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BARAMULA FROM THE SOUTH-SIDE OF THE JHELUM.

VIGNETTES OF KASHMIR

BY

E. G. HULL

Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, Kashmir.

WITH PREFACE BY

SIR WILLIAM MACKWORTH YOUNG, K.C.S.I.

Late Lieut.-Governor of the Panjab.

WITH FIFTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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Preface.

NO more striking illustration could be afforded of the way in which God is opening the door for the spread of the good tidings of the Gospel in the East, than that which is contained in the following simple narrative of a lady missionary's work in Kashmir.

I remember meeting Dr. Elmslie—that splendid pioneer of C.M.S. medical missions—in General Lake's house, in Lahore, in 1866. He was not the first missionary in Kashmir, for a lady claims that honour—Mrs. Robert Clark, wife of the Panjab missionary veteran. But Dr. Elmslie was the first to establish a regular mission in that country, though he was only allowed to remain there during the visitors' season, and had to come away in the winter.

I remember the difficulties which he experienced and the obstructions which were placed in the way of his work at that time. I remember that prayers were offered in General

Lake's house for the removal of those difficulties and obstructions; and how some of them were removed before Dr. Elmslie was taken Home in 1878.

But who ever thought that in less than a generation the door would be opened wide to missionary effort in Kashmir, and that important medical and educational institutions would be established there under the control of the missionaries with the full sanction and approval of the State authorities? And who ever supposed that within forty years a lady missionary would be able to write in regard to work in the Kashmir zenanas: "Invitations to visit and teach come faster than we can respond to them"?

May some of the readers of these pages be led to devote themselves to this grand work!

W. MACKWORTH YOUNG.

*Wimbledon,
4th November, 1902.*

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Introduction.



IN A DANDY, KASHMIR.

Introduction.

IT is now some fourteen years since I was first sent out to Kashmir to begin work in its homes—among those whom none but a woman could reach ; and, having been asked to record some of my experiences, I am sending forth this little book, hoping by its means to interest some in the dwellers in that beautiful land.

It is not of its outward aspect—its snow-capped mountains, its blue lakes, its broad rivers and foaming torrents, its noble plane trees, its fruits and flowers—that I am going to write, but of its homes and its people.

An American lady visiting Kashmir called on me one day not long ago. “Will you take me,” she said, “to a Kashmir home, and let me see something of the home life of the people?” She had already seen all that the ordinary visitor sees of Kashmir, but she felt that she did not know the country while she was a stranger to the people. And, after an hour or more spent in what was to her an unimagined world, she said it had been the most interesting day she had passed in the country.

It has been my aim in the following pages to portray for my readers, who may, perhaps, never have a similar opportunity, something of the home life, thoughts, and manners of the people of Kashmir, hoping that they may be as much interested after their perusal as my American friend was after her visits.

What a great contrast there is between "the stately homes of England" and those in which the Kashmir women spend their lives! The outside of the latter is sufficiently picturesque—in the style of a Swiss cottage in a greater or less degree of dilapidation—but inside there is little of beauty or of comfort. Bare mud walls, mud floors partially covered by a piece of matting, with the addition, among the better class, of a felt rug, which serves instead of chair, table, and bedstead. Books or pictures there are none, save among the Muhammadans the Quran on its stand; and even the book of Nature is closed to those who may not leave their houses.

No wonder that a look of hopelessness is so often permanently stamped on the faces of the men and women living in such surroundings, absolutely devoid of intellectual or spiritual interest. The women sit drearily round between the hours of cooking and eating, with no other excitement but what may be gathered from a stray piece of gossip brought by the happier servant from the world outside or the small boy

on his way from school. The pleasures of the *toilette*, which serve as some recreation for the Indian lady, have no charm whatever for the Kashmiri, who only indulges in them when she is about to pay or receive a visit.

My first journey to Kashmir is still fresh in my memory. It was before the days when the *tonga*, or hill-cart, brought you straight into Srinagar; and the journey was accomplished in slow stages, partly in the saddle and partly in a dandy. It occupied about ten days—perhaps more—during which time I never once spoke to anyone in my own tongue. Leaving the Abbottabad route and crossing the River Jhelum, the road soon merged into a mountain path, known now as the “old road.” The way lay high up on the hillsides, through fine scenery, often with banks of flowers and festoons of white clematis and wild roses on either side. Far, far beneath, the Jhelum rushed along, foaming over its rocky bed. The journey, too, was enlivened by some hair-breadth escapes, not unknown to the traveller in a *tonga* even now. And many a time came more than a possibility of being pushed aside by heavily-laden mules or supercilious camels contesting with us the right of way, and threatening, in the general confusion, to hurl horse and rider over the mountain side into the roaring torrent at its base.

At night we rested in a tumble-down *Dāk*

bungalow, where the traveller found literally a table, a chair, a bed, and a candlestick—all that was then provided by the Kashmir Government for the use of the much-deprecated English visitor. There was a certain charm in the complete unconventionality. The servants, after ten or fifteen miles—or even a longer march—on foot, on reaching the bungalow, fetched wood, lighted a fire, cooked the dinner, unpacked the bedding, and made me comfortable, afterwards doing the same for themselves on a lesser scale of comfort. My *ayah* only slept within; she made the journey on the same pony that carried my bedding.

And now the last stage was passed, and, after a night spent with but little between us and the boards of the flat-bottomed boats in which all travellers then completed the journey to Kashmir, we were being slowly towed and punted in turn up the river to Srinagar.

Day was closing into night, and the last of the poplar sentinels which guard the way to the visitors' quarters was fading in the darkness. What a weird day it had been! Grey skies above, grey river reflecting them, grey banks on either side, dripping grey houses, and people wandering about in strange, loose garments, drearily sympathetic in colour with their surroundings. Was this, indeed, beautiful Kashmir? And yet hope ran high—a hope no rain could damp, for I had

not come to see its beauty ; I had been *sent* with a message to its people. How well I seemed to understand how our Blessed Lord, amid all discouragements, ever felt the strength of the position, "I am sent."

But the first fortnight passed ; the rain had done its work, healing the chilled, frozen earth, and a complete transformation took place, such as no one who has once seen it can ever forget. From out of its dull winter barrenness the whole valley emerged in its spring robe of many colours.

A Kashmir spring has a loveliness all its own. The silvery branches of the plane trees are once more decked with tender green, little brown tassels intermingling. The avenues of stately poplars, and the willows along the water-alleys, have put on a new year's foliage. The ground beneath is strewn with soft, white fluff, for the leafy buds have doffed their furry coats and have emerged into sunshine. Besides these, nearly every tree seems to be in blossom—pink, white, and deep crimson. Far away, too, on every side, the valley is flecked with white and mauve irises, yellow mustard flowers, and scarlet poppies ; while the clouds lifting reveal ranges of snowy mountains, their pure white peaks standing like a fairy wall against the blue.

Even the birds share in the joy of general resurrection. The bulbul no longer comes tap-

ping at your window in the early morning, or peeping round the curtain-edge, with a sharp chirp, to call you from slumber to give him his morning meal, but flies from tree to tree, luxuriating in his spring diet of a thousand little buds.

The dainty hoopoo comes forth from the tree hollow, and, spreading his train on the young grass, with crown erect, draws with his long bill his special luxuries from the freshened earth; while golden aureoles fly like sunbeams through the air, calling to each other, in jubilant notes, that spring has come!

