Every Mission has its own special battle ground, and traces on its banner, with thankful pride, its own special victories. The Baptists of America kindle into enthusiasm as they recall the conquests of Judson and Boardman among the wild Karens of Burmah. The Church Missionary Society point to the Shanars of Tinnevelly; while the London Mission tell, in glowing words, the story of their martyred Malagassies. Our own Society, too, has had many successes of different kinds in various parts of the world. Its missionaries were powerful factors in keeping alive and extending that agitation which ended in the abolition of West Indian slavery; and its work among the freed slaves of those lovely islands has been conspicuously if not romantically successful. The South African Mission, both amongst natives and colonists, has grown quietly and rapidly into almost independent strength, without much notice being taken of it by outsiders. But our Mission to Fiji, alike in the thrilling romance of its attendant circumstances, in the unqualified character of its success, and in the judicious use made of that success, stands in the forefront of the achievements, not only of our own Church, but of all Churches. A recent writer, not a Wesleyan, frankly owns that “of all modern Missions the Fiji Wesleyan enterprise is probably the most complete and striking, as regards extent and effects, and furnishes the best answer to the old-fashioned croakers and the young Rehoboams who cry out that Missions are a failure and missionaries a humbug.”
The story of the Mission has long been familiar to Wesleyan Methodists in England; but all that they have been repeatedly told by their own missionaries, has recently been confirmed by the striking and trustworthy testimony of an independent witness. Four or five years ago a lengthened visit was paid to the Fiji islands by Miss Gordon Cumming, who, during her stay, was the guest of the governor, Sir Arthur Gordon. Her position ensured for her the fullest opportunities for interrogation and criticism, and of these she availed herself with fresh unbiassed mind, determined to know the truth about a Mission which has had an ample share of detraction. The results of her investigations are given to the world in a book entitled “At Home in Fiji,”* and consisting of a series of letters written on the spot, when impressions were most vivid, and the means of testing their accuracy close at hand.

The inhabited islands of the Fiji archipelago are about eighty in number, and contain at present a population of something under 120,000. About seven years ago they were added to the British possessions, with the consent of the petty kings and at the wish of the people; and since then their tabulated progress has been very encouraging. But what is the history of these latest graduates in civilization? Widely sundered from the busy centres of religion, civilization and commerce, what were they, and what are they? Whatever they were, how did they cease to be that? and how came they to be what they are now? These questions are answered in the volumes before us in words which, while vigorous and glowing, are also moderate and discriminating. The story is indeed a strange one, unsurpassed if not unmatched in the terror of its tragedy, and divinely sublime in its issue. If our Fiji missionaries, instead of having realized the results described in these books, had merely anticipated them, they would have been sneered at as ill-balanced enthusiasts; and even now that the work has been done, there are not wanting ill-informed and illiberal men who would fain lessen its glory, by decrying its value. But to all such Miss Gordon Cumming’s volumes furnish a full and triumphant answer, and attest, if need there be, “that in its transforming power the Gospel of the grace of God is as mighty as it was in the age of the Apostles.”

* Two vols., 8vo., Blackwood and Sons.
Let us see, then, what Fiji was, hardly a generation ago:—

"I often wish that some of the cavillers who are for ever sneering at Christian Missions could see something of their results in these isles. But first they would have to recall the Fiji of ten years ago, when every man's hand was against his neighbour, and the land had no rest from barbarous intertribal wars, in which the foe, without respect of age or sex, were looked upon only in the light of so much beef; the prisoners deliberately fattened for slaughter; dead bodies dug up, that had been buried ten or twenty days, and could only be cooked in the form of puddings; limbs cut off from living men and women, and cooked and eaten in presence of the victim, who had previously been compelled to dig the oven, and cut the firewood for the purpose; and this not only in time of war, when such atrocity might be deemed less inexcusable, but in time of peace, to gratify the caprice or appetite of the moment.

"Think of the sick buried alive; the array of widows who were deliberately strangled on the death of any great man; the living victims who were buried beside every post of a chief's new house, and must needs stand clasping it, while the earth was gradually heaped over their devoted heads; or those who were bound hand and foot, and laid on the ground to act as rollers, when a chief launched a new canoe, and thus doomed to a death of excruciating agony;—a time when there was not the slightest security for life or property, and no man knew how quickly his own hour of doom might come; when whole villages were depopulated simply to supply their neighbours with fresh meat!"

All this is horrible; but let the reader, if he can bear it, contemplate some particular and well verified illustrations of the general statements made above. Speaking of the father of Thakombau, the principal king who recently abdicated in favour of our own Queen, Miss Gordon Cumming says:—

"Nothing delighted him more than to return from tributary isles with the bodies of infants hanging from the yardarms of his canoe, as tribute exacted from their parents. One of his near kinsmen had offended him, and knowing how little pity he had to expect, sought by every means in his power to mollify him, humbly imploring his forgiveness. But the fiend responded by cutting off his arm at the elbow, and drinking the warm blood as it flowed. Then he cooked the arm, and ate it in presence of the sufferer, who afterwards was cut to pieces, limb by limb, while the brutal chief sat watching and gloating over the dying agonies of the miserable victim. Afterwards he sentenced his own youngest son to death, and compelled an elder brother to club him.

"When the time of his own death drew near—I think it was in the year 1852—he gave special injunctions that his wives should on no account fail to accompany him to the spirit-world. Two English missionaries, Mr. Calvert and Mr. Watsford, who for years had vainly striven to convert this atrocious old heathen—now exerted their whole influence to try and persuade Thakombau to refrain
from carrying out his father's wicked will. These felt that success in this matter would be an earnest of wavering from heathendom on the part of the king. So Mr. Calvert offered a princely gift of whale's teeth, and even to have his own finger cut off (Vaka Vati, i.e., Fiji fashion), if only the lives of the women might be spared, but to no purpose.

"Mr. Watsford offered twenty muskets, the mission whale-boat, and all his own personal property; but all in vain, Thakombau had just assumed the title of Tui Vati—King of Viti—and felt that his dignity would suffer by the omission of any customary ceremony. It is the privilege of an eldest son first to strangle his own mother, and then to assist in performing the same kind office for the other widows. So the five ladies were dressed with all pomp, and placed the new cords round their necks as proudly as though they had been precious ornaments; and Thakombau himself assisted the men whose office it was to strangle his mother and the four other women. Out of deference to the white men's prayer, he offered life to one victim; but she refused it—not from any love to her cruel lord, but simply because it was the custom of Fiji.

"So here they all lie side by side, on the green hillock overlooking the broad blue Pacific and the isles where the name of Tanoa was once so sorely dreaded.

"I turned back to the peaceful, pleasant mission-home, and lingered in the fragrant garden, looking across the Viwa, where the early missionaries established themselves before gaining a footing in Bau. Brave women were the wives of those men; and in many a scene of horror, and many a peril, did they prove themselves help-meets for the men of earnest purpose whose lot they shared. I will give you one instance of the part they took here in those awful days—not remote days either; for the story I will tell you happened just thirty years ago.

"A piratical tribe, called the Mbutoni, had brought a large offering of their spoil as tribute to the old king, Tanoa. Custom required that a feast of human flesh should be prepared for them, but the larder was empty, and no prisoners of war could be obtained. Under these circumstances, it was the duty of Ngavindi, the chief of the lasakau, or fishermen, to provide victims. Two young men were accordingly entrapped; but these not being deemed sufficient, the wary fisher went forth with his men. They ran their canoes among the mangrove-bushes, and covered either end with green boughs, and then lay in wait. Soon a company of fourteen women came down to fish. They were seized and bound, and carried off to Bau to furnish a feast for the morrow. News of this reached Viwa, where Mrs. Calvert and Mrs. Lyth were living alone with their children, their husbands having gone to teach on another island. They determined to make an attempt to save the lives of their luckless sisters; so, having induced a friendly native to take them across in his canoe, they started on their errand of mercy. As they neared the shore it was evident that the cannibals were in a state of frantic excitement: the death-drums were booming; muskets firing, in token of rejoicing; and then piercing shrieks rose above the wild din, and told that the horrid butchery had begun. It needed desperate courage for these
two lone (and apparently unprotected) women to land on the isle and face that bloodthirsty rabble. But with resolute courage and unfailing faith they pressed on.

