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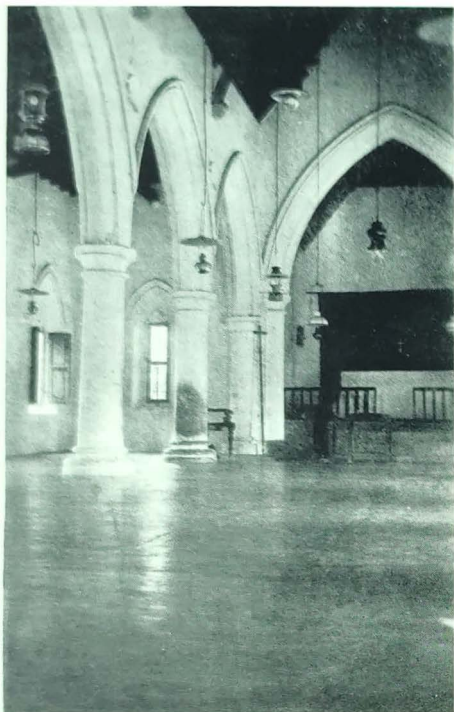
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ANNALS OF AN INDIA^N PARISH



*Interior
of the
Parish
Church*



The Lake

ANNALS OF AN INDIAN PARISH

BY THE REV.

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

THREE YEARS AGO a missionary found himself in the unusual position of taking over from an Indian clergyman charge of a small country parish. In the fulfilment of his duties, he was brought much closer than ever before to the real life of the Indian Church, its joys and sorrows, its failures and triumphs. Letters recording his experiences were read with great interest by friends at home, and some of them asked that they might be made available in permanent form. The letters have been edited and in part rewritten. All the names have been changed, chronological sequence has not been strictly kept, and some of the details have been altered; but in the main the chapters which follow are a transcript from daily life.

The whole of this book may be taken as a commentary on a sentence in *Out of Bondage*¹: "Baptism, like marriage, is often the beginning of the tug-of-war." Friends of missions at home almost always think that, as soon as a convert is baptized, the missionary has done his work, and is free to go on and preach the Gospel to other non-Christians. Nothing could be further from the truth. The greater part of missionary work in India to-day is the care of the Christian Church. In many places the initial impulse of conversion has died away. The Church, as in the parish here described, consists of the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the original Christians, who are very much like the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Christians in England. In any English parish will be found three classes of people: a small group of converted Christians, with a living experience of the power of Christ; a

¹ *Out of Bondage*. Stephen Neill, Edinburgh House Press. 2s. Almost out of print, but obtainable from the C.M.S. Library, 6, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. 4.

large number of good church-goers, whose religion is external and conventional; a still greater number who are wholly indifferent and rarely darken the church door. All these groups are to be found among Indian Christians, though the second tends to be larger, the third much smaller than at home.

But there is another factor in the Indian situation. The Church is a small island in a vast ocean of Hinduism. The village Christian is at all times breathing in through every pore non-Christian superstitions, non-Christian ideals, non-Christian standards, which corrupt and destroy the life that is within him. Parish work in England is like pushing a heavy stone along level ground. Getting the stone moving is hard work, but once it is moving, it will roll some distance by its own momentum. Parish work in India is like pushing a heavy stone up a steep hill. The moment pressure is slackened, the stone begins to run down hill. Harm done by one year of neglect can hardly be repaired by ten years of labour.

The work of the Indian parishes is now almost wholly the responsibility of the Indian clergy. The purpose of this book is not to prove that the Indian Church is either good or bad, but to show how very heavy is the burden that we are laying on our Indian brethren, how great their need of wisdom and spiritual power, how great the responsibility of those who, like the author, are called to the task of training Indian Christians for the ministry of the Gospel. Perhaps some Christians, as they read, will find that the familiar words: "Our Bishops, and Curates, and all Congregations committed to their charge," take on a new and more compelling meaning.

S. N.

THE HOUSE OF THE KING

CHAPTER I

THE HOUSE OF THE KING

1931. *April.* - I have had a busy time the last month, taking possession of my parish. People everywhere are very friendly, and it is clear that they are going to give us a fair field and no favour. Rightly or wrongly, they are profoundly dissatisfied with the state of things in the past, and want to see improvement ; but, with so many divisions and cross currents of feeling, we shall be walking all the time on broken bottles, and shall need quite a superlative degree of the wisdom that cometh from above.

At the time of writing, I am extremely tired after my first Easter. Naturally, all the bigger congregations want to have Holy Communion on the festival itself, and, as you know, they like service very early in the day. The only way to satisfy them is to keep a continuous succession of services going all through the night. I had sent my Indian colleague over to help a neighbour, who has a heavier burden than even we, so I had to do the whole thing myself.

I started at the House of the King at 11.30 p.m. The church was brilliantly lighted, and beautifully decorated ; the people make long streamers of white and red oleander flowers, and hang them all down the church ; at that time of night they are all fresh and dewy, though they will be sadly brown and faded before the heat of the day is over, and one advances as into a bower of fragrance. I preached a short sermon, and had 165 communicants ; and then was ready for the next service at about 1.30 a.m. It was very wonderful and moving to bicycle on from village to village all through the night under the Paschal moon, so bright

and clear that even colours are distinguishable, to find every church alight and decorated, and congregations ready waiting. I had four services in all, and got back to the bungalow just at 7 a.m. The strain of standing for so long is terrible, and all the services, remember, are in a strange tongue; towards the end, I wondered whether I could get through, but "the joy of the Lord is your strength," and somehow I managed it. Rather more than 300 communicants in the night's work. But one is knocked up at the end of it, and I feel as if I could never face a celebration again.

July. - I am very cross. The House of the King is all in a ferment again. They were just settling down nicely after the last row, and I thought we were really making headway, and now everything is in confusion. The *casus belli* is the transfer of a teacher, a fruitful source of trouble in our congregations. In this village we have a very good and efficient school. The head master, who is also the catechist of the village, is one of the finest fellows I know in any country. He is not specially gifted, but is really competent; and much more important, he has had a good, old-fashioned, unmistakable conversion. I remarked on this to a colleague who knew him well, and his comment was: "Oh, I don't think he ever needed much conversion. He was always perfectly good before." But what a vast difference there is between "being perfectly good" and knowing God. I think you can tell it more plainly out here than you can at home; all outlines are sharper - just as all shadows are more sharply defined under our blazing sun. My colleague here, Dixon, after one year in the country, feels it very strongly. Among those who know their Redeemer, "heart answereth to heart." Anyhow, Isaac had his conversion three years ago, and one of the leading men in the village, not a very spiritually-minded man either, told me:

“His life was changed in a day.” Now at the age of twenty-three, he is my right-hand man, in practically sole charge of a congregation of 600, and head master of a school of 130 children. We have been running the school with two masters and two mistresses, but the inspector is always pressing us to put in another teacher, and I am sure that, with sixty babes in the primary class, he is right.

Last Saturday we had the meeting of the local church committee. As usual, the sub-committee which deals with transfers of teachers, met the day before; there were a number of anxious and difficult matters, but after long thought and prayer, we managed to work out a series of proposals, which, though not entirely satisfactory, were tolerable, and gave rise to no very serious objection. These proposals had to come up next day at the church committee. I am not chairman, though I have an *ex-officio* seat. The chairman is the local Indian priest, John Peter; and with all his many excellent qualities, he finds difficulty in conducting these meetings. He does not get the issue clearly before the members' minds, and confuses them by calling suddenly for a vote. His task is not at all an easy one, as there is a good deal of factious spirit in the committee. I usually try to be present the whole time, and help things on as much as a private member can. On this occasion, as ill-luck would have it, I was kept at home by important business, and arrived twenty minutes late for the afternoon session. In that twenty minutes they had got through the maximum possible amount of mischief in the minimum possible time. All the carefully planned transfers were rejected. We are badly hit financially, and in a moment of time, it was decided to dismiss four young trained masters and replace them by mistresses; and as a further measure of economy to reduce the school in the House of the King from four teachers to three. The bitter irony of it was that the representatives from that village

got tangled up in this complicated business, and when it was too late, found that they had unwittingly voted for the reduction of their own school ! It could not have made any difference if they had not voted that way, as they are always in a minority compared with the representatives of the other parishes which are included in this committee ; but they were sore and embittered about it. Some of them came to me later, and said : “ Sir, please don't let us have any of this voting. We have never had it before, and we don't understand it.” This may surprise you ; we are so used to democratic methods that we can hardly imagine any other. But it is sober fact that India's method is quite different. Here they have always worked on the *panchayat* system – small groups, which govern, I am tempted to say, by the method of exhaustion ; a motion is not accepted till all have agreed to it. This means endless, and to our minds unutterably tedious, delays ; but when all have been shouting at one another simultaneously for about four hours, quite suddenly the needed formula emerges ; in a few minutes it is over, and all go away quite happy and intending to keep the agreement.

