harvest.
We turn next to the art of war. The Aryans were constantly at strife with their neighbours and the art of war progressed amongst them with more rapidity than the accomplishments of peace. Indra was the Mars of the period. The gathering storm-clouds in the sky; the roll of thunder; the glare of lightning; the rush of fierce winds; in fact, the strife of the elements impressed the imagination as a type of the strife of men. Indra was invoked ere the Aryan soldier marched from his village to meet the foe. They had envoys and heralds, who we may suppose, were employed in small acts of diplomacy prior to a war and during its continuance. When a battle drew on, the Aryan chief could muster an army both of cavalry and infantry, and send it into action divided into companies; chariots drawn by horses, carrying two or more men, played an important part. Banners waved and conch-shells sounded the war cry. Amidst the turmoil, cries of invocation went up to Indra, the storm-god. The Aryan soldier was defended by quilted armour, by coats of mail or iron armour; by helmet and by shield. For weapons of attack he had bow and arrows; darts, spears and lances; clubs and swords. Personal prowess found room in such conflicts, and the hymns mention several heroes whose names were as familiar in the mouths of the people as those of the Black Prince and the men of Agincourt or Poictiers, to the men of merry England. Wealth for the herdsmen’s homes, pastures for their flocks were acquired in fight; captives and conquered people appeared to have been reduced to slavery;—the Sudras of the caste system. The victor is said to return home with bounding steeds; he enjoyed his triumph; it was as much to him as the march into Rome was to Caesar or Trajan. The enemies, with whom the Aryans had to contend are generally termed Dāsyuns; thieves, robbers. They are repeatedly referred to as impious and irreligious; opponents of the Aryan worship, having no worship themselves, annoying and harassing those that had. They were men of flesh and blood: black skinned; they had armies and fortified cities; knew how to fight; not unfrequently succeeded in routing the Aryans, capturing their chiefs and harrying their farm steeds. Not without a struggle did the indigenous population of upper India give up possession of their ancestral lands. Purānic poetry has magnified these foes of the Rishis into giants and ogres, Rākshasas, Yakshasas and what not; hiding from us, men;
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

—darkening counsel by words without knowledge. There was no lack of martial fire and military strength, as far as means went, amongst the men who herded cattle in the valleys of the Punjab.

From the materials already furnished, you will be able to form a conception of the industrial classes, found in an Aryan community, at least when civilization was somewhat advanced. There were goldsmiths and blacksmiths; wheelwrights and carpenters; weavers and potters; butchers and barbers. Even in these early times, the seller of intoxicating liquors had his bazaar, and private tipplers left their leathern bottles in his charge and called for them, when convenient.

We may dismiss the criminal population in a few words. Gamblers played for filthy lucre; as there was drink and plenty of it, we may infer there were drunkards; dishonesty had its pickpockets, burglars, thieves and highway robbers; and vice, its prostitutes, seducing the youth with an open show of blandishments, as the lightnings, we are told, "play with and caress the clouds."

We have reserved under this division of our subject, two points worthy of especial consideration. I mean the position of woman, in the Aryan communities, and the question of caste. All we know of the youthful life of a woman in an Aryan family is the name bestowed upon her before marriage. She was the milk-maid and dairy-woman of the home. This silence is itself significant: for surely if baby marriages, as they have been well called, were imperative or even common, there must have been some reference to them occurring. There is much evidence however of an opposite character. Where brides are mentioned, it is in connection with many hints that they had passed from girlhood to maidenhood. We have one allusion to the Swayambara,—the public choice of a husband by a maiden, such as is so beautifully described in the history of Damayanti. Moreover we have it distinctly stated that a daughter, who should remain at home unmarried, should share in the paternal property:—a proof that old maids formed a class in the female portion of the Aryan community. We have a story of Kakshivat who married ten daughters of one father, some of whom must have been of ripe years, and another of the sage Shyāva, who became enamoured of the upgrown daughter of another sage; both prove that in those days it was no disgrace to a father to keep his daughter unmarried, and no disgrace to a lover to ask her for a
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

wife. A young man bought his bride with a dowry. The wife was occupied for the most part in household duties; she went to the well for water, was up first in the morning, summoned the members of the family to their various tasks and occupied herself during the day in the operations of the kitchen. Dignities now denied to her were then freely granted: she shared with her husband in the rites of sacrifice and oblation; with him, she listened to the vedic rhymes and joined with him in chanting them. In the displays too that went to relieve the monotony of rural life, when the chariot of the family was ordered out, the wife rode by the side of her lord and husband. Bigamy and polygamy were common—the source of domestic strife; for the two wives of one man are spoken of as rivals. We may conclude then that baby marriages were not imperative in Vedic times; that husband and wife shared together the responsibilities of home and were partners together in all the religious and intellectual life, for which their times gave them scope.

Now as to the question of Caste. There does not appear the slightest proof that in the days of the early Aryan settlers, there was amongst them any such Institution as that of caste, as it exists at present amongst us. There are allusions to the inhabitants of the earth as divided into five classes of beings, and of course when a Brahman commentator comes upon these passages, he jumps at once to the conclusion that these five classes are the four-castes and the out-castes. But a little reflection will prove this to be untenable. For in the first half of the Rig Veda, or the 240 hymns which have passed under review, the terms Kshatriya and Sudra do not occur at all; the Naishadas or barbarians were foes to the Aryans. The Sudras and Naishadas were not parts of the community then, and could not be included in the phrase “five classes.” Again the reference is to the whole earth; and to “beings,” for the phrase may so be rendered. Hence some Brahman commentators feel the difficulty of the usual interpretation, and affirm that the five classes of beings are Gandharvas, Pitris, Devas, Asuras and Rákshasas. This interpretation appears most in consonance with the tenor of the Vedic Hymns.