"On the beach they were met by a Christian chief, who led them through the crowd to Tanoa's house, which it was death for any woman to enter. But unheeding their own safety, they forced their way in, with a whale's tooth in each hand, as the customary offering when making a petition. The old man was so amazed at their courage, that he commanded that such as still lived should be spared; and a messenger was despatched to see that the order was obeyed. Nine had already perished; but five survived, and were set at liberty, blessing their brave deliverers, who not satisfied with having gained their object so far, went straight to the house of Ngavindi the chief butcher, who was sitting in full dress, rejoicing in his work. They spoke to him earnestly on the subject, and had the satisfaction of seeing that his chief wife and that of Thakombau cordially seconded their words. A few days later, H.M.S. Havannah touched the isles, and Captain Erskine went to Viwa to call at the mission. They had just sat down to tea, and he had been delicately hinting his belief that many of the missionary stories about these nice well-conducted people were grossly exaggerated, when Ngavindi came in to ask Mrs. Lyth about the great English ship. He was most kindly received, and took his place at table with perfect ease. Captain Erskine described him as a very handsome, prepossessing young fellow, of modest and gentle manners. He could scarcely believe that he had just been chief actor in this horrid business. Not long after this Ngavindi was slain in battle when attempting to carry off a dead body. One of his wives was sister to Thakombau, whose duty it now was to strangle her; but the tribe petitioned that her life might be spared, that her unborn child might become their chief. So the old mother offered herself as a substitute, and the king strangled her with his own hand—a hand which had already cut off the nose of one sister, as a punishment for being unfaithful to her husband. So Ngavindi lay in state on a raised platform, with one head wife at his side, and the corpse of his mother at his feet, and an attendant close by; and all were laid together in one grave.

"The day after Captain Erskine had made acquaintance with the gentle, courteous Ngavindi, he came to Bau, where he saw the bloody stone on which the heads of multitudes of victims had been dashed, when presented to the god at the chief temple. The Mbutoni guests were still at the strangers' house, and to prove how well they had been received, they pointed out four or five large ovens in which the nine women had been cooked; and also the spot where, a few months previously, after the capture of Lokia, a town belonging to Rewa, eighty corpses of those slain in battle had been heaped up, previous to being apportioned to the greedy warriors..............

"It was only people who had been killed that were considered good for food. Those who died a natural death were never eaten—invariably buried. But it certainly is a wonder that the isles were not altogether depopulated, owing to the number who were killed. Thus in Namena, in the year 1851, fifty bodies were cooked for one feast. And when the men of Bau were at war with Verata, they carried off
260 bodies, seventeen of which were piled on a canoe and sent to Rewa, where they were received with wild joy, dragged about the town, and subjected to every species of indignity ere they finally reached the ovens. Then, too, just think of the number of lives sacrificed in a country where infanticide was a recognised institution, and where widows were strangled as a matter of course! Why on one occasion, when there had been a horrible massacre of Namena people at Viwa, and upwards of 100 fishermen had been murdered and their bodies carried as bokola to the ovens of Bau, no less than 80 women were strangled to the honour of the dead, and the corpses lay strewn in every direction round the Mission station! It is just thirty years since the Rev. John Watsford, writing from here, describes how twenty-eight victims had been seized in one day while fishing. They were brought here alive, and only stunned when they were put into the ovens. Some of the miserable creatures attempted to escape from the scorching bed of red hot stones, but only to be driven back....................It is very hard indeed to realise that the peaceful village on which I am now looking has really been the scene of such horrors as these, and that many of the gentle kindly people around me have actually taken part in them."

Such Fiji was. It seems as if exaggeration could find for itself no vocabulary, in describing the unrelieved horror of those days. For those who met, and in Christ’s name fought and conquered such incarnate devilry the Church which sent them justly reserves a high niche of honour, and the names of Cargill, Cross, Hunt, Baker, Calvert, Lyth and many others, will long be a glory and an inspiration throughout Methodism. The danger was shared by all, and honour is due to all; but the master spirit of that heroic band was John Hunt. In referring to him, Miss Gordon Cumming gives a stirring sketch of the way in which the change from cannibalism to Christianity was accomplished.

"I told you about Mr. Hunt commencing the mission at Somo Somo. For the last six years of his busy life of earnest work he lived chiefly on this island, where he had established his printing-press; and in the intervals of travelling from isle to isle, in danger, storm, and privation—teaching the people and superintending the schools—he found time to train a large number of native agents, and also to produce and print an admirable translation of the New Testament. If you think of the amount of labour represented in acquiring so very elaborate a language by ear, reducing it to writing, and then translating and printing so large a book, with such rude appliances, and so little help, you will surely conclude that this of itself would have been no light work for one man to undertake. So it was no wonder that this over-willing spirit should have outworn the frail body.

"He had his reward in seeing a marvellous change pass over his cannibal neighbours at Viwa. Here (where, five years before, one of the most horribly treacherous massacres which ever disgraced Fiji had been perpetrated, and the bodies of upwards of a hundred poor
Our Mission in Fiji

fishermen deliberately murdered for the ovens of Bau, lay strewn all round the mission premises, where Mr. Cross and his family, with the native teachers, had assembled, horror-stricken, but utterly powerless to stay the butchery), Mr. Hunt records the story of a general awakening, before which all such revival meetings as we have heard of elsewhere seem pale and colourless. He had instituted special prayer-meetings (penitent meetings they were called) on Saturday evenings, and was struck by the exceeding earnestness which seemed to prevail amongst all present. This was the commencement of a series of meetings held night and morning in almost every house, when, like the men of Nineveh of old, these people, with one accord, humbled themselves in the dust, crying for mercy, with one heart and one voice. These fierce murderers and cannibals seemed suddenly to realise the awfulness of their guilt, and were overwhelmed by the sense of their own wickedness. In deepest contrition they knelt before the God of the Christians, weeping and wailing piteously, pleading for forgiveness, and continuing in such agony of prayer that many of these men—some of them the worst cannibals in Fiji—fainted from sheer exhaustion, and no sooner recovered consciousness than they again began to agonise in prayer till they again became insensible. They had to be literally forced to take necessary food. Those who heard their cry noted its strong earnest sense. They simply bewailed their past wickedness, and implored God's mercy. This continued for several days, during which business, sleep, and food were almost entirely neglected. But the cry of the people was heard and answered, and soon a strange new peace—the peace that passeth understanding—seemed to pervade the isle. The people that had hitherto sat in darkness now saw a great light, and those who hitherto had been noted only for their evil deeds now became gentle and teachable, and began to lead simple, consistent, Christian lives. Truly, if such a change as this were the sole result wrought by the mission, the lives of Cross, Hunt, Hazlewood, Polglaze, and Baker, were not laid down in vain, when one by one they died at their posts from sheer over-work. At least the first four did so. Mr. Baker was murdered, as I mentioned in writing from Viti Levu."