Thus winter after winter passes into spring; and how deep the longing grows to see a similar transformation in the dwellers in the Happy Valley, who, living in the midst of so much beauty, seem untouched by it even on the surface. "Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe . . . that they may live."

That "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," is as true of Kashmir as of Western lands. Let no one for one moment suppose that—deprived of liberty, or denied her rightful position at man's side as his helpmeet, counsellor, and friend—the woman behind the *pardah* is no longer a power to be reckoned with. Here, in her home, shut away from the modifying influences of public opinion or an advancing civilization and enlightenment, religion—for woman is

essentially religious—degenerates into bigotry, and restraining influence into a despotism that makes a man think twice before he will openly adopt views or opinions adverse to those of his zenana. As for the man, he has to lead a double life. In all social functions, grave or gay, he must leave his wife behind. Society, so-called, is composed only of men, and is entirely destitute of the refining, ennobling influence of woman. Here the man may air his opinions unchecked, and discuss possibilities, but before taking any onward step he has to reckon with the power behind the *pardah*.

It will be long years before this state of things can be remedied. When the change does come, it will have been mainly wrought by Christianized mothers and wives recognizing and rising to, as some are even now doing, the responsibility which God has placed in their hands.

Meanwhile, it rests with Christian women in England to bring into the lives of the women of India and Kashmir the inspiration which will make them the regenerators of their country. What a great work lies before the Zenana visitor! Would that she were multiplied a hundred-fold!

It was long before the door opened in Kashmir. The women could appreciate the ministry to the sick and suffering body, and the lady doctor, Miss Fanny Butler, was gladly welcomed. But not as

yet had they understood—these prisoners behind the lattice—what still better things we had to bring to their dull hearts and lives.

The door has opened at last, and invitations to visit and teach come faster than we can respond to them. Will my readers now enter and visit with me some of the Kashmiri homes ?

Vignette I.
A Mubammadan Pir.



RIVER JHELUM, WITH THE TOMB OF SHAN HAMADAN, SRINAGAR.

A Muhammadan Pir.

MY first invitation into a Kashmiri home came from an aged Pir. The Pirs are the Muhammadan saints. While they live they are the friends and teachers of the people, and when they die their graves become shrines to be visited with prayers and offerings. You may often see a Muhammadan pause suddenly as he comes to an angle in the road, and, with folded hands and eyes turned in the direction of you know not what, devoutly mutter a prayer. It is to his favourite saint, whose *zujarat*, or shrine, is far away somewhere in that direction.

The lady doctor and I had already visited this old man's wife, and the whole family had stood around, awe-stricken, as Dr. Fanny's deft fingers performed an operation which probably saved her life; and the doctor's skill had made an indelible impression. Truly, they reflected, the Kashmiri *hakims* are skilled in the use of sherbet for healing the sick, but they are nowhere in comparison with the English doctor in her use of the knife!

And so it happened that, some three weeks

afterwards, the aged Pir presented himself at our door with a goose cackling bravely under his arm ; the only fee, he said, that he could afford for the doctor who had saved the Pir Bai's life. (The Pir Bai is the lady Pir, *Bai* being added to any profession to indicate that the person spoken of is a woman.) He wished to know why I had not come again.

The way to the Pir's house lay through more than one canal, fringed by willows and an occasional plane tree, whose branches stooped to kiss the silent water. It was spring-time, and the sun shone with that glittering radiance peculiar to the East. Gay little kingfishers sat on the banks, intent on their prey, teaching unconsciously their lesson to "fishers of men," a plunge and a joyous scream from time to time announcing that their patient watching and waiting was not in vain.

The boat drew up at the landing-place, picturesquely termed in Kashmiri the *yar-i-bal*, or place of friends. And such it was for me, for the old man, his wife, and two sons were sitting watching for me from the upper window of their house overlooking the canal, and I had scarcely left the boat before the younger men were on the spot to meet me.

I had come on the day I had promised, and was greeted by the Pir Bai with the words "*Puzier, Puzier*," or "Truth speaker." Profuse enquiries were made, Kashmiri fashion, after my health.

"Are you well, quite well? quite, quite well?" These I, in my turn, repeated, being answered by upturned looks and the words, "Praise, praise!"

A place was made for me on a piece of warm matting, and, with the rest, I squatted on the floor. If you speak their language and sit with them on the ground, the Kashmiri soon grow friendly, especially if you also partake of their tea. After preliminary greetings, one of the sons disappeared to make the much-loved cup for me.

Kashmiri tea varies in kind. In the early part of the day it is drunk with milk and flavoured with a profusion of salt. If taken very hot it may be imagined to be some kind of weak soup. In the afternoon it is prepared sweet—unutterably sweet—and flavoured with cardamums. The tea is boiled in a *samanwar*, or Persian tea-pot; a little fire burns beneath which keeps it at boiling point. The common tea comes from Central Asia, and is of a bright pink colour. But my friend, the Pir, boasted of having Bombay tea, and his son, with proportionate pride, poured it out from the *samanwar* into a small green bowl, which had received some sort of a wipe since it was last used. The Pir Bai carefully removed with her fingers some stray tea-leaves and sipped a little to see that it was sufficiently sweet, before finally handing it to me. If the draught was nauseous, it was surely a loving-cup, for

they all watched its disappearance with proud satisfaction !

We were now the best of friends, and all were ready to hear the reading. I had brought my Kashmiri Testament with me, and after a few verses had been simply explained, I sang a Kashmiri hymn, translated from Urdu, and adapted to the music of the Kabuli National Anthem. The hymn begins :

“ I have no helper, O Christ ;
“ Thou alone art my helper, O Christ.”

How often at the weekly visit did the Pir Bai ask to hear again *that* hymn, “ which,” she said, “ was just made for me.”

Among Muhammadans it is forbidden for a woman to sing, so she could not join herself in singing a hymn, but the aged Pir often sang this and other hymns with me, while the Pir Bai listened.

How deeply interesting those readings were ! The neighbours often came and sat with the Pir and his family at the feet of the foreign teacher. To these he generally excused his delight in the Book by saying that its teaching was entirely in accord with that of the Quran. “ The wish was father to the thought,” surely, as the Quran emphatically denies both the Divine Sonship of Jesus and His atoning death upon the cross.

Years of listening and learning passed by, and

then the end came for both, with but a short interval between. The Pir Bai went first. I was in England, so I have the few particulars of their last days only at second hand. But a lady, who visited them in my absence, wrote that she had been sent for to see the Pir's wife, who was dying. She was very restless, but when at her request the Bible was opened, the tossing ceased and she lay still and calm.

"I find no rest or comfort but in that Book," she said, "but how can I hope that He will receive any one so worthless as me, a poor useless old woman? Go to the young! Tell *them* to give their hearts to Jesus; they will listen, they can come, but how can I, so old and worthless?"

The aged Pir did not long remain alone.

"Peace, he is dying now,

"No light is on his brow,

"He makes no sign, and without sigh departs

"The poor die often so,

"They often long to go

"And take to God their over-weighted hearts."

The Pir's friends and disciples had gone downstairs, where the daughter-in-law was making tea.