Dr. Wilson of Bombay, in speaking on this subject, has so well arranged the points that I cannot do better than draw on his material; condensing his paragraphs into
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

general heads, which you must weigh and investigate for yourselves.*

1. The Brahmans are represented in the Vedas merely as a profession, not as a Caste. They claim no superiority of birth over other classes of the community. They were merely priests and in the title given them there is no more of caste or blood distinction than in our modern title "clergyman."

2. The Rishis were the ecclesiastical nobles of the community. Yet they were paid servants of anyone who chose to employ them. Kings even were Rishis; to wit, Viswanitra, and Jamadagni, whom subsequent Puranic fables, concocted by the Brahmans, affirm to have been raised to the dignity of Brahmans, by mantras or tantras, tricks of Brahmanical trade, pious frauds upon history.

3. Rishis and Brahmans intermarry with other castes. For Kakshivat, to whom reference has already been made, married the ten daughters of a Kshatriya or sovereign, brought home his wives with ample marriage gifts, did not find himself tabooed for the step, but thanked the gods in a Vedic hymn for the good fortune which had fallen to him. His mother by the way was said to have been the daughter of a slave.

4. The term Kshatriya was not the name of a class, but of one possessed of power.

5. In like manner, the term Vaishya meant a householder.

6. The Sudras, when they were brought within the community, were from a conquered nation, living on the banks of the Indus, to whom even classical authors refer.

7. In the time of the Vedas, the idea of the God, Brahma, from whose head, arms, thighs and feet, the four original castes of the Hindus are said to have been derived, was neither developed nor formed. The Brahmans framed him for their own purposes.

8. The system of defilement by touch or by eating and drinking is not recognized in the Vedas in a single instance.

An apology indeed for caste is found in the hymn of the Primeval Male, found nearly at the close of the Rig Veda. But men who know best how to judge, say that it ought not to be there at all;—that it has been put there in after

*India, Three Thousand years ago, p. 45.
times, by unscrupulous men to help on their own evil purposes. For the language of which it is composed and the ideas of which it is the vehicle are at variance with all that goes before. In this hymn, which time will not suffer me to quote at length, God is represented as an enormous male, whose body is the whole universe formed from him when offered in sacrifice. The moon was his mind; the sun, his eye; Indra and Agni came from his mouth; Vayu from his breath; from his navel came the atmosphere; from his head, the sky; from his feet, the earth, &c. In the midst of imagery like this, comes this verse. "The Brahman was his mouth; the Rajanya was made his arms; that which was the Vaishya was his thighs; the Sudra sprang from his feet." This is but a clumsy allegory;—in which all parts creation are supposed to be members in the body of the first male or God. Sun, moon, fire, rain are thus parts of God. With some degree of propriety the teachers of the people are his mouth; the defenders of the people are his arms; the wealthy class, the support of the people, are the thighs; the workmen of the the people, busy of movement, are his feet. This fancy is of a very awkward kind, and to take it all for truth, to claim diversity of birth and blood upon such a fable, is just as reasonable as to believe that in the phrase "the body politic" we affirm that the state has an actual physical form, that "war" is a monster whose sinews are of wrought gold, because we call wealth the "sinews of war." Yet this fable, the Brahmans so enlarged and reiterated that they got it believed at last. In the genuine Veda, we have no trace of caste, as caste now exists.

How then did this monstrous system develop? In the strife of class with class and race with race. A strife of the same kind amongst the western branches of the Aryan race, in Greece for instance, free from the influence of an overweening priesthood, fought itself right, fought its way to the downfall of tyrannies and the construction of republics, the influence whereof is felt in Europe to this day. But in the religious tendencies of the Eastern Aryans, in their quiet, meditative character, the priesthood found grand engines for their work; from sacrificers they became teachers, councillors, lawgivers, gods. Their domination was completed when under Parasu Rama, the powerful military class succumbed. Then a minute system of social tyranny was riveted on the Hindu people beneath which they groan
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

A system then, is this, built upon a lie; in itself, a sham; to be seen through and exposed and done away with as soon as those who ought to see, will see; as those who ought to speak, speak out strongly; as those who ought to act, have courage enough to set about the thing in good earnest.

Without apology and without preface I will now enter upon the second branch of my subject: the religious life of the Rig Veda. The Gods of the Veda are said to be three and thirty; eleven on earth, eleven in heaven, eleven in mid-air. The sphere of devotion was limited enough, beginning with the dust beneath our feet, terminating with the sky above our heads. With a wonderful stretch of superstitious voracity and by a wonderful process of arithmetic, modern Hindus have crowded this sphere with actors enough, multiplying the thirty-three of their ancestors into three hundred and thirty millions for their own use. Out of the two hundred and forty hymns which compose the first half of the Rig Veda, seventy-three are addressed to Indra, sixty to Agni, or 133 to these two deities alone. Besides these, they have many more hymns addressed to them in combination with other deities. These two, then, were the Dei majores, the great gods of primitive Hindus. Varuna is next in importance. Indra, Agni, and Varuna may be called the Triad of Aryan heathenism. They shall suffice us for illustration. I will give a general description of the character of each and a few specimens of the style in which they were addressed.

Indra then is Lord of the sky; all the varied changes which pass over the face of heaven, especially in storm and tempest, are his work. He is invoked as the bestower of fertilising showers. These ideas are thrown out into bold personification. The dark purple cloud, brooding over earth, is Vritra, an enemy, retaining stolen treasures in that gloomy prison-house. Indra advances against him. The great white clouds are his vehicle; the lightning is his only weapon; he hurls it, and with shine and glister it lights up the dark face of the foe; penetrates, wounds, sever's him into fragments: the treasures are recovered and the earth is made soft with showers. This is all true to what we may suppose were the feelings and wants of an Aryan settler. The march, the movement, the roll, the splendour of elemental storm struck him with awe. Indra was his king. Pastures for his flocks, soft furrows for his sowing time, sheaves ripe and full at harvest time, all depended upon rain. Indra
was his father and he prayed to him for water in the torrent, the rain and the dew. The poetical representation of the fight of Indra with Vritra and the mimicry of battle pomp in the strife of wind, rain, and thunder, gave to Indra another hold upon the devotion of his worshippers. He was their God of war.