And what is the outcome of such devotion by such men? What is Fiji to-day as compared with thirty years ago? Let our author resume her story:

"Slow and disheartening was the labour for many years, yet so well has the little leaven worked, that, with the exception of the Kai Tholos, the wild highlanders, who still hold out in their mountain fastnesses, the eighty inhabited isles have all abjured cannibalism and other frightful customs, and have lotued—i.e., embraced Christianity—in such good earnest as may well put to shame more civilised nations. You may now pass from isle to isle, certain everywhere to find the same cordial reception by kindly men and women. Every village on the eighty inhabited isles has built for itself a tidy church, and a good house for its teacher or native minister; for whom the village also provides food and clothing. Can you realise that there are nine hundred Wesleyan churches in Fiji, at every one of which the frequent services are crowded by devout congregations; that the schools are well attended; and that the first sound which greets your
ear at dawn, and the last at night, is that of hymn singing and most fervent worship rising from each dwelling at the hour of family prayer?

"What these people may become after much contact with the common run of white men, we cannot, of course, tell, though we may unhappily guess. At present they are a body of simple and devout Christians, full of deepest reverence for their teachers and the message they bring, and only anxious to yield all obedience.

"Of course there are a number of white men here, as in other countries, who (themselves not caring one straw about any religion) declare that Christianity in these isles is merely nominal, adopted as a matter of expediency, and that half the people are still heathen at heart. Even were this true (and all outward signs go to disprove it) I wonder what such cavillers expect! I wonder if they knew by what gradual steps our own British ancestor yielded to the Light, and for how many centuries idolatrous customs continued to prevail in our own isles! Yet here all traces of idolatry are swept away.

"I think it might well startle some of our sleepy congregations to find themselves in a Fijian Church......................To say nothing of largely attended week-day evening services, there are on Sundays three regular services, beginning with a prayer meeting at 6 A.M. Each of these is crowded, and a large number also attend Sunday school in the afternoon; while many prove how attentively they have listened to the teacher by repeating on Monday the substance of the sermon preached on the previous day..................

"Nor is there the slightest reason for thinking that this is merely an outward show of devotion. Everything in daily life tends to prove its reality. The first sound that greets your ear in the morning, and the last at night, is the sound of family worship in every house in the village. I am positively assured that the presence of the white missionary makes no appreciable difference in the congregations, and that the churches are just as crowded when there is only the native teacher to lead the simple worship.

"One thing which strikes us forcibly in all our dealings with these people is their exceeding honesty. Day after day our goods are exposed in the freest manner, more especially on Sundays, when for several hours not a creature remains in the house where we happen to be staying, which is left with every door wide open, and all our things lying about. Boxes and bags which are known to contain knives and cloth and all manner of tempting treasures, stand unlocked, and yet, though the village is invariably within a stone's throw, we have never lost the value of a pin's head. I confess, however, it was some time before I could stifle all qualms of misgiving on seeing a crowd of what some people might call savages swoop down on our property and carry it off piecemeal to the boat or village, as the case might be; but when day after day passed and nothing was ever missing, I gradually acquired the implicit trust which has proved so well founded.

"Poor as these people are, their generosity is most remarkable, and they give freely of such things as they have, both to those among themselves who may be in need, and also for the spread of the Christian cause. Not only does each village support its own teacher,
but considerable offerings for a general fund are made at the annual school examinations and ‘missionary meetings.’ Nothing could be more distressing than to have nothing to give on such a day, so those who have no money will walk miles across the hills, bringing some treasured bowl or spear for sale; and great is the anxiety to receive payment in numerous small coins, that no member of the family may appear empty-handed on the great feast day. Very often, however, it is to obtain a copy of the precious Fijian Testament that the household treasure is thus offered for sale; for already an immense number can read, and are as well instructed in Bible history and precepts as any Scotch peasant of the good old school.”

The Mission has attached to itself a numerous band of native agents—men, in many cases, of the same heroic mould as the founders of the Mission. Of one of them, Joel Mbulu, Miss Gordon Cumming thus speaks:

"He has been a Christian teacher in Fiji for the last 30 years—that is from the beginning—amid noise and tumult of war, and in the thick of all the devilry of cannibalism. He has been the old king’s special teacher,—and many a difficult day he has had with him, and all his handsome, strong-willed sons and daughters. They are all very much attached to him.

"There is no doubt that this magnificent physical development has tended to increase his ascendency over a race which naturally looks up to one whose stature at once proclaims him to be tamatavudina (a man indeed). That such he is, is testified by the deep scars on one arm, which tell of such a triumph, and such power of endurance, as no Fijian living can boast of.

"Many years ago he had a dream about an encounter with a shark. This so haunted him, that for many days he refused to swim, as was his wont, in the deep water near the mouth of the river. At length, yielding to the persuasions of other bold swimmers, he ventured in, and was far ahead of his companions, when suddenly he beheld the monster of his dream coming straight towards him. There was not a moment for hesitation. As the cruel jaws opened, he plunged his arm down the throat of the shark, and, grasping its tongue by the root, held it firmly, while with the other arm he swam towards the shore, dragging the brute after him. As he reached the bank he fell down in a dead faint from exhaustion and loss of blood; but his wounds were speedily dressed, and the arm recovered almost all its power."

Here is the account of grand old Joel’s death:

"Bau, 7th May 1877.—‘Last night there was a great wailing and lamentation in Bau, for soon after midnight Joel passed away, and died nobly as he had lived. He was quite conscious to the very last, and the expression of the grand old face was simply beautiful—so radiant, as of one without a shadow of doubt concerning the home he was so near. No man ever more truly earned the right to say, ‘I have fought a good fight—I have kept the faith;’ and none ever was more truly humble. If ever the crown of righteousness is awarded by a righteous Judge to His true and faithful servants, assuredly Joel will not fail to stand in that blessed company.
"This morning we went to look once more on the face we all loved so truly. He looked grand in death as in life, lying on a square of rich black-brown tappa, his head pillowed on a large roll of native cloth, his beautiful white hair thrown back as a halo, and his long white beard adding to his patriarchal beauty. His poor widow Ekkesa, his pretty granddaughter, and many other women, and students from the college, were all weeping bitterly, as those who had lost their wise and loving counsellor and guide. The king and all his family also mourn sorely, for Joeli has ever been their true and faithful friend and minister; and many a time has he vainly pleaded with the old chief in the long years ere he could be brought to abandon the vile customs of heathenism."

Here then we leave these thrilling volumes. The narrative which they contain is full of instruction and encouragement for us in India. It proves clearly enough that the religious development theory, for which many of the natives of this country plead so earnestly, and which is supported also by some great names in England, is, to say the least, unnecessary. These Fijians were as low as they well could be—beings swayed by the grossest passions, and with intelligence entirely undeveloped except by crime. How wide the distance between them and a spiritual religion! How essential, these theorists would contend, that such ignorant people should toil painfully up every rung of the ladder before they touch the top which reaches even unto heaven! Yet they have leapt it at a bound without even touching fetishism, idolatry, or pantheism in their rise. Cannibal though he was, the Fijian has buried his appetite with his arrow, and stands forth to claim his place in the world as a man, with reasonable faculties, and spiritual capabilities and experiences. And all this in direct opposition to the much belauded development notion! Surely what was unnecessary in Fiji, can never be necessary in India, the land of ancient civilization and long trained intelligence? We may go on, therefore, preaching Christ's Gospel in this country, quietly confident that, not less to the subtle Brahman and simple ryot than to the cannibal Fijian, it will prove "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."
No one could live very long in Hassan without noticing a somewhat elderly, but very energetic, native man, carrying an old sack over his shoulder, probably also a large sized book on his turbaned head, and holding half a dozen smaller ones in his left hand. He is seen in all parts of the town—now squatting down in a verandah discussing eagerly with the master of the house, then hanging about the gate of the Government School busy with the boys, anon bustling in and out among the buyers and sellers at the weekly market, and sometimes visiting the Travellers' Bungalow, to do business with a passing coffee planter or official. Chiefly does he rejoice when the Quarterly Sessions come round, for that always brings him in crowds of people from the surrounding villages, and he has his time fully occupied in going from group to group and pushing his trade.