The lady missionary sat by their dying teacher. It was autumn, and the golden leaves from the fruit trees in the garden fell, with a soft sigh, to the earth. The Pir lay and watched them; the Quran lay open at his side, but he pushed it

impatiently aside, and, turning to his Christian friend, he said :

“I have been very faithful to the Quran, but oh, it is a mere sound like that of the dead leaves falling from the trees, a sound and nothing more ! Read now from *that* Book, which seems always like cooling waters to my thirst.”

And now the aged pair no longer watch lovingly from the open window for the coming of their friend ; but she, at least, cannot doubt that they watch for her from the gates of the Better Land.

Vignette II.

Emigrants from Kabul.



A KASHMIRI FAMILY.

Emigrants from Kabul.

WHAT strange histories lie concealed behind the heavy swinging doors of some of these Kashmiri homes! An aged man asked me one day to come and teach his little granddaughter, who was growing up, he said with a regret in his voice which surprised me, in lamentable ignorance.

On my entrance I found the family seated in the upper room. I may here mention that the upper room in summer, and a downstairs room in winter, is the family sitting-room.

This room bore, as did its inmates, every mark of extreme poverty; and yet there was a certain dignity of demeanour in the old man and woman which seemed to tell of better days. A beautiful young woman was nursing a baby boy. With a cluster of black curls resting on either side of her forehead, like our ancestors of not long ago, with soft, plaintive, black eyes and fair complexion, she looked as though she had walked out of an old picture. Her little daughter, who had not inherited her mother's beauty, sat beside her. A few sympathetic words elicited their

story, which was told me interspersed with many tears and sobs.

They had, they said, some years before, migrated to Kabul. There the eldest son had occupied a good position, and they had all lived in the greatest comfort. But comfort and prosperity are of uncertain tenure under Muhammadan rule, and the son had fallen under the suspicion of the late Amir. He was accused of being a spy and of holding secret communication with the English Government, and was put to death. The beautiful young woman sitting opposite me was his widow. A younger brother had been imprisoned, but as nothing could be proved against him, he had been released after a year; and then, in the depths of a Kabuli winter, he, with the aged parents and the young widow and child, were conducted on foot through the snow, by a mounted escort, to the English frontier, and bidden to "go to the English whom they liked so well." And so, with all their possessions forfeited, with scant clothing and broken hearts, they reached Peshawar, and finally found their way to their native country of Kashmir.

The young widow, in Muhammadan fashion, had been re-married to her husband's younger brother, as a means of protection and support, and was now the mother of a baby son.

Sorrow and hunger had dulled the faculties of

the old man, but the beautiful daughter-in-law listened eagerly to the Gospel Story, saying that, when listening to the words of that Book, "her heart seemed to blossom like a garden."

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Vignette III.
The Qazi Pir.



The Qazi Pir.

NEAR by the Kabuli family lived the Qazi Pir. Qazi means a judge, but I could never find that the Pir had acted in that capacity. So I imagine the title was purely honorary. He was a fine, courteous old gentleman, above the usual height, with a long flowing beard. He had once been prosperous, before the art of printing had been introduced into Kashmir and had rendered the services of the Persian writer superfluous. Now, like many another sufferer who had little to gain and all to lose from the inroads of a foreign civilization, he and his family eked out a meagre subsistence by the gradual sale of their few worldly possessions.

I had met the younger daughter in the house of some relations, and had received a warm invitation to visit her in her home.

They, too, had their tale of woe to tell me, in the loss of their only son, a mission schoolboy, who had died of cholera. They showed me with pride the Kashmiri Testament which he had received as a prize at school. It lay there unopened and unread, as no Kashmiri learns to read his own language, for which he has a supreme

contempt. The missionary learns to read it from one of the few *munshis* who have acquired the art for the sake of a living.

Sorrow of heart, over whose darkness the light of immortality had cast no gleam, and constant weeping for her boy, had induced paralysis in one of the mother's eyes. It had closed, she feared, for ever.

The beautiful young daughter sat in her crimson embroidered *pheran*.* Poor as they were, she wore her all in the sparkling jewels, which are indispensable to the Indian or Kashmiri woman. She was her father's pride and joy, and he had taught her to read Persian, the language of the cultivated native. She was eager to learn Urdu and knitting, and proved an apt scholar.

Upstairs, solitary and hidden away from sight, sat an unmarried daughter, nearly blind from neglected disease in her eyes. It was a disgrace not to be married, and so she must not be seen; and yet who would marry a blind girl? So the case seemed hopeless. It was Rachel and Leah over again, only the father lacked the cunning of Laban to rescue the "tender-eyed" daughter from oblivion.

Another handsome girl was pounding rice for the daily rations of the family in the yard below. Kashmiris buy their rice in the husk; it is their staple food, and enough for the day's consumption

* The *pheran* is a long, loose dress, worn by Kashmiri men and women alike.

is daily pounded out with a huge wooden pestle and mortar. The only servants the family could afford were two orphan girls, who probably got a meal of rice for going errands. Someone must do the work, so the daughter in the yard below had to be left in ignorance while the younger girl had her lessons in the reception room upstairs. There is compensation in everything, and the healthy exercise in the open air kept her always well and cheery, while her more favoured sister was often ailing.

Things took a happier turn after our coming. The mother's eye opened again under the careful treatment of the lady doctor, and, after much continued persuasion, the poor girl upstairs was also allowed to be brought by her mother, in a boat, to the C.M.S. Hospital, where a small operation, followed by careful nursing in her own home, ended years of suffering and partial blindness, and the once banished daughter again took her place in the family circle, without any sense of the injustice that had deprived her of it for so long through no fault of her own. The venerable father took a keen interest in the Bible readings. He would hasten upstairs when he heard of my coming, listen somewhat impatiently to the daughter's reading lesson, and, sometimes, bring it to an abrupt conclusion by saying: "That will do now, we are waiting for the preaching." Neighbours were invited in to listen, and fractious

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arguers were checked with the words : " The lady is our friend, and if you wish to ask any questions for the sake of understanding better, well and good, but we will have no captious objections raised here."

He would look over my shoulder from time to time to satisfy himself that I was reading correctly, and would explain again to the audience what I had said. I never had a more courteous or satisfactory listener. The women on these occasions are of course silent ; they never make any remarks in the presence of the men. Whatever a husband or father accepts, they accept likewise, even though a woman be teaching.

The Qazi Pir was a poet, and when I gave him some Kashmiri hymns to copy for me in his fine copper-plate, the writing was beautifully done, of his own accord, in red and black ink, like an old illumination, our Lord's name being invariably rendered in red ink, the only word in that colour ; and with the little book of hymns came a short Persian poem, written by himself ; it was a confession of ignorance and unworthiness, and a prayer that Christ would give him light ; and, surely, no such prayer is ever offered in vain. I still keep this, as well as a Christmas card, quaintly illuminated on a piece of native paper about twelve inches square.

The Qazi Pir has also passed away beyond our ken, though the aged wife still survives—as

she believes, in answer to the lady missionary's prayer—and listens with ever-increasing interest to—"the wonderful words of life."

Their friend, the lady doctor, writes: "The Qazi Pir's daughter is learning to read the Kashmiri First Book. I took her your little elephant pin-cushion and a peacock's feather, to illustrate the lesson; both were examined with the greatest interest, for an elephant and a peacock are, of course, only names to women who may never go outside the door of their homes."

Vignette IV.

Behind the Iron Grating.