"Indra, the blender of all things, comes verily with his steeds that are harnessed at his word; Indra, the richly, decorated, the wielder of the thunderbolt."

"Invincible Indra, protect us in battles abounding in spoil, with defences insuperable."

"Shredder of rain, granter of all desires, set open this cloud. Thou art never averse to our requests."

Agni is the God of Fire. Fire has three modes of existence; in the human body and in nature, as heat; in the mid-air, as electric fire or lightning; in heaven, as the sun, moon and planets. In all these aspects, Agni is adored. His office is three fold: he is the family priest or master of the ceremonies, because no oblation can be carried on without him; he is the herald of worship; with his pointed flame and crackling noise summoning the gods to the service; he is the servant alike of gods and men, conveying oblations from these to those. As to his divinity, much the same character is ascribed to him as to Indra; the same blessing sought from both. Caesar and Pompey are so very much alike that one could very well be spared.

The feelings which prompted the adoration of fire are happily indicated in the following remarks of Professor Max Müller. "Many things that have become to us familiar, struck the poets of the Veda as wonderful and mysterious. They describe the power of fire with an awe which to the natural philosopher of the present day, must appear childish. The production of fire by the friction of wood or its sudden descent from the sky in the form of lightning, is to them as marvellous as the birth of a child. They feel their dependence on fire; they have experienced what it is to be without it. They were not acquainted with lucifer matches and hence, when describing the simple phenomena of fire, they do it naturally with a kind of religious reverence."

Let three verses serve as a sample of the hundreds addressed to Agni in the Rig Veda.

"Neighing like an horse that is greedy for food when it steps out from the strong prison;—then the wind blows after his blast; thy wind, O Agni, is dark at once."
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

"O Agni, thou from whom, as a new-born male, undying flames proceed, the brilliant smoke goes towards the sky, for as messenger, thou art sent to the gods."

"Thy appearance is fair to behold, thou bright-faced Agni, when, like gold thou shinest at hand; thy brightness comes like the lightning of heaven; thou showest splendour like the bright Sun."

Now we may let Agni die out and take up Varuna, the Ouranos of the Greeks, the Uranus of the Latins. The term expresses the vault of heaven, personified, deified. Varuna, like Indra and Agni when worshipped, is regarded as supreme. He rules over the night; the movements of the constellations are his acts;—the moon walketh in brightness by his command; the rain-showers are the effusions of his charity. The most interesting aspect of his character is its bearing upon the morality and virtue of his worshippers. To him, more than to others, they confess their sins: from him they intreat forgiveness. Let me adduce an illustration.

"Let me, not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!
If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind: have mercy, almighty, have mercy!
Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters; have mercy, almighty, have mercy!
Whenever, we men O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host; whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness, have mercy, almighty, have mercy!"

I must confine my notice of the remaining deities of the Veda to a few lines. Surya, Savitri, the Sun, receives adoration, but not in the degree which we should expect, seeing the primitive Hindus were given so much to the worship of nature. We have Vayu, the god of the winds, but he is generally regarded as a form of Indra. Not the wind only, but the winds,—blowing from different quarters cold, hot, rainy,—are deified and termed Maruts. When fierce, tempestuous and stormy, they are termed Rudras, and they have a chief called Rudra. The early rays of light that precede the dawn shooting athwart the sky, carrying the news of coming day to every homestead, are worshipped as the Aswins, twin heroes, ever young and ever handsome.

* Ancient Sanscrit Literature, p. 548.
† Ancient Sanscrit Literature, p. 540.
The Dawn or first diffusive light of coming day, is deemed a goddess; she is daughter of the sky; she rouses every man with her light; wearing a garment of brilliant beauty, she ripens in brightness: gold coloured, lovely to behold. Saraswati, goddess of speech, Ila and Bharati, goddesses of song, are also her companions. The remaining names of the primitive pantheon may be identified with one form or another of the deities already specified.

We have at least one instance of apotheosis, the deification of mortals, that easy method by which deities may be manufactured to any amount. The parties in question are called the Ribhus. More than one hymn is addressed to them. They are stated to have lived long before the age of the Rishis themselves, when their ancestors were in a state of immature wisdom. The exploits for which they were deified are recounted in the following stanza.

"The Ribhus possessed of skill in their work, constructed (for the Aswins) a well built car; they framed the vigorous horses bearing Indra; they gave youthful existence to their parents; they gave to the calf its accompanying mother."

They are also said to have divided the sacrificial ladle into four. Stripped of poetical dressing, this tradition points to a very early period of history when the contrivances of mechanical skill were unknown and the effects of medicine upon malady, a mystery. These Ribhus seem to have been carpenters and doctors; their contemporaries looked upon their doings with amazement; their descendants handed on the tradition with enlargements breathing a supernatural mystery around it! after-ages lifted the men to heaven and immortality. No country has been more liberal than India in conferring divine honours upon mortals; monarchs, heroes, sages, have been deified by the score. It is interesting and amusing to find at the head of this crowd of man-made-deities, a couple of carpenters, lifted among the gods for carving a spoon, constructing a car and curing a cow.