Who is our busy friend, and what is he doing? It is Puttanna the colporteur; often called "Bunyan" by facetious Europeans, on account of the load upon his back, which very aptly suggests the burdened Pilgrim of the immortal dreamer. Puttanna is our Hassan colporteur, and to my mind the king of colporteurs. His history, as well as that of his wife, has been very strange, and in the hope that they may interest some of the readers of this Magazine, I propose to give a brief sketch of this godly couple of Kanarese Christians.

Many years ago Puttanna was a student in our Mysore schools, where he read and learnt much of Christianity, but apparently with no better results than we see in the case of many other Mission scholars. Years passed away, when one day he was led to join an open air congregation, to which our old Mysore missionary, Mr. Hutcheon, and some others were preaching concerning the way of life. The old school impressions were recalled and vivified; he became an inquirer; and after proper instruction he was received into the Church by baptism. But persecution set in with terrible swiftness, and only too great success, for that very night
his friends got hold of him, made him helplessly drunk, and then laid him down, in angry triumph, just outside the gate of the mission 'compound.' When he came to himself, his shame and despair were so great, that he fled from the town and from all Christian association, and for several years nothing was heard of him.

Mr. Hutcheon left the country; others came, and in their turn left; but still nothing was heard of the lost one. One morning, however, about seven years ago, a man, evidently much excited, presented himself, with his boy and girl at the Mysore mission house. There was an air of mystery as well as excitement about the man. He spoke in hurried whispers, begged Mr. Hocken to take him into his study and lock the door, so that without fear of intrusion he might complete the business about which he had come. Then he told his story (for it was Puttanna)—how he had run away for very shame, and after prolonged absence grown careless; how, notwithstanding his distance from Christians, and unceasing opposition from his wife, he had maintained the form of Christianity; how at last conviction had re-awakened, and feeling keenly the sin and disgrace of bringing up his children as heathens, and unbaptized, he resolved to come back to the place of his own baptism, rejoin the church himself, and dedicate his children to Christ and the Mission. He said that he had been obliged to come away by stealth, but that his wife, guessing with ready instinct where he had come, was sure to follow immediately—might even then be entering the mission compound. All this he told quite breathlessly, and then begged that all further explanation might be delayed until his children had been baptized. When this was done he insisted on writing and signing in, the presence of witnesses, a document in which, without reservation, he committed his children to the care of the Mission, and in case anything should happen to him, constituted the missionaries their legal guardians. This he did for fear his wife and friends might try to seize them and deport them to some other neighbourhood, where Christian influences would be absent. As soon as the desire of the man had been quite accomplished, all his excited fear left him, and his broad face beamed with contented joy. He had only just left the mission bungalow, when his wife appeared, and with great demonstrations of fury demanded news of her children. When she was told of their baptism she
threw herself upon the earth, beat her breast in rage, and noisily wailed forth the agony of her disappointment.

Shortly after this Puttanna was sent to Hassan to serve as colporteur in connection with the Bangalore Bible and Tract Society. It was there, in 1877, that I first met him, and after an intimate acquaintance of six years, during which time I have watched his character and work very closely, I feel convinced that he is one of the most earnest and consistent native Christians we have in the Mysore churches. His appointment to the Hassan colportage, though agreeable in every way to himself, was loudly and persistently opposed by his wife. She was still unconverted, and to leave her heathen friends and go and live in a Christian neighbourhood at so distant a place was altogether too dreadful a thing to contemplate. With much difficulty, however, she was induced to make the journey, and soon the whole family settled down in their new home with some show of harmony.

But the quiet routine of such a life, the restraints of her surroundings, and her husband’s occupation, became more than she could bear, and at last the storm burst. One morning a messenger came running into our bungalow with the news that Padmamma—for that was the woman’s name—was, in her husband’s absence, running away with the children to Mysore! Would I come and stop her? I found the report only too true. There she was, dragging the boy and girl at either side, and with the baby in a cradle upon her head, hurrying off through the back gate towards the town. To my regret extreme measures had to be adopted, and the children forcibly taken from her to the mission bungalow. The scene was one not easily described. The shrieks of the mother brought out all the neighbours; the servants of the adjoining Travellers’ Bungalow began to line the wall; and all these, with many passing onlookers, witnessed the unprecedented scene of an apparently in­furiated sahib tearing away by superior strength the children of an inoffensive mother! To this day I remember with half regretful amusement that in that short struggle I broke every one of poor Padmi’s glass bangles!

Puttanna now made arrangements to send the eldest boy and girl to our boarding school in Bangalore, where they would be safe from the mother’s influence; and the transfer had to be carried out with some caution. He took his wife to a neighbouring village for the day, and at dusk,
before her return, the poor children were taken a mile outside the town, where a cart was in readiness. Placed in charge of our Catechist Shantappa, they thus set off on their long slow journey of 115 miles.

This matter having been settled, and the children placed, by the father's wish, under the motherly care of Mrs. Hodson, we hoped that Padmi would see the uselessness of further opposition, and yield, even if sullenly, to the inevitable. But her fierce untamed nature chafed at all restraint, and she still made most determined efforts to get her husband back to Mysore, away from the baneful influence of the missionary. More than once she rushed off with the intention of committing suicide—poor Puttanna pursuing her, and eventually coaxing her home again. Now, too, she would frequently dart into the bungalow, lay her little fat baby at my feet, and go away for hours, leaving the unwelcome visitor on my hands. Her absence on one occasion lasted several days, and my wife was obliged to engage a beggar woman from the streets as foster mother for the abandoned infant. The position was certainly a trying one for the young wife of a young missionary.

Padmamma next tried complaints at the police station, and one morning, when the Sessions Judge, Col. Hay, was quietly walking to his Court, she threw herself at his feet, clasped him by the legs, and besought him to interfere. Councils of five grave elders were convened and her case was fully discussed, with the result that Padmamma was solemnly warned to behave more calmly. A friendly Police Inspector also called and gave her two hours of wholesome advice in the blandest and most conciliatory manner, but without result.

Thus things went on till I was compelled to leave Hassan for seven months to recruit my health on the Nilagiri Hills. My successor, Mr. Haigh, took charge of the Hassan circuit and—Padmamma! Matters gradually mended. She began to calm down, and after a while was induced to attend Christian worship and to put herself under Christian instruction. One day, when her husband was away selling his books, she appeared at Mr. Haigh's study door, and said she wanted to speak to him. Seated on the floor, she told him very simply how for a long time she had had "a bad mind," and had been acting very wickedly, but that now
Gathered Sheaves.

God had given her "a good mind" and made her sorry, and that she would like to become a Christian and receive baptism. After a short delay for the sake of fuller instruction, arrangements were made and Padmi stood forth in the presence of our little Christian congregation, a candidate for admission into the Church of Christ. The service began, and the missionary had proceeded about half way through, when Padmi seemed seized with a sudden tremor, and, to the amazement of minister and people, rushed like a frightened deer from the room! The fact was, she was appalled at the step she was taking. But the Spirit strove and ceased not till all opposition and fear had gone, and once more Padmamma sought baptism. This time the service was completed without interruption, and to everybody's joy, peace reigned in Puttanna's little cottage.

On our return from the Hills, one of the first to welcome us was Padmamma. What a change had been wrought already! How humbly she salaamed and asked our pardon for all the trouble she had given us! She was thenceforth a constant visitor at the mission bungalow with her chubby little baby (the latter no longer a cause of anxiety to us); and it was touching to see her sit as a child at my wife's feet learning to sew, and trying to spell out her letters.