ON THE DHAL CANAL, WITH TAKT-I-SOLIMAN.

Behind the Iron Grating.

IS it a house, or a prison? For doors and windows are alike protected by strong iron bars. Only one door stands open, that which leads to the shop of this rich Hindu merchant.

I had many times passed his house, but there had been no invitation to visit his family. To-day, something I had heard had determined me to seek admission.

But what great treasure is thus strongly guarded, is it money or jewels? Ah, it is a greater treasure still! Things of greater value than a world; dear human souls are here imprisoned.

People often ask how it is that we, foreigners, and going ostensibly to teach a religion whose influence is dreaded by both Hindus and Muham-madans, even though they cannot withhold from it their admiration and respect, gain admittance to their homes?

Is it not indeed a miracle? We can only account for it by believing that, as of old when "they went everywhere preaching the word, the Lord (was) working with them," so now He is working with us. For we nearly always go by

invitation from the people themselves, and these invitations come faster than we can avail ourselves of them.

The present occasion was an exception, when I had come to ask permission to visit the lady behind the bars.

The poor old Hindu master of shop and household, is sitting cross-legged on a table behind the one open door. He is startled out of a reverie at hearing my request to be admitted to the inner sanctum of his house. He pauses a moment to find an excuse for excluding me. Happy thought! "No," he says, "it will not be convenient for you to see my family." (A Hindu gentleman never speaks of his wife, she is generally called the person of the house). "She is cooking, and has no leisure at present to attend to visitors." I catch at the words, "no leisure at present." I am not going to be conquered without another effort, so I ask again, how soon will she be at leisure; for rumour said that the iron bars guarded not only human souls but a broken heart.

Finding I am not to be repulsed, the old gentleman names a time, and at the appointed moment I re-appear. He leads the way up a dark, stone staircase and through several big, empty rooms, till he brings me to a smaller one with a mat in it, on which I seat myself, to await the appearance of the lady of the house.

The old man departs, bewildered by the

invasion, and descends to resume his seat and the reverie of by-gone years spent with the beloved wife of his youth. His heart held a tragedy, such as many a Hindu husband's holds, but it shall be kept sacred by me.

Upstairs, a woman with the neglected attire of one who has long ceased to care to please, comes and seats herself opposite me, much excited and astonished at my appearance on the scene, but not averse to the variety of a visit from an English lady. There is a wild look in the restless eyes, and an uneasy manner, which confirms the report that she has sought refuge from her troubles in drink. As the father's step dies away, poor little neglected children emerge, full of delight at the visitor! My gloves are felt to see if they are part and parcel of myself, then my shoes, my dress, all are handled, and each new discovery produces the wildest merriment.

Then a Kashmiri nurse appears, with her mistress's sweet baby pressed against her dirty *pheran*, and seats herself also on the floor, and my audience is complete.

The mother listens, wondering that the foreign lady can speak her language, and willingly assents to a proposal to sing her a *bhajan* or Hindu hymn. Let me interpret for my reader the one I sang to her, which is a special favourite with Hindu women.

"Wherefore, oh mind, be deceived by this world ?
"Happiness here is not for ever,
"It departs like the running brook ;
"At the last hour all will come to see you ;
"In a moment you will be parted from all,
"Mother, father, relations, friends,
"None can go with you ;
"Even your jewels and clothes must be left behind.
"In hell there is none to save—
"Then brother, seek salvation,
"Jesus, the Lord, is Saviour.
"A sinner, Thy servant, Lord, has none to help but
Thou."

The hymn-singing is interspersed with expressions of astonishment from the mother at the wonderful wisdom contained in the words. She had reason enough to know that happiness is not for ever, for the stream of gladness had disappeared from her life while she was but a child.

When I pause, she turns to the Kashmiri nurse, and remarks, with sufficient candour, "Did you hear that? I had always thought the English were not good for much ; but, do you see, she knows our language, and speaks in it words of wisdom ?" (I am glad to have redeemed the character of my nation !)

I take her hand in mine, and ask her for her thoughts on life.

"Life," she replies, "it is all a lie." And at my second question as to what she knew of the

"other side," the world beyond, she visibly shudders. "Ah," she says, "that is terrible! I do not like to think of it."

Surely there was need here of the Gospel!

There is much said and thought of Medical Missions, and rightly so. They are surely one of the grandest agencies for the spread of the Gospel. But, truly, is not every missionary medical, if he or she be anything?

And with what infinite tact must the right remedy be applied! What could have better suited the aching heart of this poor daughter, who had left her father's house to be the neglected wife of a rich old man, than the soothing words of St. John xiv., "Let not your heart be troubled . . . In my Father's house are many mansions"—Christ's own picture of "the other side"? The Father's House—the words bring back a smile to the face of the little Hindu wife. And then, the Elder Brother preparing a place, and coming Himself to take His banished Home!

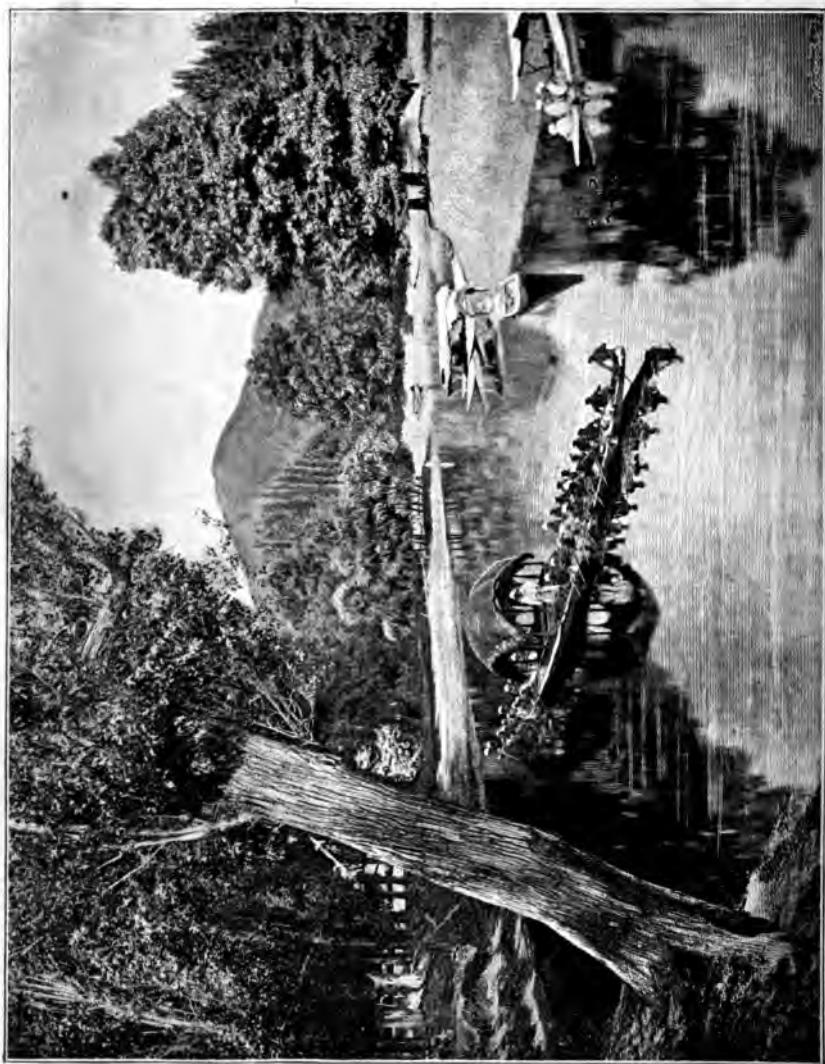
I could see that the *recipe* had met the case by the fast-falling tears—tears which had healing in them.