Well, the people of the House of the King were not going to lie down under this oppression. They spent the greater part of the night shouting, and then came up the usual conclusion of such affairs : “ We won't pay our church dues. We don't want to be associated with a church which treats us in this way. We will separate and manage our own church. Or we will call in some one else to help us.” In nine cases out of ten it all ends in talk, and somehow peace is restored ; so we get to treat this kind of threat rather lightly. But in the tenth case, they really do as they say, and then we are sorry that we did not take thought in time. You must remember that we have within a few miles of us Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, and Brethren, ready and waiting to take over our

disaffected people, let alone the danger of their suddenly lapsing to Hinduism. It is very strange that there should be Christians who act in this way. But there they are, and I suppose their actions are justifiable on their principles, though not on ours. But this kind of sheep stealing never leads, as far as I can see, to anything but spiritual disaster. It was very important that the people in the House of the King should not go to extremes, and I felt that they had a real grievance. John Peter and I worried over the question; he was awfully good and patient, and eventually we arrived at an interim arrangement which will soften the blow. But this has no authority from the committee, and we have strained the constitution to its utmost limit to put it through. I expect there will be ructions when the committee next meets!

September. — On Friday I was called out to a funeral. It was one of the young men attending Isaac's Bible class. Like so many of them, he works away in the hills on a tea estate, and had just come back for a month's leave. He was married and had one child, a boy. From the Indian point of view this makes a tremendous difference; the continuity of the race is assured. Also he has a brother. But in any country, the death of a man of twenty-three is a tragedy, and it is utterly false to say, as is sometimes said, that Indians do not feel their losses keenly.

When I reached the house the dead man was laid out on a bed, and the whole house was filled with wailing and lamentations, exactly as you read in the New Testament. It is very terrible, that wailing for the dead. I agree with Socrates: "I have heard that it is fitting to die in holy silence." And I do not think that that utter abandonment of grief, as of men that sorrow without hope, is Christian. I have sometimes preached against it, telling them that a time of death is one of our greatest opportunities of

witnessing to the Hindus that our religion really is one of joy and everlasting consolation. But among Christians the wailing is I think rather a matter of good form than anything else – a mark of respect to the dead and of sympathy to the bereaved family, like the top hat and black gloves, equally incongruous, which are *de rigueur* in England. The women were perfectly under control; when I called for prayer, there was complete stillness, broken only by the low sobbing of the widow. But the wailing broke out again as soon as we had left the house. “In sure and certain hope.” The Burial Service is intolerably moving in any language. In India, it is the custom that all the men remain until the grave is filled in. I come away as soon as I have done my part. As I was moving off the lad’s father came up to me and, looking up, said: “It is all right. I am his father here, but he has gone to be with his heavenly Father. It is all right.” Surely such faith is precious in the sight of the heavenly Father.

December. – We have just had our school anniversary. Isaac was at the height of his glory. He really is first-rate, and he is happy in that his wife is likeminded. They have a baby about a year old, who scowls savagely whenever he sees me; all my efforts so far to win his confidence have proved unavailing.

The programme was, as always, immensely long. The *pièce de résistance* was a drama of the Three Children in the burning fiery furnace. Nebuchadnezzar was marked out from the rest not merely by his cardboard crown, but by the supreme distinction of wearing shoes and stockings. The image which Nebuchadnezzar the king did set up came in clad from head to foot in bright yellow paper, and stood absolutely motionless for the whole period of the drama – about half an hour. I was in terror that he would go off in a dead faint, but he seemed to have withdrawn entirely into

a world of his own, and was quite happy ; in fact he had to be recalled to life when it was all over, and moved off. The burning fiery furnace was most ingenious. A kind of frame was made of bamboo, with wires, to which were tied pieces of rag soaked in kerosene. The moment this was lighted the whole thing went up in a tremendous blaze, entirely satisfactory to the mind of the king ; unfortunately it burned a little too quickly, and was beginning to burn down before the Three Children could be immured behind it. But, after all, it is an essential principle of the drama that some place should be left for imagination.

I admit that my own mind is hazy about this question of acting. In this country the whole tradition of the drama is evil and corrupt. Is it not dragging religion down to allow it in any way to seem associated with what has come to bear the appearance of evil ? On the other hand, I am certain that no harm can come of the simple spontaneous acting of children such as these. In fact I wonder whether we ought not to carry it much further than we do, and whether this ought not to be one of the chief means by which we impress the Bible stories on the simple minds of the villagers.

1932. *March*. – I have just had an experience so odd that I hardly know how to describe it.

I have so far kept off the subject which is most painful of all. You know that drink is almost the greatest evil in our church. It is very bad in its direct effects, as the source of much poverty and of innumerable quarrels, all of which, in a land where so many people carry sharp knives for their work, are liable to be dangerous. Also since the use of alcohol is a sin both to Moslems and to high-caste Hindus, it brings the Church generally into a disrepute which is very harmful indeed to its power as a witness for Christ. But the habit is very hard to eradicate. In our part the palmyra tree grows literally in millions ; the sweet juice of it

ferments very rapidly, and provides quite a strong intoxicant for practically nothing. The trade is controlled by the Government, but in practice there is a great deal of licensed drinking, and a great deal more unlicensed.

I knew, before I took over the parish, that one of my chief church committee members was the keeper of the local tavern. Personally I hold that Christians who deliberately engage in this traffic ought to be excommunicated. Most people would not go so far as that, but there is an old rule of the Church still actually in force, debarring all such from any office or from membership of any church committee. Here it seems to have been forgotten; and as my friend is rich, and most of the villagers are in debt to him, no one dares to vote against him when the elections come round. But I found later that I had not yet heard the worst. The licensed drink shop is two miles away, which is much further than most people want to go. So my enterprising friend has started an illicit drink shop in the churchyard of the Northern Village. This goes on in full swing practically all day, in broad daylight and within sight of the main road.

I have tried various means to put a stop to it. I went one day and broke the place up. I thought at the time that it was rather like Gideon going up to break the image of Baal. Afterwards it appeared much more like nasty temper. Anyhow it did not do any good. The family involved in the trade were at first very angry; but they cooled down after a day or two, and their final attitude was: "He's young and hasty. We must give him time to settle down, and he'll be all right later on." Then I tried the official arm. I happened to meet the Excise sub-inspector, who is a Christian. I told him fairly frankly what I felt, and said that his department was being publicly disgraced through the whole district. His method of dealing with the situation was unexpected but ingenious. He went to the illicit

shopkeeper and said: "Look here, the missionary is on your track. Don't you think you could be a little more careful?" He explained the situation quite frankly to one of my colleagues. "My salary is Rs. 60 a month. My superior forces me to give him a contribution of Rs. 50 a month. Unless I take bribes from people like Sundraraj to allow him to continue his illicit business, how am I to live myself?" So that was no good. I finally came to the conclusion that it is impossible to work ahead of public opinion in a matter like that. A sound public opinion would be able to end the drink in a day, and that is what we must work for. In the meantime I take my evening walk fairly often that side, and it is amusing to see the drinkers arise like a flight of gulls, and retire to a safe distance amid the growing paddy. The big pots of toddy are very rapidly carried away, but I have never yet been able to discover where they put them. It does not really do any good, but it is a reminder that my eye is on them, and makes them feel vaguely uncomfortable.