An important question now claims attention. What relation is there between the gods sung in Puranas, sculptured in forms, honoured with temples, worshipped to-day by the millions of India and the gods sung by the Rishis in the far-off-days of the olden time. The answer is the briefest possible;—none, or next to none. Let us begin with the Trimurti; Brahma, Siva, Vishnu. In the 240 hymns I have examined, I have not met once with the names of Brahma or Siva. Vishnu has a few hymns addressed to
him and his three steps are mentioned; but even the Brahmanical commentator acknowledges that he is there identified with the sun and his three steps are but the three points of the sun's passage across the heavens, or morning, noon and night. In the few places in which he is referred to, he appears as no way superior to his compeers, and if we may judge by the paucity of his honors in comparison with those paid to Indra and Agni, his dignity was vastly inferior to theirs. We have indeed a Rudra in the Vedic Hymns; but he is simply the head and chief of the winds;—a servant and ally of Indra. Dr. Muir who has gone over the whole Rig Veda in investigating this very point shows that there is nothing throughout the book to contradict these conclusions. Your ancestors, my friends, knew nothing of the forms you worship: they anticipated no incarnations; they sang no praise to Rama or Krishna: Mahadeva, Parvati, Kali or Durga were unknown; so were Ganesa, Subramania and Virabudhra, their hideous offspring. They knew nothing of the Trimurti; never puzzled their heads about the mystical symbol O'm; and lived before the days when men professed to find a pure philosophy attached to the linga. On the other hand, Indra, Agni, Varuna; the gods your first fathers honoured have sunk into dishonour; they are door-keepers, policemen, errand boys for deities born of poet's fancies, in times comparatively recent.

I will confine myself to a few words in referring to the sacrifices of primitive worship. For the most part, the offerings of the primitive Aryans were bloodless; consisting of the products of the cow, and libations of Soma juice. Animal sacrifices were not unknown. In times of special calamity or danger, the horse was made a victim. We must go further; the technical phrases of Naramedha and Purushamedha, familiar to you all, are standing testimonies that the offering of human life was far from being strange in the ancient religion of this land. Several hymns of the Rig Veda are said to have been recited by Sunasephas when tied at the sacrificial stakes; whilst the wild hymn which I have quoted, termed the Purusha Sukta, represents the deity becoming a man, and as a man, being sacrificed. The sacrificial laws of the Old Testament seem to come back to me in these old rites: here are sacrifices of thanks: the preciousness imputed to the immolation of a living victim appears a stray light of the great law that "without shedding of blood there is no remission," whilst from the story of
the First Male it appears, that these men of long past ages felt the need creation had, for its redemption from the curse, of the sacrifice of One, divine and human.

The prayers which accompanied the libation or the sacrifice were not of a lofty or spiritual character. The blessings sought are generally temporal; thousands of cows and horses; wealth, plenty of children and those children healthy; food for the family, pasture for the herds; victory for the soldier;—these are the gifts asked: sometimes, however, hopes of immortality are dimly intimated; virtues are asked of the gods; sin is occasionally confessed; and forgiveness sought. Now and then, the feelings belonging to true piety in every age burst out with surprising freshness as in that hymn to Varuna already quoted.

My work of narration, my friends, is now complete. We have trod the years backwards to the days of your Aryan forefathers. We have looked in upon their homes and followed their flocks: listened to the toil of artificers and the songs of priests; we have mingled in the turmoil of their primitive warfare and been spectators of their worship. Thus far our work is done:—not so far done but that there remains for us the question, What is this past, so long gone, to us? That is the question you ought to ask and which many of you are asking. You have my sympathy and I have sought to lend you some help. For the mind of India is waking up;—like Kumbakarna, the brother of Ravana; the sleep has been long and it has taken no little trouble to disturb it, but the giant is up at last. Half startled, half bewildered by the forces that are bearing him on, he cries out, "Back, back to the olden time! Learn Bacon if you will, but listen to the sages! paraphrase Shakespeare if you will, but give your heart's faith to the rhythm of primeval hymns!" Back to the Vedas."

Go back to the Vedas, I say too; for the songs sung by the sacrificial fires of your ancestors give you the key-notes of social reform; elevate woman, do away with caste. In that old world in which we have been moving, man and woman, husband and wife stood together; joint sovereigns in the little kingdom of home. Woman shared with man, the daily toil; he in the pastures, she, at the fire or the milking pail; they were partners in the educating influences of their times,—the song of the Rishi, the prayer of the priest. Bring back your Krita Yuga, your golden age. You men may have intellect, will, vigour, but you can never
have sweetness, courtesy, grace, gentleness, delicate morality, the qualities which go to compose our word "gentleman" in its best sense, until you have amongst you a womankind that you can reverence and until you do reverence it. Man and woman

"Rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free.
If she be small, slight natured, miserable,
How shall men grow?"

Let her keep by her own work in the home, as you do in the office or the shop. But let her share your culture. Begin with the A. B. C. of her mother tongue. Let her grow up with a mind trained to thought, a tongue prepared for conversation. Share with her your religious struggles: tell her all that is in your heart, for yourself, your country, for the future. The movement is begun: sustain it; push it; and ere you see your grandchildren around your knees, some portions of a golden prophecy will have found fulfillment in Hindu homes. Woman will

"Set herself to man
Like perfect music unto noble words."

Then as to that other question Caste and the most difficult task of modifying and removing it: let me tell you, young men, this work is yours. We, outside foes, may discharge our artillery at these old barriers and scratch and pull at them with incessant perseverance and do a little to effect a breach; but the work of demolition must come from within, from you. You are sustained by the loftiest principles, true and therefore invincible; in them you must conquer. These principles, may be traced back to the throne of that Father "of whom every family in heaven or earth is named." So far your cause is divine. But going back to these Vedic times, you gird yourself with weapons of less worth, yet still worthy of a soldier. You obtain arguments to stop the mouths of gainsayers; querulous mothers, conservative sisters, bigoted priests, learned pedants. When they ply their only weapons and cry out, "the Sastras, the Sastras" or "custom, custom, the way of our forefathers," answer them,—"No, not the Sastras,—for the music of our Vedic hymns is set to thoughts of brotherhood; no, not, custom; in the beginning it was not so; our first fathers by their sheep-folds owned a common birth; their ranks and classes formed themselves by no pretence of divinity, but by the wise head, the cunning hand, the diligent
frugality of home." I pray God strengthen you. Were I a spectator of an army on the march for a war in which liberty and justice were concerned, I would follow every battalion as it passed with shouts of cheer; I would go to my closet and pray God to give them the courage of true soldiers and had I observed a look of fear, a nervous trembling amongst them, I would pray all the more, "the Lord strengthen them." So do I look upon the strife but now commencing in the social life of India; so would I cheer on every youthful knight as he goes forth to conflict, and because I know what difficulties are in your way, and that human hearts grow sick in weary struggle with wrong that is strong, I pray for you the more earnestly,—the Lord strengthen you.