One who not long ago went from work among the heathen to the Father's House, said to me, in reference to the vigorous efforts that the people of other religions were making to copy our

methods: "Believe me, they will copy our hospitals and our schools; there is one thing only they cannot imitate, and that is, the preaching of the Gospel." It had been his joy to preach glad tidings to the poor, and it was a joy that he knew no Hindu or Muhammadan could share.

Vignette V.

A City Magistrate's Home.



A City Magistrate's Home.

I HAVE heard English women in India say, "We don't feel sure that the people wish to have their religions meddled with; we don't know that they are not quite happy as they are." With these it is vain to argue that it has not been left to us to think one way or the other in the matter, that our orders are clear:—"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." I suggested, however, to one lady, who had made this remark to me, that it might be well to try to verify, or otherwise, her conjectures, by a few visits with one of our lady missionaries to the homes so near her door. But though that is now several years ago, she has never done so yet.

Lest any of my readers, however, share her doubts, let me draw aside the *pardah* from yet another Hindu home.

A City Magistrate came to see me, accompanied by several "*sufed posh*" (gentlemen) in spotless white clothes. He told me, in English, that his wife was not well and would like to see a lady doctor, would I come myself? So I gathered that

it was a teacher he really wanted, only it was advisable to veil his meaning before his friends, and I promised to come.

Down the river my little boat sped, and I had a quiet time for thought as I floated down the stream. Sometimes a pair of bulbuls, attracted by my luncheon-basket, would take a free passage and sit on the roof peeping saucily at the owner of the boat, with a quiet confidence that they would not be interfered with. They were not so generous to others, though, for did another pair alight on the occupied boat, the two pairs, with crests standing erect and feathers fluffed out to the full, would discuss the right of possession somewhat after the manner of Billingsgate, not to say of Kashmiri, boat-women. But this is by-the-way ; the boat at length reached the landing-place, and mounting the steep steps, I entered the heavy yard door, which swung to behind me with a loud resound.

In the yard I found some six or eight women of the upper class, seated on two bedsteads. "A school all ready for you," my hostess remarked, as she emerged from the kitchen, with a glad greeting. All were keen to learn ; some had already made an effort and had conquered the weary preliminary stage of letters and spelling. Books were distributed and eight reading lessons were given ; they were most difficult to satisfy, these new pupils of mine, and nearly all begged for

just a page more. Does the reader think these reading lessons dull work? If she be a woman with the love of Christ in her heart, and a "passion for souls," let her come and try. For each lesson is bringing the learner a step nearer reading the Gospel story for herself, and breaking one link of the chain that is binding a precious soul in ignorant darkness. As someone says, "Let us think of *ends*."

After the books were put away, there was an expectant pause, so I brought out my dear little red Book, the Hindi New Testament wisely bound in red, for why should glad tidings be wrapped in mourning? "Now," I said, "I will tell you, if I may, something from the life of Jesus Christ." There was a ready response from the lady of the house and from all her friends: "That is the reason why we sent for you." What would they have thought of me if I had not said that?

The Light of the world was shining into that yard that day, and all listened with earnest attention, as I read of Zaccheus, his longing to know Who *He* was of Whose fame he had heard, what He brought to Zaccheus' house, and how He stood knocking and waiting at their door too.

Alas! Illness checked the happy work in that home. All too soon it had to be given up, and the judge's wife said sorrowfully to the lady doctor, "The Light was beginning to break in, but all is getting dark again."

After that visit I could not but feel how mistaken is the advice that even our Indian brethren give us. A venerable Indian Christian once said to me: "You should not, if you want to gain the women of my country, begin at once to teach them about Jesus Christ or propose to read the Bible to them: you should do it by degrees."

But I had had what he, though an Indian, could never have—long years of experience in visiting Indian homes, and I knew he was wrong. Many Indian women are waiting for news of Jesus Christ; they have heard of His fame, perhaps through a son attending a mission school; they have seen the Light as it were through a chink in the door, and they long for more. I believe the straightforward policy is the best. "I knew you were true," an Indian lady said to me, "when you proposed to read the Bible with me that first day you came."

Vignette VI.

The Fool in the Home.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the **LORD** thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate **Me**; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love **Me**, and keep **My** Commandments.”

—*Exodus* xx. 4, 5, 6.

The Idol in the Home.

HAVE we thought enough of those solemn words of the Lord God: "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me," *i.e.*, of idol makers and idol worshippers?

They came to me with tremendous force one day when I was sitting on the floor of a verandah room, overlooking the river Jhelum, talking to a Hindu family.

The grandfather, a fine specimen of a Hindu gentleman, his daughter lately a widow, an aunt, a sister-in-law, the eldest son of the widow, now master of the house, and a little daughter, were all seated round me. A Kashmiri priest entered, with a garland of French marigolds, a flower beloved of the Hindu god, and passing by us he unlocked the heavy iron bolt of a door at the end of the room where we were sitting. I knew, of course, that it must contain the idol, and felt the moment had come for a direct onslaught on idol worship. The household had heard much Bible teaching, but, fearing the Lord, they still worshipped their own gods.

So I asked who lived in the locked room. "Our

god lives there," was the prompt reply. "And do you mean to say," I rejoined, "he lives in there, and for an hour since I came, has uttered no sound, nor made any attempt to come out? One of these little children would have had more sense, for they would have made a fine noise if you had shut them in." My friends looked at each other, as if I had made a very profound remark; it had evidently never occurred to them before to reason at all on this subject. I then said I would tell them what the Living God had said about idol worship, and repeated slowly the solemn words of the second commandment, "visiting the iniquity"—the in-equity of forsaking the Living God, Who made us, and gave us "rain and fruitful seasons," and His worship, for that of of stocks and stones.

Three generations were there, listening and able to understand the awful judgment pronounced on such "iniquity." The son, whose low, half imbecile face betokened the character which made him hateful even to the mother that bare him; the mother, whose life had been embittered by the indifference of her husband and the insolence of her bad son; and the aged father, a witness to sorrow he was powerless to comfort or remove.

I certainly had never felt the force of the second commandment, and the penalty of its breach, as I did then, as I heard the words repeated slowly by one after another, "visiting

the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me."

It was with a real and new interest that they began to ask: "How can we worship a God Whom we cannot see?" And when I had once more told them the story of the Image of the Invisible God, and the spiritual worship that He seeks, I felt that that door could never again be unlocked for the daily offering without the words of the second commandment recurring to their memories.



Vignette VII.
Among the Priests.



SRINAGAR FROM THE THIRD BRIDGE OVER THE JHELUM.

Among the Priests.

PASSING down the river at Srinagar in his small flat-bottomed boat, the visitor sees on his left, close to the palace, the glittering dome of the golden Temple, and, in singular contrast with other buildings, ancient and modern, a low, broken-down building, supported on piles, with a little verandah-walk in front. This is the house of the officiating priest. Steep, stone steps lead up from the river to the temple precincts, and beyond the temple a door leads to the verandah and to the house itself.