Well, the other day Dixon and I were out in that direction, and walked right up to the hillock, which is the churchyard, to see what was going on. We found, of course, all the signs of drinking, except either drink or drinkers. Then, I am afraid out of sheer mischief, we sat down there to enjoy the evening breeze and to admire the sunset sky, the disappointed and exasperated denizens in the meantime glowering at us from about a hundred yards away in the fields. Suddenly the proprietor himself appeared, and, almost at the same moment, a friendly Christian from our local metropolis. Now that we have agreed to differ on principles, the old man and I are friendly in a curious kind of way, and we sat down quite amicably to discuss the whole situation. He admitted freely that, two years before, when caught *in flagrante delicto* he had given a solemn agreement to John Peter not to engage in the illicit traffic himself

again ; and that a year later he had given me a verbal promise that, if he was left alone till the end of that season, he would give no trouble in future. He did not seem greatly abashed by the fact that he had broken both these promises. His real point of view is that it is no business of mine ; if a man pays his church dues, and comes to Communion once or twice in the year, what in the world more does a clergyman want that he should poke his nose into a man's private concerns ? But the explanation he gave on this occasion was this : " You see, it's like this. I've been in this trade for thirty-six years ; it's become a habit with me, and I can't give it up." To which our Christian friend replied unexpectedly but aptly : " Then don't you think it's about time you took your pension and retired ? "

There for the time being the matter rests. It is hard to accept the law that " he that believeth shall not make haste." But I think that is our only course, to go on patiently working until the Christians feel the evil of what is going on, and to let them step in when the time comes to stop the thing finally and for good.

1933. *April.* - We are apt to get discouraged sometimes by the apparent lack of fruit from our labours. We work on and on, and there is very rarely anything decisive to record. But it would be cowardly to feel that nothing is happening, and after two years' work we are beginning to feel that there has been steady gradual change. Once we have jerked the church up out of its state of stagnation, and got it on the move, the movement will continue and we may expect to see greater things. Here what I have most noticed is a very marked improvement in church attendance in the last few months. At this time last year, thirty men and sixty women at the principal service on Sunday (you know that they sit men with men and women with women on opposite sides of the church) would have been

considered good. Lately we have had regularly fifty men and about a hundred women. You must remember that a great many of the able-bodied men are away from home at work, so the disparity is due only partly to irreligion.

But quite our best attendance was at the Three Hours' Service on Good Friday. Last year there were about a hundred grown-ups; this year there were just twice that number, and 120 children. I admit that most of the latter slept throughout the service! We take the Three Hours' Service very seriously here – in fact it usually runs to nearly four hours. We start with a preparation at about 11.40; and it is customary to assign some of the Seven Words to laymen, who only speak on that one occasion in the year, and are naturally eager to say all that they know. Usually the whole time is fully occupied with long addresses and long prayers, with hardly a moment of quiet. This year, of the eight addresses, I took three and Isaac two; the other three went to three elderly and better-educated members of the congregation. I do not think the speaking was very good, and it is a great strain to listen for so long in the hottest part of the day in almost the hottest month. But the people were quiet and reverent, and for me the time passed astonishingly quickly. I take a little credit for the fact that we ended on the very tick of three. Isaac said afterwards that it was the best Three Hours he had ever known, and I think others agreed with him.

Easter Monday, and the last day in the House of the King. I leave India to-morrow. I received a farewell address in the middle of the night after the first Easter service, and several others later from smaller groups. I was specially touched by the members of Isaac's Bible class, in which I have taken a very tender interest all the time that he has been leading it. The work among them is very difficult. A great part of the time they are away from home at work,

and we have to do what we can for them while they are in the village. They are wonderfully attractive and responsive. They came as a body to bid me good-bye, and out of their poverty had subscribed to buy a silver cross, which they brought me as a parting gift. It is of truly episcopal size, and I could not possibly wear it, except inside my clothes. But it shall go with me wherever I go. Not that it is necessary for me to have any reminder of them ; as St. Paul says : “ They are in my heart, to live and to die together.”

THE NORTHERN VILLAGE

CHAPTER II

THE NORTHERN VILLAGE

1931. *April.* - I have just been over for my first visit to the Northern Village. This ought to be our chief evangelistic field. It consists entirely of depressed class people, our two main groups of them being represented. I suppose there are about eighty houses altogether at present, and only six families of Christians. They have a little land of their own, but for the most part are the servants of the Christians in the House of the King. This ought to be a tremendous help in the Christianizing of them, but I am not sure that it does not sometimes work out in the other way; if there is a strained relationship in the matter of work and wages it is very likely to result in a feeling of opposition in the religious sphere also. The village is very picturesquely situated, amid big trees on a bank between the big tank (artificial lake) and the rice fields. On a similar bank in the middle of the rice fields is another exactly similar hamlet of depressed class people, where we have one Christian family only.

They are building a permanent church, but, as so often happens, they have come to the end of their resources, and it is standing, four bare walls, waiting completion at some indefinite date in the future. In the meantime, services are held in the little school. It measures only sixteen feet by ten, so when the whole congregation of thirty or so is present, there is not an excess of room, even with all sitting on the floor. Although they have been Christians for a long time, I think they are very ignorant. But I like them very much. When service is conducted at such very close quarters a friendly feeling grows up automatically. They

are quicker to follow instructions than many much bigger congregations. For instance, as very few have books I said that we would read the psalm very slowly, pausing after each group of words so that all could follow. For the first time in my life I really got this carried out as I like. And here I am able to do what I think is much the best thing, preach entirely by the method of catechizing, no connected discourse at all, simply a string of very simple questions interspersed with references to the Bible, which they look up and read. The bigger congregations feel themselves too superior for this method, though even they would profit much more by it than by sleeping as they do through the flowing and eloquent periods to which our language so admirably lends itself. I think that I am going to enjoy the work here very much.

July. - I often think committees are the best device of the devil for preventing the work of the Kingdom from getting done. The cause of this outburst is that we have just had the local church committee which settles the transfers of teachers. We had a very nice young teacher, Azariah, who was working as assistant in the House of the King, and getting on well there. Now they have transferred him to the Northern Village. It will mean that he has, instead of a big, well-organized school, a very small school to work in and one at which the children are very irregular. He is much annoyed about it and feels that he has been as it were degraded. I have had a long talk with him, and at last he has seen that we can take all these things as the will of God for us, and can turn them into a blessing, even if at the start they seem like the opposite. He has agreed to go without any fuss, and do his best. I have pointed out to him that there is a big piece of work waiting to be done, the finishing of the church, and that if he will put his back into that, it will take all the strength and energy

of a young man, and that I will help him in every way I possibly can.

November. — We have just had the dedication of the church in the Northern Village. Azariah has done splendidly. There were a good many subscriptions promised for it but not paid up. He at once started going round and getting these in. Nothing succeeds like success, and as soon as the people in the neighbouring villages saw that the work was really going forward, they began to get interested and money came in again. I was able to advance money against the grant from England, which had been promised, but cannot be drawn till the work is actually completed. In what seemed a miraculously short time the roof was on, and we could make arrangements for the dedication. We received various gifts for the furnishing, some more useful than others. It is a very old established custom that people in time of illness or other special need vow that if delivered they will give a lamp to the house of God as a thank-offering. As all these lamps are a special token of the piety of various families, they can never be removed without causing offence, and in many of our churches one advances under almost a forest of lamps. They are hung rather low, and I constantly dash my head against them while processing up the aisle. Nowadays we use almost entirely the Petro-max lamps, which give a dazzling light, and have entirely solved the problem of Evensong after dark. At the very most two Petro-max lights would be ample for the small church here, and it was a little embarrassing to receive three gifts of lamps of the older pattern, or rather all of different pattern, which had to be hung somewhere about the church. The most touching gift was that of money for the Holy Table from the women in the House of the King. We have not had anything from the men there.

Architecturally the church simply does not exist; it is

just a box, with a smaller box at the end as sanctuary. I am afraid this is inevitable in most of our villages. At the present stage the urgent necessity is to get a church of some kind which will stand against sun and rain, and at the minimum cost. Later generations will be able to afford beauty and dignity. We must be content if we have the beauty of holiness. I suppose the majority of the Saxon churches in England, judging by what little remains of them, must have been bare and undistinguished in the extreme. We always tend to be in a hurry and to try to push through in a generation in India what has taken centuries to work out in England.