There was now no longer any reason for keeping her from her children, so, when Christmas came round, she and Puttanna went with us to Bangalore to remove them from the school and bring them back to Hassan. It was none too soon, for the little ones had been grieving for their parents, and in the case of the boy the sorrow was likely to have serious effects. He was already showing symptoms of that sad disease, dropsy, which has carried off so many of our famine orphans. Is it possible that homesickness should be a cause of that dread malady? It would appear so in this case, for the change wrought wonders, and the little fellow, notwithstanding an ill-ventilated home, inferior food, and scanty clothing, recovered rapidly, and once restored to his parents was also restored to health.

But the best remains to be told. My wife, about this time, having made sufficient progress in the language, established a mothers' meeting for our native Christians and Padmamma became one of her most regular and attentive members. She drank in the truth with eagerness, and her questions and answers revealed a genuine desire after spiritual things. When the women were examined as to
the sermon of the previous Sunday, Padmamma could almost always say something about it, and usually made such observations as showed that she had been an attentive listener. In fine, to our great joy, she became soundly converted, and, so far as we can judge, has never lost that blessing. It seems an impossibility to identify, in this humble, quiet, happy Christian woman, her who before had been almost tigerish in ferocity, and of whom one had almost said, "This woman can never be converted." If ever I come near to doubting the power of the Gospel, I have but to think of Padmamma and those unworthy doubts must vanish. I would not have my readers conclude that she or her husband are without flaw. Alas! the blemishes are far too patent for such an illusion. But the grace that wrought the greater change is sufficient to correct these remaining defects.

About a month ago I bade good-bye for a time to my Kanarese Christians at Hassan in order to visit England. After a last interview with the dear orphan girls and the members of our little church, I was walking sorrowfully to the coach that stood at the foot of the hill, when a woman, almost breathless with running, overtook me. It was Padmamma; and hers was the last warm hand I grasped of all the weeping Christians. Should I not meet Puttanna and his wife again in this world, I confidently hope that we shall meet in the next, when the reaper shall present these his "gathered sheaves" to the great "Lord of the harvest."

A. P. Riddett.

JOTTINGS FROM THE MYSORE DISTRICT MEETING.

Foreign District Meetings have a very special social aspect, just as truly as they have religious and business aspects. A few years ago, when the Mysore Province was still governed by the English Commission, every country station, with the one exception, perhaps, of Gubbi, had a small English society; and thus, though there was unvarying quiet, there was not positive loneliness. Now, all this has been changed, and Hassan, Tumkur, and Shimoga are only a little less
lonely than Gubbi itself, where no English speaking person, save, perhaps, the Amildar lives. Naturally enough, therefore, the District Meeting is looked forward to, especially by the missionary’s wife, as a happy break in the not unhappy monotony of the year’s solitude. Truly, the getting to Bangalore is a formidable business. Bullock-coaching, under the most luxurious conditions is a dusty, tiring, and temper-trying experience; and each of these adjectives may be emphasised into its superlative when a father, mother, and three or four bairns have to distribute themselves in a coach already overcrowded with luggage. But such difficulties stop nobody. They are accepted as the disagreeable and inevitable accidents of a most agreeable event, and are borne with heedless good temper. As the last pair of bullocks pull up panting in front of the Mission House, there pour forth a tribe in dusty dishabille, whose smiles and noisy greetings would delude you into the belief that their journey had been a tonic, not a toil.

The District Meeting becomes, in fact, not merely a business assembly, to which men come at the last minute, and from which they hurry with unseemly speed, but a large family reunion marked by much hallowed mirth and genial hospitality. What a season it is for the ladies! There are new babies to be shewn and admired; a variety of experiences, domestic and travelling, to be discussed; plans of work to be compared; progress in the vernacular to be measured; and a year’s shopping to be done! And to the children it is a most gleesome time! They fully appreciate the family character of the gathering, and dub each missionary ‘Uncle’ and every lady ‘Aunt.’ All the keenness of anticipation and abandon of gladness which attach to the short seaside holiday of the family in England, are here matched, for mothers and children, in the prospect and experience of our annual District Meeting.

The typical social gathering of the Meeting is at the Chairman’s house, and this year it was one of unusual interest. There was the truly returned missionary to be welcomed in the person of Mr. Hocken, who seems to have come back heartened for fresh work and strong to bear it. He had much to tell of intercourse in England with old Mysore men, of the state of missionary feeling, and of the need of
Jottings from the Mysore District Meeting.

missionary information amongst home Methodists. There were new faces to be welcomed—Mr. Burnet and Mr. Robinson; and, amongst the ladies, Mrs. Hocken, Miss Pearson and Miss Sheppard. Altogether, it was a large party, marked by cheerful gratitude and buoyant hope. As we knelt together at the family altar, we acknowledged with devout appreciation that abounding mercy of God which had brought us through the year untouched by loss and preserved in health. Then came letters from our old fellow labourers, Mr. and Mrs. Symons, sketching some of their English experiences, and expressing what we know to be a most ardent love for the work here, and desire to return to it. Words of kind farewell were spoken to Mr. and Mrs. Riddett, who, after ten years in the country, spent chiefly in connection with the orphanages, are now going to visit England. Thus greetings and partings, mingled with memories of the absent ones, gave a strongly human interest to our gathering, and the hearty unanimity of feeling which was manifested throughout, and fostered by such manifestation, has added strength to the District and will be helpful encouragement to each individual missionary at his own quiet station during the year.

The earliest business of the District Meeting was the stationing of the European Missionaries. We strongly believe, as a District, in the importance of continuous effort and prolonged personal influence in one station; but the exigencies of the District compel some of the brethren to itinerate. This year Mr. Riddett's return to England involved the appointment of Mr. Rees to Hassan, which in turn necessitated the transfer of Mr. Roberts from the Chennapatna Circuit to Shimoga. Mr. Hocken returns to his old station, Mysore City, and Mr. Robinson has been appointed to Chikamagalur

The Mysore country contains within itself a somewhat large Coffee District, and borders very closely upon the still more extensive Coffee Estates of Coorg. The stations contiguous to these districts are so clamorous in their demands on the missionaries labouring there, that hitherto it has not been possible to do more than hold occasional services for the Planters. At our first session, however, a very numerously signed memorial was presented from the Planters of
Jottings from the Mysore District Meeting.

South Coorg, expressing their appreciation of the work done amongst them, and earnestly praying that arrangements might be made for more regular ministrations in their neighbourhood. The memorial was very favourably received by the District Meeting, and Mr. Haigh, who is already well known in Coorg, was appointed to spend four months of the year there, and to give the rest of his time to the Gubbi and Kunigal Stations. It was similarly arranged that Mr. Rees should devote two months of the year to work in the Mysore and Manzarabad Coffee Districts.

Three native brethren were present at our sittings, one of whom, the Rev. T. Luke, received ordination during the course of the District Meeting. The service was historical, inasmuch as Bro. Luke is the first Kanarese Native Minister—the harbinger, we believe, of a long and already rapidly increasing succession of pure Kanarese pastors. We hail very gratefully his accession to the ranks of the ordained Ministry, and we pray that he may long be the model in fidelity of those who shall come after him.

This matter of Native Agency has for some time past been occupying our very close attention. We seek a continually rising standard of efficiency amongst those already accepted, and a continuous supply of capable and promising candidates. Not only are the Assistant Native Ministers regularly examined according to the directions of Conference, but our Catechists have to undergo a long series of yearly examinations in Scripture, Theology, Language and General Knowledge. No man from amongst the Catechists can ever secure nomination as a candidate for the ministry merely because of success in these examinations; for we rigorously demand high character and long proved consistency, as well as unquestionable preaching ability. But no man, on the other hand, who repeatedly fails in these examinations can ever hope to enter our ministry; for our means are too narrow to support pious inefficiency.