I need scarcely say that I had never dared to hope that I should ever penetrate here. Nevertheless, I received one day a message, through one of my Hindu pupils, that the priest's wife wished me to visit her, and to "sing the hymns of Jesus to her." My pupil offered to conduct me herself, so we started by a back way, which avoided the temple and allowed us to reach the priest's door unnoticed. His wife was eagerly expecting us in a tumble-down room of the tumble-down building, which was their little home. She looked a good deal older than her husband, and much older than she really was,

for the sorrow that had dimmed her eyes and wrinkled her skin had sat lightly on him, a singularly happy-hearted man. She had lost all her children, and had not even a little grave left at which she might weep and say : "This holds all that is left on earth of my beloved till the resurrection morning." The burning ghât had obliterated even that slight comfort, and no hope of a joyful resurrection gilded her sorrow.

Seated beside her, I softly sang the hymns she longed for, and a gentle smile stole over her face as she joined in the refrain. Every line in a *bhajan* is usually repeated, which makes it easy for the listener to join, after hearing it the first time. It was a strange scene. Close by was the grim idol in the temple, receiving the offerings of its votaries, and guarded from intrusion by a Hindu sentinel ; and here, in the priest's own house, we three were singing the praises of Him of Whom it is said : "The idols He shall utterly abolish." Surely He, too, was there, the Living Lord !

I have rarely had such a reception as I had in the priest's house, or such an earnest pupil as his wife. Her joy was great when she found that a pair of glasses, sent by kind friends from England, enabled her to see well enough to learn to read, and right eagerly did she set herself to conquer the sacred *Devanagri* character, that she might read for herself the Book that was bringing light

and comfort to her withered heart, and the hymns she so much loved. Her remarks on the reading were sometimes quaint enough to provoke a smile, as, for instance, when I read to her one day, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "Mother," she said—both she and her husband gave me that beautiful name—"Mother, I have done that,"—there was a mischievous smile on her face—"for I love *you* as I do myself." The confidence and affection of these two were very dear to me. A jade cup which they had bought, in which to give me a cup of tea, soon disappeared, and I was allowed to drink from their little brass vessels. And when the wife was taken ill, she would take medicine from no one else, and even drank water from my hand, her husband saying: "Give it to her yourself, Mother."

Coming one day at the usual time, I found the priest cooking, and fearing I might be intruding, I was about to withdraw, apologising for having arrived at their dinner-time; but he looked up from his work with a smile, and said he was cooking a meal for me.

But the affection did not stop with the messenger; faith was growing strong in the heart of the dear wife, and the husband, too, would allow me to speak to him in the plainest terms of the sin of idolatry, and would himself conduct me through the temple precincts to the landing-stage. I often wondered that he dared, and protested, fearing

to bring him into trouble. That this was the case in some measure seemed evident, for he was removed when I was away, and no English person is now allowed to ascend the stone staircase.

By the priest's invitation, I was taken to visit another priest, who, my friend said, was anxious to see me.

On a raised dais in a small room, sat an elderly man in muslin garments; around him, on the floor, sat the disciples. A chair had been procured and placed for me, bringing me somewhat above the level of the priest himself. People in India sit on different elevations according to their rank, and the disciple never sits on the same level as his teacher.

Some conversation passed between us on the greatest of all subjects— Life, Sin, Salvation, Eternity. It was an opportunity not to be frittered away in idle commonplaces. I largely interlarded what I said with quotations from Hindi *bhajans*, which evidently interested him. Noticing the Book in my hand, he asked me if that were the Book that brings peace? I replied that *that* was its special mission; that it contained the story of the life on earth of the Prince of Peace, Who had come to bring "peace on earth," and, promising to bring him a copy, I bowed and retired. A small red Hindi Testament, in a quaint velvet bag, sent me in one of the dainty boxes of work that reach us year by year from England

and Ireland, was received by the priest the following day with great satisfaction. I have never seen him since, but it is a joy to think that two priests' homes now possess the Word of God.

Vignette VIII.

“He is King.”



A LAME KASHMIRI CHILD.

"He is King."

TELL it out among the heathen that the Lord is King"—not only Saviour, but King.

I was reminded of these words one day as I sat in the house of one of the principal officials. The subject of my lesson had been the miracle of the loaves and fishes, in the sixth chapter of St. John. My special pupil was the official's only daughter; her mother took lessons from me in Urdu, and the fine, handsome, widowed aunt was always present. She, in her quiet way, was drinking in the Gospel message from week to week.

Having read the story of the miracle, we were speaking of the result—that the people wished "to take Him by force to make Him a King." I was prepared with my explanation as to why He would not yield to their wish, but meanwhile asked my listeners, "Why do you think Jesus did not wish them to make Him King?"—wholly unprepared for the prompt reply from the widow lady, "He *is* King; so how could anyone make Him King?" And so the King of Glory, still unseen, passes on His way, manifesting Himself to waiting hearts, who, as He passes, still steal through the press and touch the hem of His garment!

Vignette IX.

**Among the Shepherds on the
“Everlasting Hills.”**



KASHMIRI SHEPHERDS

Among the Shepherds on the "Everlasting Hills."

UP to the mountains in beautiful Kashmir, away from the parched plains to green pastures, the shepherds bring their flocks, leading them to higher and yet higher levels as the pasture gets scant. It is a toilsome life, full sometimes of wild adventure, before the recital of which those of David the Shepherd King almost pale.

One fine fellow, well over six feet in height, came to our tent one day, stricken with fever. Sitting to rest while the medicine was a-preparing, he told me strange stories of his life. He had, he said, killed about twenty lions in his time—lion being a generic term for leopard or any animal of that genus. I asked him how he accomplished such a feat without a gun. He said he usually ran after the beast, seized it by its tail, and hurled it on the ground with a force that entirely stunned it; and he illustrated his manner of doing it the while. He said that, of course, many Englishmen were lion-killers, but he alone among the shepherds bore that title; but that

fever had eaten his strength away, and he was no longer able for it.

The shepherds always greatly interested me, and our visits to the hills in the hot weather gave the opportunity of seeing a good deal of them. During their stay at the different levels, to which they bring their flocks, they occupy quaint little log huts. These huts are generally built against the slope of a hill, so that the hill itself forms the back wall. This plan has many advantages; one can easily get to the roof, the frequent sitting-room of the family in fine weather, and also in winter avalanches of snow slide over the roof, leaving the little hut intact for the shepherd family to return to in the spring. The huts are entirely unfurnished, even the piece of invariable matting, the chief and sometimes the only furniture of houses in the plains of Kashmir, being lacking.

We were called one day to see a sick shepherd in Sonamerg. Our guide led us along a valley and across a stream, till, close to the foot of a glacier, we found the little log hut.