Go back to the Vedas! So say I too, if it be only to know what the religious system of the Vedas really is. Be not the slave of every pedant who says, "this is Vedantic, that is Yedantic." As you travel that backward journey, what burdens of utter rubbish will you throw from you; burdens which for centuries have shackled the thought and wearied the heart of the Hindu people. Go back, but some of you must make up your minds to be disappointed. You will find no Monotheism in the Vedas. There are gods many and lords many. The man, who, in our day, having broken away from popular superstition, placidly declares him a deist or a theist, knowing little of the solemn responsibility attaching even to such phrases, will find that the patriarchs of his race have no sympathy with him. Go back to the Vedas; but you will find no Pantheism there. You will find indeed that from which Pantheism sprung: an underlying feeling that Indra, Agni and the rest were somehow or other forms of an universal spirit, unrecognised and unworshipped, and in the rough allegory of the Purusha Sukta, the universe is regarded as his body. But whether this were poetical fancy or religious theory, we cannot tell. As a system, Pantheism was unknown. You must leave behind the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita.

Go back and you will find idolatry in its primal elements, its first formation, the worship of nature. We have in the Rig Veda a fresh illustration of idolatry as defined by an inspired writer. "The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse. Because, that
Life in the times of the Rig Veda.

when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened;—who changed the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator who is over all, God blessed for over, Amen!" Learn that the gods whom your fathers worshipped and you worship, have not and never had any real existence. They are the material forms above and around you; or the metaphors of poets.

Go back to the Vedas and bring back this at least, the personality of Vedic religion. The Vedic Sages were men, with hopes, fears, and wants: they could not do with an abstraction for a divinity. When they gave existence to Indra, Agni and Varuna, they made them persons, with whom they could speak, to whom they could pray, from whom they could expect sympathy. There was a great deal more of true religious tendency here, that in a philosophy without prayer, and a creed without feeling. Be sure of this that no religion, no theory, no creed is worth a thought to man, which does not bring man to God, and God to man, heart to heart; has no divine fellowship, has no outlet for the soul's poverty, penitence and prayer.

I have one thing more to say. For some light upon social questions, for information as to the creed and worship of your ancestors, you may go back to the Vedas. But for your own faith, your own creed, your own practice you cannot go back. The thing is an impossibility. What were these Rishis? With what force may we put into the lips of one of these sages, the words of our own poet Laureate!

What am I?
An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

That state of infancy you have outgrown. As well put Ravana in baby's clothes, as put the intellect, force and impulse of to-day into forms aged with three thousand years. You cannot go back to the Vedas.

You cannot go back to their gods. Heaven and earth, sun, moon and stars; the clouds, the lightning and the dawn, can never be endowed in your minds with intelligence, with wrath or mercy. No imagination can make them any thing else to you than what they are,—varied, beautiful forms of matter, but matter still. Would you read creation aright? then take down your Bibles and read a
Sangita sung by a Rajarishi, nearly three thousand years ago; a hymn true to-day whilst those of the Rig Veda have become obsolete.

"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained,—what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?—O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth?"

You cannot offer the prayers of the Vedas. You need something more than cows and horses, health and wealth. Light for the intellect, guidance for the faith, the warmth of love about the heart; these are your requirements. Let me suggest to you a prayer. "Teach me thy way, O Lord; lead me in a plain path." "O send out thy light and truth; let them lead me."

"Lord I am blind,—be thou my sight;  
Lord I am weak,—be thou my might;  
A helper of the helpless be,  
And let me find my all in thee."

You cannot offer the sacrifices of the Vedas. The simplicity which once presented milk and food to hungry deities is past. The offering of victims is falling into disuse. Yet had they truth in them; this truth, man's need of a sacrifice. They were but shadows of the true. We point you now to the substance; the true sacrifice, the divine in the human, dimly foreshadowed in the sacrifice of A'thi Purusha, more than once referred to in this lecture. "For if the blood of bulls and goats" in those old days were supposed to have some efficacy in warding off woe and procuring good, "how much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living and true God." "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world."

One look forward, after so long a gaze backward. It is a look full of cheer. We close every year with less of sorrow; we commence every new one with more of joy. You have no church spires, no peals of bells, no merry chimes upon New Year's even so our imagery limps a little. Nevertheless the hopeful aspirations of the poet as he listens to the New Year chimes, fit our feelings and make sweet music in the heart.
"Ring out a slowly dying cause
And ancient forms of party strife,
Ring in the nobler modes of life
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindler hand,
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

THE LUCKNOW AND BENARES DISTRICT.

The Third Report of the above district has just been published, and is worthy of more than a passing reference. Throughout the district "there is an increase of 31 full members with 26 on trial and an increase of 214 Sunday and 192 Day School scholars. The total membership of the District is now ninety, with twenty-six on trial. A considerable number of these are English members, for English work in this district absorbs a good deal of ministerial labour, yet success, has not been absent from the Native work. Accounts are given of two interesting cases of baptism in Benares; one a Law Student who has passed his First Arts Examination, and continues to pursue his law studies, and the other the wife of a Mahratta Brahman Pundit living at Gwalior. "The story of her conversion is a singular one, and illustrates in a striking manner the power of the untaught but written truth. Her only child, a son about ten years of age was attending school. Some one gave him a catechism and a portion of Scripture which he took home. His mother read them, became convinced of the folly and wickedness of idolatry, gave it up with all its foolish ceremonies and began to worship God. This enraged her husband, who commanded her to desist, but upon her finally and for some time declining to do so, he ordered her to leave the house, keeping possession of the child. She ultimately found her way to Benares, and after daily instruction from Mrs. Fentiman for four months, was baptized. She is now a student preparing for teaching her Hindu sisters at Benares either in a school or in the Zenanas."