But we have taken a great deal of trouble with the interior. We have two traditions of church decoration in this diocese; they are rather painfully allied to those tartly described somewhere as "the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome and the squalid sluttiness of a fanatical conventicle." I am never sure which is worse. We have tried to avoid both of these, and to give them furniture which is simple and expressive, so that they can really keep it in order without expense, and at the same time have something which has a meaning and does not merely fill up space. I am very well pleased with the result; given our limitations, I think this may be taken as a model of what an Indian village church should be. Needless to say there are no seats or pews. The situation of the church on the edge of the tank is very fine; people are passing along this way the whole time, and the completion of the church is a silent witness to the power of God. The rains were early this year and the tank is now full. Standing in the sanctuary and looking out through the "East" window (it faces actually south-west), one commands a ravishingly lovely view over the tank and the broad fields beyond it.

The dedication was very impressive. A great many people came from other places, and the little church was

crammed to the doors, with many outside. The bishop was visiting the neighbourhood, so we were lucky enough to get him for the service. We robed in the church in the big village about a quarter of a mile away, and processed with the choir singing in front. We were preceded by one of the local brass bands, which, whenever the choir paused in its hymn to take breath, attempted to blare forth and had to be strictly muzzled. It must have been a great disappointment for them. We divided up the dedication service, all the clergy in any way connected with the place taking part. There were about 150 communicants. This has given the little congregation a splendid start. Quite a number of people in the village have been saying: "Wait until the church is completed, and then we shall become Christians." I hope that they will be as good as their word, and that the church here will grow and be multiplied.

1932. *January*. - Sunday school was always a problem here. We have made various efforts to start it, and always before long it has languished. Now at last one of my students has solved the problem. It is the same as the answer to the old question in *Punch*: "How to make the children stick." In one of our boarding schools they use stamps for their Sunday classes, just as many Sunday schools do in England. We could not possibly afford even the small amount required to put this into practice in our village schools. But my colleague who uses them always has a certain number over, and the student who is responsible for the children in the Northern Village had the bright idea of getting these for them and using them as a bait. It has worked admirably and most economically. The children get only one stamp if they have attended regularly for four Sundays. But you can imagine what joy it brings to these very poor children, who have so little of their own, to possess something, and it has made all the difference to

their attendance and attention. I have noticed an immense change in their behaviour in church. They sit as quiet as mice, and really seem sometimes to be taking an interest in what is going forward. I wonder whether this is not a way in which Sunday schools at home could help us. If the children would save their stamps carefully, and send them on to us, they would have a second lease of life, and I am sure those who sent them would gain more than if they kept them for themselves.

June. - I have not been at all happy about the Northern Village. I thought the opening of the new church would have given it an altogether fresh start and that we should have gathered in many of the non-Christians. But it has not happened. One family is supposed to be in process of joining the church. They come spasmodically to the services but do not seem anxious for definite instruction or under any real religious conviction. And the services are much less inspiring than in the little shed. Now that we are a little handful of twenty or so scattered in a church that will seat a hundred, there is a sort of coldness and distance which I never felt before ; and though the people have kept the church well, I do not feel that there is the same reality as there was.

Now at last, I have got down to the roots of the trouble. One of them is our old friend, caste. It has always been the custom for the people of the Northern Village to go over for Communion to the House of the King. I now find that for years all the older men of the Northern Village have simply excommunicated themselves ; they say that once years ago, one of them was insulted in church by one of the higher caste people, and they have never darkened the doors of the big church since. This means that one of their motives in building their own little church of which I have been so proud was that they might have Communion

in their own village, and be dispensed from the necessity of outward fellowship with people of a different and higher group. They are very angry with me because I have said that the old arrangement is to continue; I will give them an occasional Communion in their own church, but for the regular monthly service they must join in the larger fellowship. They feel aggrieved, and their refusal to take the simple Christian line on this matter is I am sure an absolute block to any progress in their own Christian lives.

But there is something more serious than that. As usual, it is an old scandal, which could have been put right at the time, but has grown much worse with neglect. There is a young widow in the village. About two years after her husband's death a child was born, and it was proved conclusively that the father was the girl's brother-in-law, himself a married man. She has been living there ever since, cast off by her husband's family, maintaining herself by work in the fields, and perpetually laying claim to maintenance for her child, which the father and his family are unwilling to give. Of course the Hindus know all about it, and are naturally unwilling to join a body which allows such things to happen and then apparently treats them with complete indifference. The man was never excommunicated, and has gradually admitted himself again to Communion, nothing being said. I have made desperate attempts to get the matter settled one way or another, but feelings have long been embittered, and there is obviously no perfect solution. I spent a long evening last week going over every possibility, and always finding some insuperable obstacle to everything which I could put forward. At last the old mother-in-law spoke up, and went straight to the heart of the problem. She said: "I will take my daughter-in-law back into our house. She must promise to live a good life for the future, and we will see to the care and up-bringing of the children." She is just a poor, haggard, illiterate old

woman of the depressed classes ; it was very wonderful to me that with unerring instinct she produced the one really Christian solution, the only final way out of this tangle that has been perplexing us all for so long and spoiling the life of a whole congregation. The others have for the moment accepted her advice. I only hope that they will have the resolution and good sense to stick to it. The moral of it all is that sometimes the work of the Spirit of God is much deeper and surer than we imagine ; and sometimes those who would be hard put to it to get out two coherent sentences of witness to Christ are yet nearest to Him and more clearly conscious of His will than many of those who preach to them and are exalted in the church. It is good that sometimes we are allowed to see these things. It helps us to understand that our work is greater than we know, and that none of it is lost in the sight of God.

PLANTAIN GROVE

CHAPTER III

PLANTAIN GROVE

1931. *June*.—I have just come back from dedicating a house. It is quite a nice house, not very large, but well built, and with reasonably large windows; barred of course, as all windows are in this country for fear of thieves. The owner is a great friend of mine, a merchant, and very pious; he told me that he had purposely built his house of two stories in order that he might have a quiet place for prayer and meditation. What would you do if you were asked to dedicate a house? It seems to be one of the services that has been left out of my Prayer Book! The Syrians, of course, have a regular form, which I once saw and heard when I was in Travancore; it has one of their immensely long prayers, with an allusion to, I should think, every house that is ever mentioned in the Bible. I always try to make something of a ceremony of it, as it is a very important and joyful event in the life of the family. I wear robes; after a lyric we read Psalm cxxvii, and sometimes a short lesson, *e.g.*, Eph. ii. 19–22; then, “Lord, have mercy,” *etc.*, the Lord’s Prayer, sometimes the collect for St. Simon and St. Jude, an extempore prayer dealing with as much of the circumstances of the family as I know, and end with the collect: “Prevent us, O Lord.” This seems to satisfy them quite well, but I think it would be good to have an authorized form. After the service comes what is to them an equally important ceremony—boiling the first milk. A little portable fireplace is brought into one of the rooms, and on it is placed a large new pot with a small quantity of milk in the bottom. Dried palmyra leaves, which will burn fiercely without much smoke, are placed underneath, and every one

waits till the milk boils ; it must froth right up, and even boil over for a moment, before being taken off. I am always given a little of the milk to drink. I do not know what is the origin of the ceremony. I think it must be very old, and is one of the few things which the Church has naturally and harmlessly retained from Hindu times.

October. - I have had further evidence of the untruth of the general belief that Indians feel grief passionately for a short time and then forget it. Some are like that, as in England ; but many bear a very deep wound in their hearts, especially widows and women who have lost a son. *Nulla dies nobis maerorem e pectore demet.* No one in India has quite thought to express it in those terms, but they would understand Lucretius very well if he were translated to them. I was visiting a house the other day, and the student who was with me told me that the old lady, the mother-in-law of the master of the house, never went to church. She was called up and we heard the story ; it was true that, since her husband died six years before, she had never been able to summon up courage to go. She was in white, as many Christian widows are, though the custom is slowly dying. I have found this with a number of widows ; the contrast and the memory of happier times is too much for them and they never begin to go to church again. I talked to her as consolingly as I could ; then I said : " Next time I come to service here I shall come and fetch you to church, just as if you were my own mother - like this," and I took her hand firmly under my arm. The old darling was simply delighted. She said : " Oh ! You needn't do that. I will come, I will come." And sure enough the next morning she turned up at a week-day Communion, which one of the others was taking for me. I do hope that it will be permanent, and that she will always " enter . . . into his courts with praise."