The poor fellow was lying on the bare mud floor of the hut; no wonder the fever had got him well in hand! A piece of matting from one of our tents, and an old cushion for his head, seemed unheard-of luxuries, and he was more than ready, when thus made comfortable, to listen to a message from the Book. What a wonderful

Book it is! I thought it seemed written for shepherds as I sat and read to that mysterious audience. All the Rembrandtine shadow-corners of the room had filled since our arrival. Dark-eyed women, sitting low against the wall, would have been scarcely visible but for the shine of their eyes; men above, sitting on, or lying across the rafters of the roof, gazed down at us; all listened intently to the wondrous story of the Angels' visit to the Shepherds of Bethlehem two thousand years ago. How intensely personal it was! "Unto *you* is born this day a Saviour." We seemed to visit, together with the Shepherds of long ago, that Holy Babe in Bethlehem. And how the bright eyes of the women glistened as we told them of the Virgin Mother who rejoiced in God her Saviour, and who, though she could not, like the Shepherds, publish the glad tidings abroad, yet "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

We knew that these shepherds had not been silent either, when, on our next visit, we were joined by a man on crutches—the one reader in the village—who had come to beg that we would give him the Gospel that contained the history of the Virgin Mother and her wondrous Babe.

We learned afterwards that this man had had his leg amputated in Dr. Neve's Hospital, and being disabled from other work, had learned to read and had become the religious teacher of his clan.



Vignette X.

A Sermon on a Roof.



A SKETCH IN KASHMIR.

A Sermon on a Roof.

WHAT a beautiful day my friend and I had had in the pine woods! We had been searching for an open glade which we had espied from a mountain-top and had fixed on for a picnic. Kashmir is the land of picnics. The Kashmiris themselves have their picnics. We had paused half-way for lunch, and surely a lunch had never seemed so appetising as ours did to us, seated on a green sward, by a pebbly brook, with the scent of the pines all round us, and no sound but the audible stillness of the forest!

Refreshed by food and sleep under the trees, we got into our dandies again, and pursuing the path through the forest, came at last upon the open glade we were seeking, where we were to have our tea. Distance had lent enchantment to the view. It was not nearly so beautiful as we had thought it from the mountain-top. But, standing in the open, we saw to our surprise a shepherd village in front of us. It seemed unlikely that any missionary had ever before preached the Gospel here, so it was an opportunity not to be lost, and we started on foot to visit it while our bearers made the tea. Some

festival, or wedding feast, was evidently being celebrated, as every one was in gala attire, the women looking so handsome with their shining braids of raven black hair, dark blue *chaddars* edged with broad red borders, and a profusion of blue bead necklaces.

A nice new roof, the mud of which had only just dried, seemed the best and cleanest place of meeting, so, with a few friendly remarks, we went and seated ourselves on it, and were soon surrounded by a fair proportion of the village women.

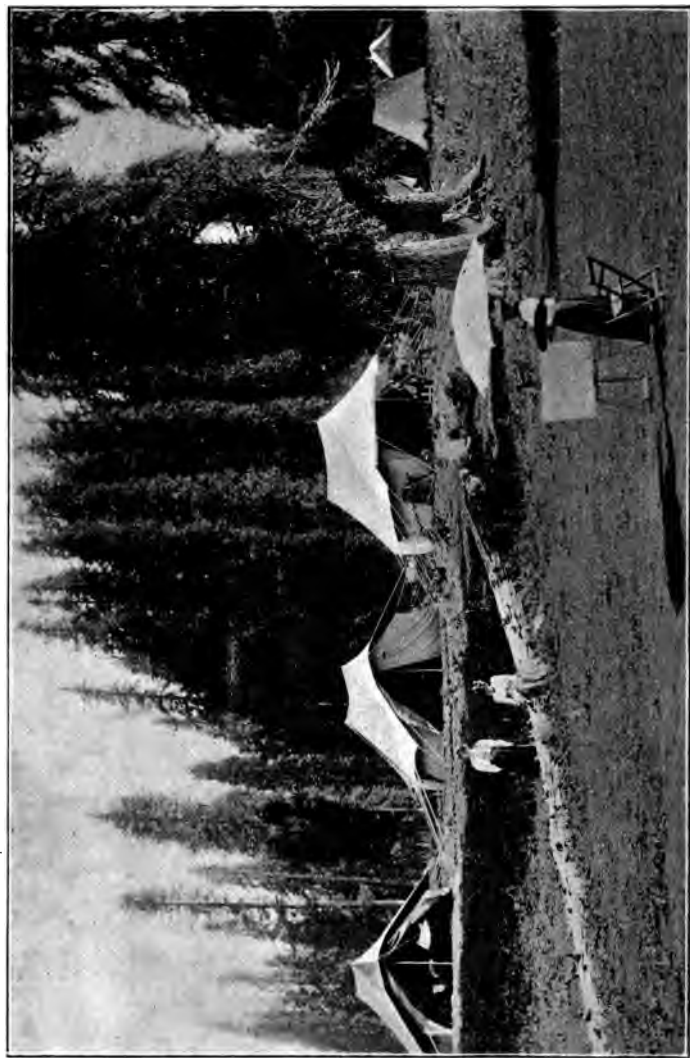
A few men stood around, and one man, who seemed much interested, continually impressed upon the women that he knew all we were telling them, and that it was perfectly true.

My friend spoke to them in Panjabi to their great delight, as it is the language of the shepherds who are not natives of Kashmir, and we then sang a hymn, hoping that the chorus—containing, as it did, the great facts of the Gospel in a nutshell—might, by its frequent reiteration, live in their memories.

Only one man seemed angry, and came and ordered his wife away, but both took care to stand at a convenient distance for seeing and hearing all that went on.

Vignette XI.
A Village in the Valley.





MISSIONARY CAMP AT GULMARG.

A Village in the Valley.

THERE are men and women feeling after God in Kashmir, as in every land, and it is worth more than a day's journey to light on one of these.

The lady doctor with her medicine chest, and I with a magic lantern, had started for a tour in the villages one bright spring day.

After pitching our tents and taking a hurried meal, my companion spread her medicines on a little table, and was soon surrounded by a modern Pool of Bethesda crowd, whom the news of the arrival of a lady doctor had brought together, while I set out to visit in the neighbouring town.

The first house I went to was that of the Chowdry, a state official. I was shown into the sitting-room, where he sat upon a kind of dais, with another man, whom I afterwards found to be the family priest. Both men sat facing a recess in the wall, the interior of which I could not then see, but which I afterwards discovered contained the hideous household god.

The Chowdry received me kindly, and a rug was spread for me on a low table, disconnected with the dais, on which of course, as a Christian, I could not be allowed to sit. I was soon joined

by the two women of the household, the Chowdry's mother and wife.

Finding, from my conversation, that I was a Christian teacher, the Chowdry expressed great pleasure at my coming. He seemed an earnest man, with but little belief in his own religion, yet not content, like so many Indians, with being without any religion at all; and he said eagerly: "God has shown you English people the way; come and show me the way, for I can nowhere find it." I was amazed at his frankness, especially before his priest, but perhaps the priest himself, like others I have mentioned, was seeking "the way." My heart yearns over the priests, for I have a strong idea that many would gladly relinquish their idol worship, were it not that "by this craft" they get their living.

I spent some time in endeavouring to set forth "the Way, the Truth and the Life" to this little household, all, including the priest, giving me an attentive hearing. It was but one of many conversations I had with the Chowdry, who made a slight deafness in one of his ears the excuse for a daily visit to our tent.

Having brought with us our magic lantern, we were afterwards able to exhibit to a large audience in his house, including more than one Hindu priest, a fairly complete representation of the principal events of our Lord's life. It seemed like a revelation to them. The women especially,

sitting in front, gazed long, with folded hands and heads bowed in reverence, at a beautiful picture of the Babe of Bethlehem, saying afterwards to me with much emotion: "Truly it seemed as though God had Himself descended into our house to-day!"