The chief feature of the report is the addition of Jubbulpore to the district, and the commencement of work there, at the invitation of two Christian men, Messrs. Pearcey and
Duffill on their separation from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Through the labours of these two brethren, formally connected with English Methodism, a Wesleyan Methodist Society was formed which after a personal visit and consultation with the parties concerned, was included by the Chairman in the district returns. Reference was made to the progress of this work in a former number of this magazine, and we are glad to learn from the report that continued labour is likely soon to meet with considerable success. In the above named brethren who are local preachers, Mr. Jackson appears to possess thoroughly efficient helpers, and in addition to these we find the name of W. G. B. Liddal who is designated for Evangelistic work. We heartily pray that success may crown the labours of all these brethren in this new field.

The Lucknow and Benares District appears to hold a worthy prominence among Indian districts in the amount of zenana work which is carried on. In Lucknow, and especially in Benares, this work is well attended to, and the teachers are cordially welcomed to the homes of their pupils.

While we are constrained to join in thankfulness to God for the success which has followed the work of the past year, we cannot but observe how much need there is for more labourers in this district. It is altogether insufficiently manned. Mr. Carmichael's difficulties at Fyzabad, appear to be numerous. He himself is mainly absorbed in English work, and cannot attend many native services. He has no native agent of sufficient calibre to conduct services on his own responsibility. Lucknow has a native minister but no catechists. Along with this scarcity of agents, there is the additional grief of a reduction of grant. We hope to see a more liberal policy towards India than the present, and trust the day may soon arrive when our missions here may be greatly strengthened if even less important work elsewhere should have to be resigned. 'It is a triumph to win any land or people to the Saviour, but what triumph could be so as greater the conquest of India for our Lord.'
WESLEYAN METHODIST NOTES.

The following extract from a Madras paper speaks for itself.

"A Native Christian is not eligible for the post." Can any one believe that such an endorsement should have been on a returned petition for promotion made by a man in Government employ? Incredible as it may seem, such a reply was given to a man who made application for a medical appointment in a certain town in our Presidency. Not for inability, not for being of bad conduct, but for being a Native Christian he was declared "not eligible" to hold the post he sought. It is a wonder that a similar consideration for caste prejudices in a town where many Brahmans reside, should not lead the inspecting European Christians to exclude themselves from the hallowed spots which their feet would defile, and from the holy persons who from contact with them might catch what is worse than small-pox to those holy ones, viz:—caste defilement. If Government is to be neutral in matters of religion according to its declarations, it must allow no such thing as this to occur. This sort of thing is a strange neutrality. It rather appears to be a startling partiality, and if allowed to hold good in the Medical Department, it will be equally applicable in many others."

—The quarterly meeting returns of the circuits in Great Britain indicate an increase of membership for the present connexional year.

Methodist theology is not yet understood by Scottish theologians. Professor Smeaton in his Cunningham Lectures on the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit affirms that a real doctrine of the Spirit is professed only in Calvinistic Churches. In his account of the spiritual movement of the eighteenth century, he leaves out the name of Wesley. An account of the Reformation without a reference to Luther would be of similar value. Not only as a theologian but as a historian, Professor Smeaton is a doubtful guide.

—The income for foreign missions for the current year, which at one time it was feared would show a serious falling-off, is slightly in advance of last year. Several large legacies have recently been left to the society, amongst others one by a Churchman amounting to £5,000.

—When we penned our mild notes on the resolutions of the North India Conference with reference to Mr. Taylor's work in India we hoped that some light might be cast from some quarter on the remarkable resolution of endorsement. That resolution does not read like a candid thorough endorsement of Mr. Taylor's work and method, the manner in which it is framed suggests either bad grammar or—compromise. We have not met with any one
knowing English, who can interpret it differently. We cannot charge the North India Conference with bad grammar, we conclude therefore that the Conference may have been guilty of compromise. We do not like this conclusion, it is so severe, and we shall be happy to be guided to a better one, but at present we see no alternative. The resolution as it stands is worse than valueless it may be misleading. Until it is explained the endorsement is a mere statement that at some former time the conference regarded the work, methods, &c. of Mr. Taylor, to be perfectly right.

Our sympathetic contemporary the M. E. Watchman should have given us a straight-forward statement on the above point. He calls “for light at once,” on how far our interests have been interfered with by the work of Mr. Taylor. We trust he will receive it when it comes.

NOTES OF OTHER CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES.

—The Decennial Indian Conference is to be held in Calcutta, commencing on December 28th.
—The C. M. S. has 32 stations in the Punjab with 1,573 Native Christians. Eighty-five baptisms took place last year.
—We regret to find in the Indian Christian Herald a letter from the Chaplain of the Bishop of Calcutta expressing disapproval of the Rev. B. C. Ghose for having taken part in a service held in the Bengal Free Mission Church. Such at least is our interpretation of his view. Had he approved, surely he would have had the courage to say so.
—The Rev. C. B. Ward furnishes the readers of the Indian Witness with a summary of the orphanage works in which he has been engaged for the past three years. There are in all 69 orphans under his care, 59 in the Christian orphanage and 10 in the Christian Home. These institutions have been well supported up to the present, as they deserve to be.
—The Rev. Dr. Murray Mitchell sends to the Bombay Guardian some notes of his South Indian Missionary observations. He has been staying at Coonoor and during last month has preached several times, and started a monthly Missionary prayer meeting which is to be continued. Last month he preached at Ootacamund also gave an
account of the progress of mission work in China, Japan, and North India, in the Breeks Memorial School. The Bishop of Madras presided.