December.—Plantain Grove is very disappointing. I have had a hard time there lately. It started by various petitions against the teacher coming in from the young men. They did not come to me, and I rather disregarded the matter; then I heard that for weeks none of these men had been in church, and that they had declared that they would not come again until the present teacher was transferred. This was bad. Old Daniel is not one of our best teachers, but neither is he our worst. Perhaps he is not very energetic; but deep down there is a real strain of piety, which is lacking in many of the others. I suppose that he has been a little hard on the young men, and rumour has it that in a sermon he used some rather harsh language, which they took, possibly rightly, as being directed against themselves.

Just before Christmas we had the dedication festival of the church, when we expect to see every one in church. I had to go to the preparatory service the evening before, and looking round, I saw that not one of the young men was present. I felt it necessary to bring matters to a head. I sent a messenger out who reported that four or five of them were in the village, but that they absolutely refused to come to church. I then announced to the congregation that I would go on with the service, but that none of the said young men should present themselves for Communion, as I should be obliged to refuse them. They are not in love and charity with their neighbours, and are clearly determined, as the rubric expresses it, to “remain still in their frowardness and malice.” This created, as I intended it should, some stir in the congregation, and after service, which ended at about 10.30, some of the leading members asked if they might call the young men, to see whether we could not settle things up before the Communion service next day. I said that I should be delighted to see them, and that I was only longing for the removal

of this hindrance to the spiritual welfare of the congregation. So three of them were brought round to see me in the school. I asked them quite quietly to state their case. They reported their grievances against the teacher, and said that they were very much annoyed because no notice had been taken of their petitions ; but that they had no complaint against me, and no ill-will against the church – in fact they had taken a considerable share in making the decorations for the festival, though they had not actually been inside the church building. You can imagine the way in which I spoke to them – of Christmas as the season of forgiveness, and of their duty to God, which they seemed entirely to have forgotten in their preoccupation with man. Sometimes we seemed to be making a little progress ; but always in the end swung round again to this point : “ Our hearts are very sore ” – indignant is what they meant. I explained that the teacher was in any case an old man, and would be pensioned soon ; but by their hasty action they had made it impossible for us to seem to put them in the right by moving him now ; and I explained why, if they persisted in this frame of mind, I could not allow them to continue in the full fellowship of the Church. (I did not want to take the matter up to the bishop, but was prepared to do so, if necessary.) At this, one of them said contemptuously : “ Oh, well, if you drive us out of our own Church, we can always go to the Roman Catholics, or we can go back and be Hindus.”

From the first I was tired and overwrought. This word was a sharp arrow piercing to the very soul, and my spirit died within me. I got up, went to the farthest corner of the room and laid my head against the wall, feeling as though my heart would burst. I do not know how long I stood there, perhaps half an hour ; when I looked up again, the lads had gone. “ They know not what they do.” “ And one shall say unto him, What are these wounds in

thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

I went into the church, and fell down upon my face before the Lord. "O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! . . . What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" It was, for this time at least, definite spiritual defeat. Oh, this terrible unforgiving rancour of our people; how little they have learnt of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and how little they feel and understand their sin. I never knew before that it was possible for one to suffer so much for the wrongdoings of another. "The fellowship of his sufferings." That was the text of the first sermon I preached after my ordination. "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" How lightly and thoughtlessly we answer "Yes." But we really mean "No."

Well, there was nothing for it in the end but to go home and sleep; man cannot work without sleep, and God is not glorified by our tiredness. It was now long after midnight. I found dear Matthew waiting for me, the man whose house I dedicated. He was terribly cut up about it all, and had waited for me all this time without going home to get his evening meal. Matters rest, as they say, in the *status quo*. The young men have cut themselves off so thoroughly from the church, not even coming on Christmas Day, that I need do no more for the moment. The congregation has taken it all very calmly; only about two of them have any idea why I am upset. I know what will happen in the end. Daniel will be pensioned in about six months; then the young men will begin to come back to church; after another three months they will come to Communion one day when I am not there; and from their point of view everything will have been satisfactorily settled. But there will be no repentance, no sorrow, no sense of the dishonour that they have done to God; and

so there will be no possibility of any real growth in the spiritual life. You can imagine that my Christmas has not been very full of happiness.

1932. *March.* – There are encouraging signs of a movement among the craftsmen of Plantain Grove. They belong to rather a high caste. When I was working as an evangelist I always found that one could get a good hearing in the craftsmen's street; they are superior people, with refined manners, and their houses are always beautifully clean. But very few of them indeed have become Christians; I do not think that I know more than four families in our church. So I was very much interested to hear of this movement. A message reached me that one of them had given up idol worship, and was reading the Bible. I went to see him a week or two ago, and found him in the end house of their little street of twelve houses or so. I have had a little contact with them before, as several of the children are in our mission school, and the men who are carpenters work in the Christian houses. But this was the first time that I had actually been visiting among them. I found that our friend possessed an enormous Bible, which had been given him by a Christian, but he knew very little, and of course had very little idea what to do with it.

Quite a crowd assembled while I sat on the veranda of his house; very friendly, but there were a good many disturbances, and it was difficult to get a quiet hearing. I gleaned another interesting piece of information; one of the young men – well, hardly more than a boy – has declared his firm intention of becoming a Christian, and has actually changed his name for a Christian one. He was not in the village, so I could not see him; but why was I never told of this before? Every one must have known, but no one thought that it was a matter which urgently needed attention. In the middle of our séance, an old man came up

leaning heavily on a stick, and began shouting : " I know everything that is in the Bible – that Christ died for our sins ; and I know the Ten Commandments – do not steal, do not lie, do not bear false witness, and so on. But is it possible to live up to them ? " I tried to explain that Christ gave power to overcome sin and to live a new life ; but he broke in almost passionately : " That is not what I want. I know you say that, but I want to see it. Are there any Christians who keep the Commandments ? Can you show me any here in Plantain Grove, or in Lakeside, or in the House of the King ? "

This was a real poser. I do definitely think that there is a difference ; with all their faults our Christians have a higher standard, and certainly they have a far more sensitive conscience than Hindus. But the difference is not so great as to be immediately conspicuous to the Hindu. It ought to be as the difference between day and night. I am driven more and more to the conviction that we cannot do very much more in evangelistic work until we have an immense revival in the Church. We may be able to change people's *convictions* ; e.g., I am sure that the days of idolatry are numbered ; but unless you change their whole life and outlook what have you done ? Christianity prevailed in the beginning just because it could not be mistaken for any of the other mystery religions – the quality of life in Christ was definitely different from that of life in Mithras. And, in the end, the real evangelistic force is the whole life of the Church ; until that is sound and true, we have no challenging and convincing message to offer to the non-Christian world. I do not mean to say that we can refrain from preaching the Gospel until all our Christians are converted. But until they are, we are half-armed. We are attacking this immense citadel of Hinduism with eighteen pounders instead of with siege guns.

April. – Sometimes our hold on our Christians seems to be much less than it ought to be, but there is one point at which it is always possible to move them – their love for the church in their village. The church in Plantain Grove is in a very poor state. We are talking about rebuilding and enlarging it; a good deal of money was collected some years ago, but at the moment it is not available. As is often done in this land of few banks, the money has been lent out at interest until it is wanted, and now that the great depression has come it cannot easily be called in. However, though the major work cannot be attended to now, I saw that there were a great many improvements which could be made in the interior, and I have been impressed and rejoiced by the way in which, partly at my suggestion and partly without any word said, the people have responded and done what was necessary.

The altar rails were loose and very unsteady. I should have liked to replace them, but one of the men quite on his own set to, recemented the whole of the sanctuary, and fixed the rails firmly. The frontal and hangings were old and moth-eaten; I should think they had not been beaten out since they were first put into the church thirty years before. First of all, I was able to get a good plain curtain for the east wall; and then a little later another gift came in, and we took a great deal of trouble designing a frontal which should be simple and dignified, and above all *washable*. This is a great principle, applicable to everything which is used in the church and its services. In a hot climate, where for three months everything is covered with dust, it is impossible to keep heavy hangings and rich material clean. Good plain colour and plenty of it, and strong materials which will bear frequent washing and can be fairly often renewed are the lines we ought to follow.