Under God, the hope and strength of our Native Agency lie in the thorough character of the work done at the Theological Institution. The Institution is only small yet, but it is working on broad and permanent lines. At the District Meeting two young men, after a very satisfactory
three years’ course, were admitted to active work as Catechists; while three others, who had successfully passed all tests as candidates for the Theological Institution, were formally received to take their place. Not long hence there is certain to be a large accession to the number of Theological Students, for we have now in the Province many godly youths on whom we believe the Lord has laid His hand.

The apparatus for the due training of our Christian children and youth is now reported as nearly complete. The Industrial Orphanages at Tumkur and Hassan are preparing for us a useful class of Christian artisans, and small agriculturalists, who have had education enough to read their Bibles and conduct the ordinary affairs of business. In the Girls’ Boarding School at Bangalore, and the Boys’ Home in Mysore, our most promising children are receiving the higher English education, and preparing themselves to take responsibility in the church and to become distinct forces in the trained intelligence of this land. To all these it has been resolved to add a Normal Training Institution, which is to be established this year in Shimoga, and from which we hope to send forth a succession of efficient Christian schoolmasters.

The general educational work throughout the Province during the year has been signally encouraging. The High Schools of Bangalore and Mysore City have fully maintained their position, both in the numbers of their students, and in the published results of their tested work. Each year we are sending forth from these schools youths who are destined to take an active, and in many cases a prominent part in the Government of this province. Those officers of state who were formerly educated in mission schools are singularly liberal in tone, and treat us and our work with grateful respect. They are distinct factors in the unbinding of prejudice; and as the years go by their influence and increasing numbers will make conviction more respected, and obedience to it more easy.

In the Girls’ Schools we report 2,260 scholars, which is an increase on the previous year of 239. One half of this increase is in the City of Mysore; but all the schools in the
District shew healthy development. The year has been signalised in this department by the introduction of special lady workers from England, who in Bangalore and Mysore are trying to initiate amongst the girls a work which shall be as extensive and beneficial as that which is now so popular in the High Schools for boys. In this province female education is fast pushing itself into the position of a necessity among all who claim for their family respectability and influence. It is very largely in our hands, and we wish, and will try, to do justice to our mission, and to the country, by taking the opportunity at its flood.

There has been an increase of 87 in our native membership this year—an increase which is well distributed throughout the District. In scarcely any instance is it the result of spasmodic and isolated outburst; but it comes to us as the ripe growth of patient and continuous effort. From Banavar in the Hassan circuit a very interesting work is reported. Years ago a cooly from Mysore heard the Gospel in Natal from the Rev. Ralph Stott, and on his return to Bangalore received baptism. Three years since he was the means of bringing two others of his own people to Christianity, and they in their turn brought three more. During the last year further fruit has appeared, and we have now in that village a Christian community of 30 souls, and the prospect of extending success. This village work is exactly the type of what must ultimately be the most characteristic feature of our mission in the Mysore.

Our churches are steadily graduating in the art of systematic liberality. The amount raised this year for the support of the native ministry shews a very considerable increase on the previous year. Some of the instances of zeal and liberality have been exceedingly cheering. There are records of gifts varying from a handful of rice to an antimacassar and a silver belt. In one circuit a Thanksgiving Fund was started during the year in gratitude for deliverance from the cholera scourge, and realized the large sum of Rs. 110. In that same circuit, six years ago, the total amount raised for the Native Ministry was only about Rs. 40-0-0 as compared with nearly Rs. 600 this year. And the District generally is advancing in the same path as that circuit. There are infallible signs of
growing appreciation of duty and privilege in this matter, while generally there is expanding interest in the work of God.

Mr. Eslick reports with cheery thankfulness of the English work in Bangalore. There is a slight increase in the number of members, and steady attendance at the class meetings. The congregations are very good—so good, indeed, at St. John's Hill, that the chapel is to be enlarged immediately. The people have a mind to work, and not less a mind to give. They are striving hard to render their cause quite independent of District support, and success is a speedy probability.

The District Meeting has had a very grave problem to consider, which puzzles the wisest of us, and which has therefore been remitted to the Committee in London for solution—how, namely, to maintain a rapidly growing work with a gradually but inexorably diminishing grant. We are free to acknowledge that the policy of reduction has acted not altogether unhealthily. It has forced missionaries to jealous scrutiny of all items of expenditure, and to a most unsympathetic deduction wherever possible. It has given point to their appeals for more generous giving in the native churches. And what more can we now do? We know of no unnecessary charges, by the removal of which we could better adjust expenditure to income. But we do know of many urgent needs, which at present we are obliged rigorously to ignore.

This is the third year in which the retrenchment policy of the Missionary Committee has operated. During that time we have introduced ten carefully trained new Catechists into our work, while three of the older Catechists have been received on probation as Native Ministers. Ten new stations have been occupied; several new day schools have been started; we have organised a high class Boarding School, and have made arrangements for beginning a Normal Training Institution. It is thus evident that the policy of the District has been entirely and most happily at variance with the policy of the Committee. We have been restrained, but we could not be stopped. At last, however, the inventiveness of economical necessity
is dying exhausted. Ingenuity is barren of further expedient for increasing the army while supplies are being cut down. The crisis is near. Gloomily, but resolutely, we must begin to.—Nay, surely; but our bonds will be loosened, and we shall be ordered forth speedily, in the fulness of unpim ped energy, to awaiting conquest.

The conversation on the state of the work of God, while it caused heart-searching and humiliation, was yet marked by grateful exultation. The tone of the District is strongly hopeful in relation to every department of the mission, and under its buoyant influence we now return to our stations. We know there is much hard work before us, but by God's help we will try to carry it on with an enthusiasm which shall be patient even when most eager, and with unfaltering faith in the divinely promised issue.

The following notes of special services held during the District Meeting have been forwarded by the Rev. E. R. Eslick, and thus complete the three fold aspect of our gathering which we have previously indicated:

"The members and congregations of the Bangalore English Circuit look forward from year to year with much pleasure to our District Meeting because of the special public services in connection with it. They are always ready to give the missionary brethren a hearty welcome and to show some real sympathy in their noble work. This year's District services have been seasons of blessing to us all.

"At the St. John's Hill missionary meeting, the Rev. J. M. Walker, M.A., Chaplain of Trinity Church presided, and thereby once more proved his thorough catholicity of spirit. He gave very valuable testimony to the genuineness of our missionary operations in this province as witnessed by himself at several of our stations. After an address by the Rev. W. H. J. Picken, the Rev. A. P. Riddett effectively described the interesting work which has begun with such large promise among the Koramas of Banavâr. He showed that, though belonging to the gipsy tribe, their Christianity had inspired them with a wish to settle permanently, and he appealed for money to enable him by means of judicious loans for a short period to put them into the position they desired. The appeal excited much interest, and was most substantially responded to.
"Two days later the Cantonment meeting was held, presided over by our Society Steward, Mr. F. W. S. Newland, who spoke of the extent and stability of Wesleyan Missions, as shewn by the Society’s large report, and also of the wonderful liberality of the English churches in reference to missionary enterprise. The Rev. J. Hudson, B.A., gave a most instructive sketch of the work throughout the Mysore, and referred with much tenderness and discrimination to the death of our old Chairman, the Rev T. Hodson. The Rev. C. H. Hocken, just fresh from England, entertained us with the narration of some of his home experiences. The missionary sermons were preached by the Revs. E. P. Rice, B.A., (L. M. S.) and G. W. Sawday. The proceeds of this anniversary, including Juvenile Offerings and Sunday School collections for the Tumkur Orphanage, have reached the gratifying sum of Rs. 486, more than half of which is due to the gifts and exertions of the Sunday Scholars. Thus in India, as well as in England, the children prove their worth as workers in Christ’s great cause."

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TIDINGS FROM NORTH CEYLON.