Vignette XII.
The Tamasha.



DISPENSARY PATIENTS SRINAGAR.

The Tamasha.

THE *Tamasha*, or spectacle, as people called our lantern, gained for us an audience everywhere, besides that of the sick and suffering women, who gathered round the lady doctor for treatment.

In one village, the *chowkidar*, or policeman, was very helpful in many ways, and of his own accord he sounded a gong for the women to leave their various avocations to come and see.

A large upper room, used in winter for storing provisions, but so far empty, with no aperture through which the light could come but the door and a window with a wooden shutter, enabled us to show our lantern in the daytime, and so secure a much better audience than we should in the evening, as Kashmiris do not like going out at night; they have a strong belief that not only the pestilence, but other mysterious things too, "walk in darkness." The long, low room was densely packed from end to end, and as there was no possible means of ventilation without letting in the light, it was well we had no time to think of the atmosphere !

The audience was entirely composed of Muham-

madans, and the darkness gave some of them courage to ask very intelligent questions.

It was a solemn moment, and an awed silence fell on all as a picture of the Crucifixion was thrown on the sheet. It was the one known as "The Marble Cross," in which the dying Saviour is alone represented. We did not break the silence by any explanations, but allowed them for a moment to sit still in the presence of the Crucified One.

But awe grew into something like enthusiasm as we passed from Death to Resurrection and Ascension. One could hardly have believed it to be a Muhammadan audience.

"There will be one more picture," I said, "but we cannot show it as yet." I was referring to the Coming in Glory, but, ere I could explain my meaning, I was interrupted by a young man, who from the first manifested very great interest. He now sprang to his feet, exclaiming: "We must see it now, we must see all." When he allowed me to resume what I was saying, I told them that we could not show them that picture, but that God would, because it was written: "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." Yet even this promise scarcely satisfied them that we had not the picture of that awful Advent somewhere concealed.

Our lantern has told its story to many a strange audience. We have shown it to the sister of the

Amir of Kabul and her household, to a Dogra official of high standing and his household, and to the family and servants of one of the Kashmiri *rais* or nobility, as well as to the poor sick ones in the dispensary, so that eye as well as ear may drink in the message of salvation.

Vignette XIII.
Among the Children.



KASHMIRI CHILDREN.

Among the Children.

AT an upper window sits an English lady. In the room below another is dispensing medicine for soul and body to sick Kashmiri women, and little Kashmiri girls are hovering round, looking, they would tell you, at the *tamasha*, as anything unusual is always termed. Glancing up, the little girls are attracted by the sight of bright-coloured skeins of wool, which the lady at the upper window is fluttering to attract their attention. "Are they not pretty?" she says. "Yes, but what will you do with them?" ask the children. To the answer, "Come up and see," some two or three shyly respond, and a Kashmiri Girls' School has begun.

Soon small, brown, very dirty fingers are puzzling over the much-coveted art of knitting. It is not altogether a foreign accomplishment, as Kashmiris knit excellent stockings, and gloves too, but it is an occupation generally confined to men. The little ones are very happy in the new experience; but their teacher must proceed with caution; she is as yet an unknown quantity, and any sudden movement promptly empties her school! But patience and perseverance—still more prayer and

love—in the long run will always win the day; and now, as the result of that venture of faith and love, some thirty Kashmiri girls and a few women, with clean hands and faces, sit in orderly school fashion, conning their reading books, or plying busy fingers over a pair of stockings, or listening to a Bible story.

In another quarter, too, a second school numbers some thirty-six Kashmiri girls, who, with a sprinkling of Panjabis, are learning various Christian arts, together with the story of Christ's love. And so the dying wish of our Pir Bai* is being fulfilled, and the children are being called to give their hearts to the children's Saviour.

* See page 17.

Vignette XIV.

Our Little Girls' Rest.



OUR ORPHAN CHILDREN.

Our Little Girls' Nest.

SUCH was the title given to our Christian Girls' School, by a fellow-missionary, when writing to send us a 50 Rupee note towards its expenses; money that could ill be spared from the heavy claims on his purse made by his own work among the boys of Kashmir, but the sympathy that prompted the generous gift will not be forgotten on earth nor in Heaven.

It is time I gave you the story of the Nest.

Two *ekkas*, or, shall I call them, Indian dog-carts, had driven into our compound in Srinagar, and we hastened out to welcome the new arrivals. Already we had six orphan girls in our School, and one or two children whose training we shared with their Christian parents. But that day, six more little maids were lifted gently down. They had come, I need not say, from famine-stricken India, for the pinched faces and spare limbs spoke for themselves of the battle for life with deadly hunger; a battle that was not quite over yet.

"Alone, alone, alone," was the only response we got from the three little ones, as we lifted them down from the *ekkas*, and asked their names. All

names had been forgotten in that terrible experience, in which father, mother, friends, had one by one dropped and died by their side, leaving only this awful fact stamped on their memories, that at the threshold of life they had been left "alone" in the world. No wonder the little faces were strangely serious!

But God, "who setteth the solitary in families," had bright things in store for these desolate little ones.

They had been passed on to us, at our request, by Miss Hewlett, who had not only sent to famine land to succour them, but had tended them in her hospital till they were fit for the long journey. So they came to us—these "little ones"—clothed and cared for, with a generous provision for a year's maintenance, lest our funds should be swamped by this addition to our family. And since then, kind friends in Kashmir and in England and Ireland, have shared with us the privilege of providing for them.

We called the three, who had forgotten their names, *Chambeli*—Jessamine, *Gulabi*—Rose, and *Kamala*—Water-lily; and their love of flowers justified this choice of names. Never were the two baby girls so happy as when I took one on either arm, and carried them round the garden to gather flowers to their hearts' content.

No one, who has not had similar work to do, can quite tell how much patient care and labour

were needed by those who had the charge of our new family through the long winter months in Kashmir. But it was truly a lovely surprise when, returning from an enforced absence in the Panjab, I was welcomed by bright, healthy, happy school girls! The result of the winter's care and training had surpassed my best hopes. Only our little "Rose" was missing—the Lord had gathered her for His Heavenly Garden.

Perhaps some of my readers are asking what we shall do with our children. We have, all told, eleven orphan girls. Well, if God be "the Father of the fatherless," He surely will have a voice in the destinies of His children, and the same Supreme Hand will be felt in the guidance of these lives which He has saved, as in the moulding of the lives of the most cherished English children.

Long years ago, in reply to an earnest appeal to the Rev. Robert Clark for teachers to help in work in Kashmir, I was told: "We cannot spare you our teachers from the Panjab; you must make them for yourself." So we have begun. Our eldest girl, Ruth, is now being trained in the C.M.S. Normal School in Benares. She promises well, and will, we hope, come back to us in the spring to help in school-work, and another girl will take her place for training.

Meanwhile we are seeking to train our girls for any work in life to which it may please God to call them. They make and mend their own

clothes, cook their own food, and keep their little home clean and tidy; and in intelligence and good conduct they would now compare well with any such school in England. Their bright faces in church, earnest responses and singing cheer our hearts, and we hope that in the future, as they have "freely received," they will "freely give" to others the knowledge of that Saviour Who has said: "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me."

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