Then one of our richer members came back from the hills where he works, and noticed that the west doors of

the church were in a very bad state. At once he gave an order for two teak doors, the cost of which was considerable. They have just been put in place, and ought to last for at least a hundred years. It is a very great improvement. Another leading member who works in Bombay bethought him to present a cross for the Holy Table. He had not been home for three years, and I had never seen him; but he wrote several times very appreciatively of all that was being done, and was very punctual every year in the payment of a generous subscription to the church funds. The cross was placed in position for the services of Easter Day. Within a day or two came the news of the death of the giver. This is a terrible blow to the big family of which he was the mainstay, and I think to the whole congregation. I was counting a good deal on his influence in helping to get things better when he next came home. I am glad that there is a memorial of him in his gift to the church. It is wonderful how the people always turn back to the place of their birth, even when they have been settled for years in good positions in distant places.

I wish they were as keen on the inner life of the church as they are on the outer. Perhaps it will be a case of "first that which is natural, and then that which is spiritual." It is fatally easy to be content with the good, and not to reach onward to that which is better than the good.

July. — I have visited the craftsmen several times since I last wrote. They are very friendly, and the young men are very attractive. They are willing to talk, but there does not seem to be a desire for definite teaching. They always say that they have no faith in idolatry, but there does not seem to be any keen desire to follow Christ. I have been able to make some progress in their confidence by visiting several of them who have been ill. Fortunately, they have not been very serious illnesses, and all have got well. At

one time, nearly the whole street was down with mumps ! I found them rather depressed, but relieved to hear that it was much more uncomfortable than dangerous. I usually ask them if they would like to have prayer in the sick house, and they always wish for it. That is a witness ; it is something very new in their experience.

I have seen the boy who has taken the Christian name. He is rather confused about his motives ; he says that he has always liked being with Christians and has heard their talk. He has no faith in the idols, and is quite certain that Christianity is the better way. That is the beginning, certainly ; but like so many of them, he has seen something of Christianity as a doctrine and as a way of life, but he has not yet seen even a glimpse of Him Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. He is quite determined to be a Christian later on ; but – and it is the same but for nearly all of them : “ I must get married first.” If he is baptized, he will not be able to get a wife from his own community. You will say : “ Couldn’t he get a Christian wife ? ” I am afraid the answer is that it would be very unlikely ; inter-caste marriages are very rare, even among Christians ; and those that there are are not always very successful. Usually both husband and wife are cut off from their relatives ; and there are so many differences in the customs and habits of castes which are quite near in the social scale that what we should consider a very hopeful marriage may turn out a tragic *mésalliance*. I can say without hesitation that it never enters the mind of ninety-five per cent of our Christians that they possibly could marry outside the caste in which they were born.

September. – Last Sunday five of the craftsmen came to church. No objection was made to their being there, but I could not help being annoyed with our Christians. All of the newcomers can read, but no one thought of sitting

by them, and showing them the place in the Prayer Book. Still, it is a great thing having got them to commit themselves so far. Now we shall see whether there is a seed which really has in it the power of growth.

October. – None of the craftsmen has been to church again. I am disappointed but not altogether surprised. They have against them the whole weight of feeling in their caste. No doubt their bold action has been bruited all over the countryside, and possibly they have already had threats about marriage difficulties, which will appear very serious in their eyes. Whenever I see any of them they are most friendly, and still the same kind of answer: “Oh, yes, we are coming some day.” Dynamite, dynamite, dynamite. There is nothing else will shift them. How often that word comes in the Gospels. Have you ever noticed the correspondence in the early chapters of St. Mark? On the one side *δύναμις* – power – on the other amazement.

In the meantime another pretty story has come to light. Quite close to the church in Plantain Grove is a little street of depressed class people. As you know, I regard every one in the parish as my parishioner, and I have been to visit in this street also. The people astonished me by saying: “What is the good of asking us to become Christians? We wanted to become Christians ten years ago, and the Christians came and burned down our houses.” I have inquired into the history, and so it was; only, as usual in this country, the matter was not quite so simple as first impressions would lead one to suppose. It is true that ten years ago, several of the depressed class families agreed to put themselves under instruction. Then I think our worthy John Peter, who was in charge at that time, went too fast. One day the congregation arrived in church to find the depressed class people kneeling at the altar rail and being admitted as catechumens. They were mortally affronted.

This may, to an English ear, require some explanation. The congregation in Plantain Grove is of the community to which the majority of our Christians belong, and that is as you know not at all a high caste ; they are not admitted to Hindu temples, and are not highly thought of by the higher Hindu castes. But our friends in Plantain Grove are of a special section in the caste ; they have always been quite big landowners, and are as proud as sin. Moreover, they claim that the church is their church ; it was put up with their money, without any grant from home, and they claim that no document has ever been signed making it over to the Church as a whole. Therefore they maintain that they have a right to say who shall or shall not come into the church. Expert opinion is that their view would not be upheld in a court of law ; but, of course, they are in possession and in a majority ; and that, in this country, puts them in a very strong position. They actually went so far as to say that they would build a little shed for the depressed class people in their own street, where they could have their own services and be taught – to be admitted to the real church later on if found satisfactory. As there would not be more than 200 yards between the two churches this could not possibly be permitted ; and the date of accepting them into the main church would, I imagine, never have come.

Then, while all this was going on, the Christians got word that sorcery was being practised in one of the houses where the people professed to wish to become Christians. I think this was probably true ; the depressed class people are inveterate in their practice of magic of all kinds, and it is only with the greatest of difficulty that we wean them away from it even after they are baptized. My servant is a very nice boy and a very good Christian. Some time ago we had some thefts in the bungalow ; the criminal fortunately was discovered, but my boy said to me : “ Sir, near

my home (thirty miles away) there is a little temple where they practise all kinds of divination and magic. If we had not found the thief I should not have cared what you did to me, I should have gone there to inquire." So I think it quite probable that there was some mischief of that kind going on in Plantain Grove. Certainly the mere rumour acted as a spark to tinder, and it is true that the Christians came in a body and burned down the house. That, for the moment, stopped the movement towards Christianity.

I have had all this out with the leading members of the congregation. They affirm: "There is no sincerity in these people. They are simply trying to climb up into our lap. All these generations they have been our servants, and now they are trying to use the missionaries to get on an equality with us. As long as we live we will never have them in the church." So far I have not been able to shift them from that position. The other day our new high caste convert, John Israel, was there visiting the craftsmen, and he fell in with some of the Christians; they got talking about this affair, and the leader again said: "As long as I am alive we will never yield. We are prepared to go to law, if necessary, about the ownership of the church. Perhaps when these young men grow up things will change; but as long as we older ones are here, we will never let go our hold." The young men then all chimed in, speaking in like manner, and swearing that they would never have the depressed class people in the church.

Dixon thinks definitely that we ought to have a row, that it is better to lose the congregation altogether than to keep them with that spirit unchanged. On which I would observe two things: That I am not yet nearly sure enough of the spirit of the craftsmen and the depressed class people to have any confidence in the result of a row on their behalf. Second, that, in this country, my experience has always and without exception been, that a row does much

more harm than good. Consider what would happen here. Suppose I forcibly introduced the depressed class people into the church. More houses would probably be burnt down, and either we or the Christians would be driven to law about the ownership of the church ; we should have the case given in our favour ; then the Christians would call in either the Romans or the Seventh Day Adventists, both of whom would be overjoyed to come in and snap them up. This would lead to endless complications in the congregation and in the other villages ; and even if we thought that all the men were worthless (which they are not), some of their wives and daughters are keen, and it would be heart breaking to lose them. The position as it is is profoundly unsatisfactory. As you can imagine, I take no pleasure in going there to celebrate the Holy Communion ; perhaps it is almost a relief that the men are very bad about coming to church. Do you think it would do any good if I circumambulated the village with bell, book, and candle, or sowed it with salt, or something dramatic like that ? I am afraid not. The only thing is to hold on and work for better times. "Therefore will I hold me still in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." If He is so patient, why should not we be ?