Our District Meeting, which usually assembles in January, was this year held in November, owing to the sudden appointment of the Rev. John Brown to Calcutta. We met at Trincomalee, and enjoyed a season of rich spiritual blessing.

There were some things to sadden us. The Rev. J. G. Pearson had been compelled to return to England during the year on account of ill health. Bro. Webster, cheery, bold, and capable, had been summoned to his eternal reward just when he had acquired acknowledged influence among the boys and young men of Jaffna. And now we were to lose, for some time at least, our Bro. Brown, who during many years of unostentatious service has greatly endeared himself to his brethren, and to the churches of this District.

There were, however, many things to gladden and encourage us. We rejoiced greatly in the large number of baptisms which had taken place during the year, many of which were of a specially interesting character. Thus,
Mr. Brown reported a most encouraging service which he had held in Batticaloa just before leaving it. Mr. Subraman, a native gentleman of great intelligence and holding a high position under Government, had been long the subject of strong convictions with regard to the truth of Christianity, and in November came forward, with all the members of his family save one, for baptism. The one exception was that of a son of his who, a week or two previously, had bravely led the way. Other conversions of equal interest have during the year taken place in Batticaloa. Jaffna has been similarly blessed. I arrived from England just in time to witness ten baptisms; and recent conversations with the young men of the station have induced in me, not only the hope, but the confidence, that before long many will make an open confession of Christ.

Other stations have their distinctive features. At Point Pedro, the spirit of hearing has been wonderfully vouchsafed to the people. At Trincomalee there is to be speedy advance in the work amongst the soldiers and sailors; while at Kalmunai a successful effort has just been made to raise funds for establishing a Girls' Boarding School.

At present the number of full and accredited church members in the District is 903, being an increase of 13, with 256 on trial. The contributions for the support of the Native ministry during the year are over Rs. 5,000.

Quite recently there has been held in Jaffna a public meeting connected with The Society of Sacred Principles. The name is a strange one, but the Society which bears it is destined, I believe, to do a great work here. It has been started about a year, and its pleasing peculiarity is that it is entirely indigenous, the outcome of purely native zeal, and has never even had, until very lately, a European missionary to preside over its meetings. The members meet once a week, and devote their time to prayer, the reading and study of God's Word, and reading and discussion of extracts from good authors, both religious and secular. The society is, in fact, a Young Men's Christian Association. It is quite unsectarian, although at present most of the members are Wesleyan Methodists. Every week the members spend some time in visiting
appointed parts of the town, distributing tracts, giving exhortations, and in other ways scattering the good seed of the kingdom. We are just now revising the Society's rules, which are really strict.

We have just had the Prize Day at the Jaffna Girls' Boarding School. The Boys' school-room was gaily decorated for the occasion by the students of the Central School, who thus shewed their interest in the success of their sisters. At 6 p.m., on December 18th, the scene there was something like this. Arranged in tiers at one end of the room sat all the girls arrayed in their best clothes; and facing them was a table laden with books, work boxes, dolls, and such other articles as girls everywhere delight in. To their left was the harmonium, and then came the audience, which comprised the Government Inspector and his wife (who was to distribute the prizes), some American friends, parents of the girls, Native Ministers, school teachers, and a large mass of natives of all descriptions. The girls recited several pieces very creditably, and sang their English songs with much correctness. A very special feature of the evening was the instrumental music rendered by three of the girls on the harmonium. It was evident to all that very much time and 'cheerful trouble' had been successfully spent on the girls by our Chairman's wife and the lady Principal. Most of the pupils have been baptized, but a few are heathens yet.

Altogether, as a new comer to this District, I gladly own that my first impressions of the work have been pleasing and inspiring. Christianity has firmly gripped the people, and the hesitation which so many manifest about the public profession of Christianity, is due, not to want of conviction as to its truth, but to the influence of unenlightened woman. and to the feared loss of temporal prosperity and position. Such obstacles, however, cannot long oppose themselves to the victorious march of Christ; and though we, His soldiers, cannot rest in accomplished conquest, yet we can fight with cheery ardour under the inspiration of assured victory.

W J. G. Bestall.
NOTES OF OTHER CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES.

The Christian Mela, of the American Methodist Mission in Rohilkund, was held at Chandansi on the Oudh and Rohilkund Railway early in December, and was a marked success. It was conducted by the Rev. E. W. Parker, Presiding Elder. In all 1,043 Native Christians, representing fourteen large and a number of small stations, were present, some of them having travelled a hundred miles in order to attend. The boys of the Moradabad Boarding School, walked thirty miles, rather than miss the meeting. These people were accommodated in 30 tents, large and small, and 105 grass chhappars. Of those present only a dozen were foreign missionaries; all the others were natives, preachers, catechists, theological students, colporteurs, teachers, Bible readers, men, women and children. Several days were entirely given to religious services and earnest prayer was answered in showers of blessings, which made the meeting a memorable one. In one meeting especially, at the close of a day of prayerful waiting upon God, the Holy Spirit visited the assembly, and scores, chiefly young people, were converted. The attendance on Sunday was estimated at 2,000. The Mission proposes to encourage these melas or camp-meetings. Last year there was a single mela for Oudh and Rohilkund; this year two were held, one for each district: in the one were 1,043, in the other 425, in all 1,468, as compared with 843 last year. The Native Christians thoroughly enjoy these meetings and will be able to carry then on unaided. Ten years hence the Christian melas will be powers felt for good far and wide.

The Rev. A. Clifford of the C. M. S. Mission at Krishnagar reports much inquiry about Christianity among the Mussulmans in the North of the Nadiya district. More than a year ago a respectable Mussulman received baptism; and the event was at once followed by severe persecution, which he was unable to bear. His relapse was a great triumph for the Mussulmans, but their triumph was short lived. The inquiry spirit only grew in intensity. Eight months later four Mussulmans belonging to the same clan as the man who had relapsed, were baptized in the village of Tetulberia. Great efforts were made to prevent the baptism, from the time the intention of the converts was made public.
Notes of other Churches and Societies.

all labourers were forbidden to work for them. At the ghat and in the roads ridicule and reproach were heaped upon them; doggerel verses full of low abuse were composed by the village poet, and two nights before the baptisms one of their houses was set on fire. The owner with three other Christians who were staying with him, managed to extinguish the fire before much damage was done. Although a large crowd of Mussulmans collected, and were entreated to assist, only two of them gave a helping hand. Relying upon God the converts stuck boldly to their purpose, and were baptized in the presence of a large company of Mussulmans and Hindus.

The South India Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church has just been held in Calcutta. The number of members reported was 1,323, with 739 on trial, being a slight decrease of the former and increase of the latter. Forty-nine Sunday Schools were reported, with 319 officers and teachers, and 2,896 scholars. There has been an increase of five Churches and three parsonages at a cost of Rs. 27,970. The total contributions for all purposes throughout the conference during the past year was about Rs. 115,000.

The chief interest of the session, and that which will make it memorable for some time to come, was the discussion of a proposal to apply to the Missionary Society in America for help with which to carry on work among non-Christian people. It has been the settled policy of this Conference since its organization to carry on its work on the principle of self-support, so far at least as the income of missionaries is concerned. In taking this position, the members of the Conference find no fault with any other line of policy, but merely indicate the kind of policy which suits them, and to which most of them have felt a special call. They have been working on this basis for about ten years, but not with the measure of success which some think they ought to be able to show, and of late, some members of the Conference have felt inclined to make a change, and accept appropriations from the Missionary Society. After a very protracted discussion of the question, however, it was decided by a majority of more than six to one to adhere to the policy of self-dependence. This decision may not be final but it settles the question for the immediate present, while the discussion will probably result in much good in stimu-
lating the missionaries to renewed zeal in prosecuting the work among the natives.