—Moses Ezekiel Sankur, a member of the Beni Israel community in Poona, has been converted to Christianity.

—The fifth Annual Camp Meeting at Lanowli was held last month. The attendance consisted chiefly of members of the M. E. Church. Some Native Christians and Native preachers were also present. The English services were attended by some 300 persons, and at the communion of the Lord’s Supper and love feast about 140 were present. The largest attendance at the Vernacular Services was 150. Vernacular addresses were delivered by various ministers, two native Telugu women were baptized and the whole of the services were attended with marked blessing. The writer of the account which appears in the Bombay Guardian is in favor of these meetings being more specially held for natives in future years.

—Of special interest is the work among the Garos, of which some details are furnished in the Baptist Mission Report. A number have now been baptized.

Last June the Chief of the village of Biri Siri came to Ram Dayal, the preacher there, and told him that he had had a dream in which he had seen the Lord Jesus surrounded with great splendour, but that He had nevertheless spoken kindly to him, and said 'that He alone could save.' This dream had such an effect upon the Chief, that he next day took one or two other Garos with him, and went through the village collecting all their gods which are made of bamboo. These he piled up before Ram Dayal’s house, and said: “Here, Bábú, cook your dinner with these things: they are good for nothing else.” Crude, ugly and shapeless as these bamboo gods are, they are looked upon with great reverence by the Garos, and it speaks well for the courage of these men, that they undertook such a wholesale work of destruction. Not one of these bamboo gods escaped the eye of the Chief: he swept the village clear of them. This man is now a baptized follower of Christ.”

—The Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Arcot Mission speaks as usual of progress:

“As regards the state of the work entrusted to our care, we are privileged to be able to record an advance in every department. 378 persons, 143 of whom were adults, have been baptized and received into our churches; the number

Notes of other Churches and Societies.
of communicants has increased over all losses by 162; the number of adherents by 186; the children in our Schools by 371, and the contributions of the native Christians are Rs. 270 more than last year. These results speak for themselves and need no word of comment.

A Pastors’ Aid Society was organized by the native brethren in January last. Its object is to stimulate the native Churches to self-support, and assist them in sustaining Native Pastors. More than Rs. 800 has been contributed, the whole of the amount being given by the native Christians themselves. The Society has begun very auspiciously, and we hope an advance can be reported every year. Already two Pastors are being aided from its funds, and a third will probably receive help from it before the close of another year.”

The following is the staff of native helpers in connection with the above mission. Native ministers 4; native helpers as follows:—Catechists 17, Assistant Catechists 12, Readers 32, Teachers 30, School-mistresses 12, Bible Colporteurs 2, Female Bible Readers 4.

—An important meeting was held in Calcutta on April 15th to consider what steps should be taken to avert the anti-evangelical and ritualistic influences recently brought to bear on the Bengali Church. Over four hundred Bengali Christians attended, drawn from the Anglican, Baptist, Congregationalist, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches, of whom a fair proportion were representative members. A few European and American ministers and missionaries were also present, among whom were Dr. Thoburn, and Messrs. Edwards, Hobbs, James, Payne, and Rouse.

The following Resolutions were passed, First:—“That this Meeting views with deep regret the recent action of certain brethren of the Church of England, introducing principles and practices calculated to destroy that Christian fellowship and communion which, notwithstanding denominational distinctions, have happily existed hitherto among Bengali Christians as a body.” Second:—“That this meeting is not aware of any necessity for the enforcement of the above principles and practices, arising from the authoritative standards of the Church of England, and resolves, accordingly, that the following brethren be appointed a deputation to wait on his Lordship the Bishop of Calcutta, as the representative of the Anglican Church in India, to ascertain whether such necessity exists:—Rev.

In the course of their remarks, on the above resolutions, emphasis was laid by the speakers on the difficulties gratuitously raised in the way of the unity of Bengali Christians by certain clergymen of the Church of England. Our brethren deserve and will receive the sympathy of many in the noble work they have undertaken, which is to save the Christianity of our own time from disfigurement, and the Indian church of the future from needless and hurtful dissension and divisions.

—The Report of the L. M. S. work in the Coimbatore district states that in the past year 16 adults were baptized with their children. In Perunduray, a number of people are anxious to embrace Christianity. The following extract gives the Rev. Mr. Hutchison’s experience in one of the villages near Suttiamungalum:—"A smooth-shaven, solemn, consequential Brahmin said that he would like to put a question. ‘Are there many Gods or only one?’

In reply I asked, ‘Do you know how to ascertain whether a country is ruled by one or by two kings?’

‘No,’ they did not know.

‘By the image on the money of the country. If there is only one king, there will only be one image on the coinage, if two, two heads will appear. In the same way, God has put his stamp on every man. He has written his law in the conscience. Whatever differences men may show, all have the law written on the heart, ‘Do right, do no wrong, &c.’"

“All expressed themselves satisfied.”

Second question. ‘Why have men devised so many Gods?’

To this I answered, ‘God has appointed for every man one wife. This is proved by the fact that the number of males and females that continue to be born is equal. Yet some men not content with God’s appointment choose two or five, and if a king,—may be a hundred. In like manner men not willing to retain the knowledge of the true God in their hearts have invented gods according to their depraved tastes and imaginations,—a thief, a god who delights in theft,—covetous men, a god of riches, &c.’"
The guru declaring himself satisfied gravely made salaam and with one or two others solemnly rose and left the assembly. They wished the others to follow them, but these preferred to remain, and another guru took up the work of interrogation. One of the questions asked was “Why did I say it was wrong to bathe in sacred rivers?” I replied that there was no objection to any one bathing in a river. The fault consisted in supposing that the water of the river could wash away sin. If any one, sincerely repenting of the wickedness of his past life and the impurity of his heart, and earnestly resolving to begin a new life, were to bathe as a sign of such a holy resolution and of his belief that God would pardon him, such an act of baptism could not be condemned. It was with such a purpose I explained that Christians are taught to regard baptism. They all declared themselves very well pleased with this explanation and said that that was exactly how they performed the ceremony. The hypocrites! They knew perfectly well that they were telling a deliberate falsehood, but knowing that the meaning and purpose of their bathing and washing could not be defended, they adopted my more reasonable explanation, and pretended that it entirely corresponded with their own. We parted good friends.”