December. - Everything *in status quo*. But I have had a little encouragement elsewhere. About ten miles away is another big village of craftsmen, and some of the young men there seem to be feeling after Christ. One lad is a mason ; he was working for some time on a church in a village miles away which I do not know. He got into the habit of going to the daily service, and the teacher, who must be a good sort of man, gave him a New Testament, and taught him a certain amount. The lad is very attractive, bright and simple-minded ; he is quite definite that he wants to be a Christian, and says that there are two or three others

in the village who are of the same mind with himself. I have not been able to see any of them. I do not know to what it will lead. Always being disappointed and always hopeful, is our description. If they do hold on, and if some of them come out, it will have a tremendous effect on the craftsmen in Plantain Grove. Some people criticize this coming over in groups ; but I am not sure. After all, God has created us in families, and it is the natural thing for people to follow Him in families – it solves many difficulties. Well, we shall see. I would not commit myself to anything about this. But the least chink of an opening is a sign that something is giving way, and I often feel that we Christians are stupid and short-sighted, and fail to make a way in where God is really opening the door to us.

LAKESIDE

CHAPTER IV

LAKESIDE

1931. *July*. — My work in the parish is certainly not lacking in variety. I find that in this, the second largest of our villages, I have to superintend the work of a Bible woman. Why, oh why have I not a wife to do it for me! She (the Bible woman I mean, not the wife) is a poor old creature. I imagine that she was really taken on as a kind of charity years ago. Her husband is a leper and she is childless. She has not had any proper training for the work, and her reports always make me smile. They run something like this : —

Wednesday.	The Creation.
Thursday.	The Ten Commandments.
Friday.	Mary and the Angel.
Monday.	The Creation.
Tuesday.	Mary and the Angel.

So when she asked me to come and inspect her pupils, the Hindu and illiterate Christian girls whom she teaches, I was not expecting very much in the way of results. As you can imagine I was terrified of going; Indian women are supposed to be shy of men, but they are not nearly as shy of me as I am of them. However, it had to be done, and on Thursday I found myself immured in the Bible woman's little house with about ten girls and young women, mostly Hindus. I must admit that I was most pleasantly surprised and impressed with what I found. Method there is none in her work, but perhaps we in the West lay too much emphasis on method. I found that they all knew at least some elements of Christian truth, and some

Bible stories, though a little after the manner of parrots. What was more remarkable was that they were all able to read quite well. After one girl had read very clearly I asked her: "How long were you at school?" She replied: "I was never at school, I only learnt from her," pointing to our little Bible woman. They were all very quiet and reverent while I prayed. I wonder what is going on in their minds. Clearly they all have a great respect and affection for her. It may not be a very bright light, but certainly it is much better than the darkness of ignorance in which they would otherwise be left. And God has a surprising way of using the weak things of the world to an extent that we do not believe even when we see it. Perhaps there will be more fruit to eternity from her work than from many of the best sermons that we preach in the churches.

1932. *January*. - We have some catechumens at last. Two young men and their mother in Lakeside are preparing for baptism. I am not quite clear about the social relations in this village. This family lives in a back street, amid a group of people who are a good deal poorer than most of those who come to church and do not seem to be related to them. The boys can both read, which is a great blessing, but they do not know much yet. It is about three months since they definitely gave in their names, and one of the students is teaching them. But they are often out and away, and I do not think the class is going on very regularly. It is difficult to make our people realize the importance of the catechumenate. Their attitude is: "Oh, they are coming to church now; let them be baptized," with the idea that they will gradually drift into being good Christians. Of course it is true that in a Church which has the rite of Confirmation and treats it seriously, as we try to do out here, it is possible to baptize people at an earlier stage of Christian

life and knowledge than in those of the Free Churches, in which baptism admits at once to the Lord's Supper. But still, unless there is a good foundation before baptism, it is not likely that there will be progress after it. I believe that if we could investigate all the cases of lapsing back to Hinduism we should find that in at least three-quarters of them, those who go back never had a proper grounding at all, and therefore having no root in themselves, fell away. I promised that if these three came regularly to church for six months and learnt at least a minimum of the things a Christian ought to know, I should be satisfied and would baptize them at Easter. But on Christmas Day, just as I was finishing the baptism of some infants, the teacher jogged my elbow and said: "Sir, there are the adult baptisms also," and there he had these three ready waiting. I suppose he thought that when it came to the pinch, I should relent and baptize them. I was very glad that I had fixed a definite date and I was able to stick to it. But I think the teacher thought that I was very hard hearted, and that I was really depriving them of something to which by the mere fact of having come to church more or less regularly for a month or two they were legally entitled. I am glad to say that they took it in quite good part, and agreed that six months was the period I had specified. So they are going on all right, and I think are making real progress. I hope that nothing will happen to prevent their baptism at Easter.

June. - Quarrels, quarrels, quarrels. If I liked, I could fill my letters with nothing else. There is nothing which so holds back the spiritual life of our people as quarrels between Christians; and when the quarrel is between Christians and Hindus in the same village, it effectually dries up the springs of conversion, and we make no progress at all. When to the natural difference between Hindu and Christian is added personal and family animosity, the

barrier seems to be insurmountable. At least in no village which I have known where there has been such a quarrel has any one ever come over from the Hindu to the Christian side. And the feuds are terribly difficult to stop. They so easily become inveterate, like a Corsican blood feud, varying between a state of suppressed hostility and open aggression, when one side or the other sees the opportunity to gain a definite advantage over its rivals. I have known from the start that relations between Christians and Hindus at Lakeside were very far from being all that could be desired. In certain things they meet and co-operate, but there is little real goodwill. The fact that they are all of the same caste, and nearly all related does not seem to make it any easier. I believe the trouble goes back at least fifty years, and there have been so many wrongs on both sides that it seems impossible really to get them to agree to bury the past. Now it has all suddenly broken out again.

The *casus belli* as you would suppose was quite trivial. We have been rebuilding the teacher's house. The question arose whether we had the traditional right to open a door in one of the walls, or whether by so doing we should infringe some one else's rights over the land just outside; rather similar to the business of ancient lights. I was away at the time, and did not really go into the matter. The evidence is conflicting. The Hindus say that there was never a door there, but that sometimes when the wall was in a bad state of repair, it was possible to pass in and out that way. The Christians say that traditionally there was both a door and a path. The real difficulty was caused by the fact that the Christians would not wait to have the thing settled by arbitration; they always rather like to carry things with a high hand; and, acting on very bad advice, came by night with lanterns, and carried on the building of that wall, leaving the offensive doorway, so that demolition to a considerable extent would have been necessary if the doorway

was to be built up. The Hindus felt themselves mortally affronted; and I am afraid that the deed was one of the works of darkness and not worthy of the children of light.

The Hindus set to work to retaliate. An Indian village is an untidy place, and there are lots of little patches of land which usually lie open, and are practically part of the streets. But to every one of them there is a claimant, and sometimes two or three. Now the Hindus have been fencing up every scrap of land to which they can lay claim, and in fact stopping in several places what had come to be considered a right of way, though it probably could not be established in the courts to be so. So the Christians feel themselves affronted; this is directed against them, and in certain places is definitely awkward for them. They want me to interfere with fire and sword and put the Hindus in their proper places; regardless of the fact that if any one is in the wrong it is themselves, and that I have not any fire and sword at command, and that even if I had, it would not be the best way to win the hearts of the Hindus to put them in action.

We are reaping the fruits of the policy of the days gone by, when the Christians really did need the protection of the authorities, and the missionaries were hand in glove with government officials, who had much greater executive powers than they have in these quasi-democratic days. The situation at the moment is stalemate. The Christians will not give up their door, the Hindus will not give up their enclosures. The Christians are annoyed with me because they think that I have let them down. I do not see that there is any more to be done about it. Nothing would really settle matters except a complete investigation of the whole history of the past fifty years, and a radical agreement to forget the past. Without that, patching at single incidents won't do much good. I am very sorry about the whole thing. Relations were rather better and this wretched little affair has put the clock back to where it was, and as far as

I can see has indefinitely postponed the day when we can hope for any progress in this village.

October. – The wholly unexpected has happened. We have had a revival in Lakeside. I should have said that this was the least likely place of all for such a thing to happen. The people are most correct churchfolk in an external kind of way, and that often serves as a direct check to response on the deeper spiritual level. And the revival itself came in the most unlikely way imaginable. I was away at the time and take no credit for it at all, except that our eighteen months of steady work had no doubt prepared the way. The village was visited by a travelling group of evangelists; they are not from our district at all, and have only a very imperfect knowledge of our language. Their methods are rather like those of the Salvation Army, if anything more so. From all you read in the books about meditative, contemplative India and so forth, you would not imagine that such methods would have any appeal at all in this country; it is one of the many unaccountable things in missionary work that they are remarkably successful, mainly of course as in England among the poor and disinherited but not entirely so. One thing is quite certain, that India will never be won for Christ without the judicious use of every possible form and sort of Christian method.