The death is announced of the Rev. H. W. Shackell, M.A., late Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and for sixteen years one of the missionaries of the C. M. S. in North India. Mr. Shackell was one of those Missionaries who have been able, and willing, to labour for the Gospel in the mission field at their own charges. Having worked with great earnestness and fidelity in Agra and other parts of North India, he returned to England in 1873, and was never able to come back, though desirous of doing so. His private resources were always, up to the last, freely made use of for spreading the Gospel, and one of the latest of his liberal acts to his Society was to offer to it Rs. 1,000 for each new station opened amongst the Santâls, in whom he always took the liveliest interest.

The Editor of the Indian Evangelical Review in reviewing the year 1882 says:—"The event of the year to our Bengali brethren is the annual Conference held in October, closing with its love feast and procession, with singing and music. Fears were entertained that the effect of the agitation against sacerdotalism at the beginning of the year would diminish the zeal, harmony and numerical importance of the Conference. Whatever effect beyond instruction and that was great and good, that discussion may have had, the zeal, enthusiasm, harmony and numbers were never more than this year. I thought, a few years ago, that I should never, in my life, see the large Hall in Nimtollah Street even half filled with Bengali Christians. On the last day of the Conference it was my privilege to see it more than full, crowded to the ceiling and out at the doors. One of the streams flowing from that Conference was a very successful and large Christian procession with singing, prayer, preaching and music in Serampore; and ever since small daily processions in the streets and bye-lanes of Calcutta on the same plan. The processionists are frequently asked into Hindu houses to sing their Christian songs even to the inmates of the zenanas. I think that in the future history of the propagation of Christianity in India the musical procession, with prayer and preaching, will occupy a far more important part than it has hitherto done."
GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

The Viceroy at the Calcutta Madrassa, on occasion of the prize distribution said:—"It is a cardinal creed with the Government of India that we should maintain an attitude of strict impartiality to all creeds in this country. We have not to look to the creed or race of a man, but to enquire what are his personal qualifications. Under such circumstances it behoves, it seems to me, the leading men of every community in India to take care that their brethren in race and faith do not fall behind in the struggle of life. The educational task to-day is an arduous task, and for its full and complete accomplishment requires the strictest union of the varied forces of every description; of Government on the one side, of private individuals on the other; of public assistance and religious zeal. Above all, it is a task that needs that men should cast aside all mere regard for individual opinion or personal preference, that they should unite to accomplish one of the most important and greatest works which can ever be done to benefit the Indian people. I feel a great interest in this institution. You know well that I earnestly desire the extension and improvement of primary education, but it would be a great error to suppose that I do not equally desire an extension of higher and middle education."

Sir Richard Temple has been visiting America, and while in Boston met a number of gentlemen interested in religious movements at home and abroad and spoke to them of Protestant Missions in India. According to the *Boston Daily Advertiser* he gave high testimony to the personal worth, merit, capacity, and self-sacrificing devotion, of the men and women from Europe and America, not only in their direct missionary work, but in their untiring efforts to aid the natives, in their struggles to improve their physical condition, aiding and sympathizing with them in years of famine, and stimulating them by precept and example to a higher life as seen and heard in the daily life of Christians and cultured homes.

Sir Richard spoke of adverse reports regarding missions as coming often from travellers with limited opportunities for accurate and reliable information, and also from some others of long experience in India, and much information, but who have little, if any, regard for religious work at home. These criticisms, he said, do not indicate the local English opinion in India of Christian missions; the testimony of such men as Sir John Lawrence, Sir Bartle Frere, Robert Montgomery, and others, given in favour of missions, outweighs these off-hand and unsympathizing reports. Regarding the
of the missionaries to the government, he said the missionaries have the confidence of their native neighbours, know their inner life, real sorrows, anxieties, and grievances, better than the government can know, and by their timely representations to the proper authorities, perils have been averted, which might have been left to increase and ripen into impending evils.

Of the native Christians, he said, their character was good, and while they do not possess all the Christian gifts and graces, their new religion does exercise a decisive influence on their life and conversation, and despite many and powerful temptations, the instances of apostasy are very rare. He cited instances where, during the Sepoy rebellion, the native Christians, being threatened with death if they did not abjure their new religion, stood to their principles with sublime martyr-like courage. He spoke of the growth of the native ministry, and the necessity of its rapid enlargement; also of the laudable willingness and increased ability of the native Christians, especially those born in the faith and nurtured by Christian parents, to render their churches and schools self-supporting; of the bright and happy condition of the native Christian villages in Southern India, and of the improved physical condition of the converts, under the higher moral and religious requirements of their new faith.

An important and interesting paper appeared last month in The Fortnightly Review, on "The Political Effect of Religious Thought in India," in which, while treating of a volume of Asiatic Studies by Sir Alfred Lyall, the writer, Sir Richard Temple, calls attention to the under-currents of native thought in India. He says that, probably, "the sum of their thoughts amount to this, that they are, by the will of an ineradicable fate, living under foreign rule; that they are ineffably better, nicer, pleasanter people than their rulers; that they have a purity of descent, a grandeur of tradition, an antiquity of system with which an European nation has nothing to compare; that, despite their union socially and morally, they cannot hold together politically; that, consequently, they have fallen under the control, first of Turks or Mongols, who have force alone, and now of the British, who have both force and sagacity; that great care must be taken lest the unavoidable contact with white people in business affairs should lead to social intercourse where the gulf of separation must be preserved; that British rule cannot last for ever, and meanwhile its advantages must be accepted with scanty thanks or recognition; that doubtless on some great day there will be successors to the heroes of old who may bring back the "golden age" (in eastern
phrase); that this prospect, however, though wrapt in the haze of sunshine, is too dim to be within the practical domain of hope." It is thought that there is a great opportunity presented to Christendom, if only it be earnest and true enough to make use of it, for giving to those teeming millions the blessings of the religion of Jesus Christ.

The following passage on the triumph of Christianity, is quoted by the *London Quarterly Review*, with the remark that, "for its wide historic survey, and its vigorous and glowing eloquence, it is one of the finest in the range of literature":—

"It (i.e. Christianity) arose in an enlightened and skeptical age; but among a despised and narrow minded people. It earned hatred and persecution at home by its liberal genius and opposition to the national prejudices; it earned contempt abroad by its connection with the country where it was born, but which sought to strangle it in its birth. Emerging from Judea, it made its onward march through the most polished regions of the world—Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Rome—and in all it attracted notice and provoked hostility. Successive massacres and attempts at extermination, persecution for ages by the whole force of the Roman Empire, it bore without resistance, and seemed to draw fresh vigour from the axe; assaults in the way of argument, from whatever quarter, it was never ashamed or unable to repel, and whether attacked or not it was resolutely aggressive.

"In four centuries it had pervaded the civilized world; it had mounted the throne of the Caesars; it had spread beyond the limits of their sway, and had made inroads upon barbarian nations, whom their eagles had never visited; it had gathered all learning into itself, and made the literature of the world its own; it survived the inundation of the barbarian tribes, and conquered the world once more, by converting its conquerors to the faith; it survived the restoration of letters; it survived an age of free inquiry and skepticism, and had long stood its ground in the field of argument, and commanded the intelligent assent of the greatest minds that ever were; it had been the parent of civilization, and the nurse of learning, and if light, and humanity, and freedom be the boast of modern Europe, it is to Christianity that she owes them. Exhibiting in the life of Jesus, a picture, varied and minute, of the perfect human, united with the divine, in which the mind of man has not been able to find a deficiency, or detect a blemish—a picture copied from no model and rivalled by no copy—it has accommodated itself to every climate; it has retained through every change a salient spring of life, which enables it to throw off corruption and decay, and renew its youth amid outward hostility and inward divisions."