—The Report of the Baptist Mission in Northern India is elaborate and interesting, but contains no summary of the work as a whole. We have marked a few passages for quotation, some of which appear below.

Samuel Per Buksh, Calcutta, writes:—“I observed that the people in the mofussil are always more ready to hear the good message of Salvation and the sweet name of our Lord Jesus Christ than the people of towns and cities. Wherever I went in the mofussil I was warmiy and kindly received, and when I was thirsty they gave me milk to drink and sometimes sweetmeats to eat; while I was strongly opposed by the people of cities and towns, and sometimes they gave me much trouble. The conclusion I draw from this, is that the people of the mofussil and villages, hill-tribes and savages will receive the Gospel before the well educated and high-class people of towns and cities; however, the Word of God will go on. May the name of God and that of His dear Son Jesus Christ be glorified.—Amen.

Mr. W. R. James, Calcutta, writes:—“Lieut. Johnson
and myself aimed a hard blow at idolatry during the last Durga and Kartick Puja holidays. Placards with Scripture texts against idolatry were stuck on the walls through nearly all the native part of the city. Handbills also with similar texts were given away at the different processions. The first that was prepared had no heading; and we found that it did not attract much attention owing to its absence. Besides, the type was too small to catch the eye at a glance. This defect was remedied in the two subsequent numbers. The placard was headed—*Abominable Idolatries* and on the handbills were the words *Dumb Idols*. We thought it advisable to use the strongest Biblical language we could find, because the people of Calcutta have become so familiar with mild denunciations of idolatry by both Christian and Brahmo preachers, that unless strong language is employed, they do not seem to care anything for what is told. The effect which it had on the Hindus was just what we had expected. Many denounced bitterly; others praised, and so, as of old "there was a division among them." Never in my life before did we see such a rush for tracts as we witnessed during the puja processions. The texts on the placards were copied by many of the vernacular papers; and in this way the Lord caused our testimony to be carried at the expense of the enemy to thousands of Hindus living in districts remote from Calcutta."

**GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.**

Longfellow the Poet was a Unitarian.

—Under the auspices of the Livingstone Ireland Mission twelve mission agents are already employed and a chain of industrial stations established extending 220 miles up the course of the Congo. Fourteen additional missionaries are now destined for that district.

—The Theosophists have arrived in Madras and met with a cordial welcome from certain members of the native community. A few natives have been already initiated into the mysteries of Theosophy.

—The Free Christian Church of Italy grows apace. It has 13 ordained ministers, 16 evangelist, 14 deaconesses, 3 colporteurs, 36 churches, 35 out-stations, 1,750 communicants, and 657 Sunday scholars.

—A conference of the Protestant Missionaries in Japan will be held next year. Japan has now, 78 married and 10 unmarried male missionaries, and 48 unmarried female missionaries.

—The *Christian World* says,—" A new missionary agency for the Central Provinces of India has been suggested. It is recommended that a missionary community, including men and women, should buy a village and develop native industries. Native customs should be respected, and the appearance of a European colony should be avoided."
The missionaries should identify themselves with the people, and exercise a moral influence.

We are curious to know by whom the above suggestion has been made. Can it refer to the work of the Rev. Mr. Ward of the M. E. Church?

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The Indian Evangelical Review, for April is quite equal to its predecessors in interest. The opening article on Hindu Eclecticism by Ramchunder Bose, is a reprint from the New York Methodist Quarterly Review. It is mainly a summary or grouping of the contents of the Bhagavat Gita, under the headings of theology, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology. The writer's estimate of the Gita is given in his concluding sentences, and is by no means a favourable one. We present it to our readers. "We confess we do not rise from the perusal of this time hallowed and extravagantly venerated book with a very high opinion on its contents. The devotee who amid the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, represents God as the life of every living thing, from man down to the meanest worm, and the aggregate of all forces, mechanical, chemical, electric and magnetic, as the sum total in short, of all forms of life and all material agencies, may be in rapture when speaking of its teachings......We cannot help representing its general teaching, theological and moral, as on the whole pernicious, even while we are not at all backward in recognizing the excellence of a few truths and principles scattered up and down among its miscellaneous contents. We have no hesitation whatever in affirming that this and other books of the sort have on the whole, been so many drags on, rather than incentives to the progress of the world in religion and morals, and we fearlessly oppose this bold assertion to the sentimental talk which is now unhappily gaining ground even in the churches of Christendom."

Art II. is an able exposure of the untrust worthiness of the native historian of Travancore, P. Shungoomy Menon, at the same time the writer gracefully recognizes the benefit which must come to us even from a badly executed history by a native writer. But Mr. Mateer's article is not merely a destructive criticism of much that Mr. Menon has written, it contains much valuable information on points upon which the critic is entitled to speak with authority. We shall look with interest for what he has still to say on the work of Mr. Menon.

Art III. on Psychology and Preaching is but a fragment. The story of an Excommunicated Nun will be read with interest as also the Missionary Letters concerning Japan.

Art VI. on An Oriental Interpretation of the Bible, touches a subject which has probably engaged the thought of every Missionary. The people of India must be dealt with as they are mentally and spiritually, and missionaries must unlearn much, and bend not a little, in order to effectual contact with the Oriental mind. Mr. Jones has given to the readers of the Review an instructive and suggestive paper. A paper on Patna, Gaya, and Benares, closes the series. The Notes and Intelligence as usual deal with a variety of matters related to Mission work.