I should have expected that in Lakeside, our strolling friends with their “corybantic Christianity” would have been hooted out of the place. But apparently they had immediate and extraordinary success. I had a remarkable letter from one of my students. He said: “Men and women were giving themselves to Christ one after the other; if you had been here, you would have been thanking God all the time.” He also added wisely: “Now it will be our great task to build up in the Faith those who have thus made a beginning in the Christian life.” It is, as you

would expect, mainly the younger people who have been most touched; the older ones have not been hostile, but I do not think there has been very much change among them. Some of the manifestations of the new spirit have been very interesting. One of the richer among the young men has left off the gold bracelets which he always used to wear. I do not think any one told him to do so; it was just that he felt that ostentation was unbecoming in a real follower of Christ. He was always a good fellow, but certainly he now has hold of something very much deeper than he ever had before. It must have cost him something to give up the old display. Jewellery, in the form of rings, bracelets, ear-rings, and so forth has an irresistible fascination for the young men in our part, and probably the first time he went out without them he felt almost completely unclothed.

I have noticed a very different spirit in the church services. They were always reverent, though rather stiff; but now many of the people do really want to be taught how to live the Christian life, and there is a feeling of expectancy and response which is new. We have just had the annual church festival. It has always been the custom to spend quite a lot of money on fireworks. This year apparently the young men were definitely against this extravagance, but the older men overruled them, and would not allow the festival to be shorn of any of its glory. I was visiting in the village one day with the student I have referred to. As we went into one house, he said: "This woman is quite illiterate, but now she has family prayer in the house every day. It is very wonderful to me that these ignorant people can have just the same experience of Christ that we have." Two of the young men keep a cake and sweetmeat shop by the roadside. Several times when I have been cycling past, I have noticed them sitting with an open Bible between them. This is certainly not for ostentation; it is simply that it

has become the main interest of their lives. And they are being sensible and practical about their problems; it is not mere emotion. Their most immediate difficulty is the strained relation with the Hindus. I am sure that the spiritual awakening at this time has been providential; the long strain of petty provocation from the Hindu neighbours might very easily have broken out into violence if it had not been for the overruling spiritual power which has given them an unusual patience and forbearance. These lads have always been very affectionate; but since the awakening we have felt ourselves bound together by an inexpressible love in Christ, which is the more than adequate compensation for many disappointments in other directions. Now, if they can only be kept firm to the end, there is the certainty of a very greatly changed church life, when they come forward to be the leaders of the church.

THE VILLAGE OF THE STONE QUARRY

CHAPTER V

THE VILLAGE OF THE STONE QUARRY

1931. *March*. – I have just paid my first visit to the Village of the Stone Quarry. I am afraid that work there is going to be very difficult. The people are of two different castes ; the majority are from the depressed classes, a few from a higher, but only slightly higher community. The latter, including the children, sit together in the front of the church ; one or two of them lead the singing very loudly, rather out of tune, and with an excruciating slowness. The old catechist is a good man, but he was pensioned long ago on the ground of ill-health, and finds it difficult to cope with the work. The people give very little sign of knowing anything. They, or at least the men, can all read ; but for most of them the struggle for existence is hard, and the contrast is very great with our other villages. A few of them are in Ceylon, but the majority earn their living by day labour and by stone breaking.

Certainly there are some signs of life ; the people are undoubtedly very keen about the church, and the attendance at Communion is very good ; the book shows that the average is about twenty-five out of a possible forty. But we must set against this the fact that the local toddy shop (the licensed one) is just outside this village, and I think every adult man in the place without exception drinks. I am afraid this means that the church and church services have come, in their estimation, very much down to the level of a Hindu *pūja* (worship), and that they are content to go on year after year outwardly conforming, but without any serious attempt to face up to what Christianity really means in life and conduct. However, their welcome was warm ;

they seem very glad indeed to have some one who will look after them, and I am sure that we are already good friends ; the spiritual fruit will come later.

July. – I have just scored a striking and quite unexpected success. The Village of the Quarry has always suffered from lack of water. The well of the higher caste people is dry through August and September nearly every year ; and, of course, though Christians, they will not draw from the depressed class well, better though it is ; and, if they tried to do so, the depressed class people would probably object that their supply was only just enough for them. So our friends, our people and Roman Catholics together, got me to introduce them to the sub-collector and presented a petition for help in the digging of a new well. But money is not easy to come by in these days of depression, and I did not think that their request would have much effect. I remembered that we had had very good success in boring the bottom of a well in the school compound ; there seems to be a water-bearing stratum about fifty feet below the surface ; there was nothing to show whether it extended as far as the Quarry Village, but it seemed worth trying. We borrowed Rs. 24 from the local church fund, and set to work.

The boring apparatus is simplicity itself ; just a pointed iron bar, which is raised and dropped by a rope over a pulley ; as the hole gets deeper, sections of iron bar are screwed in as required. I went down to inspect the well before they started. Certainly the people were in piteous plight ; the well was completely dry, but a little water was oozing up into an excavation at the bottom ; five or six women stood round waiting their turn to draw up just enough to fill one pot with water for cooking. Washing seems to be in abeyance here until the rain comes in the middle of October. Two days later I went again to see how they were getting on, and was indignant to find that

the people were paying six coolies six annas a day to pull the rope. Two men have to be paid, as the work of actually controlling the bore requires some skill; but the mere manual labour of hauling can be done by any one, and of course the people ought to be doing it themselves. With this kind of extravagance the cost of the work would come up to over Rs. 60, and where is that amount of money to be found in a poor village? I am glad to say that the people listened to my objurgations, and after that there was no more nonsense; the young men of the place set to and hauled with a will, getting their food at mid-day.

On the fifth day, they struck a layer of hard rock, and work went forward very slowly. I was anxious. To be disappointed after raising the people's hopes and after having got so far would be very sad. But the next day, at a depth of thirty-seven feet below the bottom of the well, they struck water. The next morning there were twelve feet of water in the well - "two men's height" as they express it. I do not know whether it will be a permanent gain, or whether it will dry up quickly. But in the meantime the joy of the people is very great, and I feel that I have really been able to unlock a door to their confidence. They crowded round me, and said: "For ten generations our fathers have lived here, and always they have been troubled for water; and now in a few days by your care for us the trouble is ended." This is going to provide an illustration for many sermons. How often God has some great blessing waiting for us in the very place where we are; and because of our blindness or indolence, because we will not go deep enough, we lose His pleasant streams, and suffer drought and desert heat.

August. - At last I have been able to do what I have long intended. I have visited the Quarry Village a number of times in the early evening; but it is not very much good,

as the men are never back from work, and the women are busy. I have felt that the only way to get to know the people would be occasionally to spend a night in the village. So last night I sent my camp cot and a few necessaries over in advance, had dinner early, and cycled over soon after dark. The people collected in good numbers for Evensong about 8 o'clock; I think there is a little more response than there was, but it is very difficult to hold their attention for more than five minutes. The men have remembered quite a lot of my last address – on the ten lepers – but as one looks at the faces of the women, worn with hard labour, and without any gleam of light and eagerness, one wonders how anything is to be brought home to them.

After Evensong, I started house-to-house visiting. But their idea of it is quite different from mine; I like to go in in a leisurely fashion, and sit down and call the children, and inquire about all the affairs of the family; and then if possible give a short Bible talk and end with prayer. But here the great idea is that you must pray in the house, get it over in two minutes and go on. As almost the whole congregation followed me from the church, and, what is more, followed me to every house I went to, the occasion was not very propitious for private talk. Not that I need have worried about that; there is no privacy in an Indian village, and the village street is held to be a most suitable place to discuss what we should regard as most confidential topics. After about six houses, I began to think it was time to rest, for I am always pretty tired on Saturday night, and praying in a foreign language is a rather exhausting occupation. But they would not have it, and drove me on from house to house, till I had been round almost the whole village. It was after 10 p.m. before I got back. There being no other available place, I spread my cot near the door of the church and lay down.

But not to sleep. I had chosen my night badly. It was

full moon. Ordinarily every one will be asleep very soon after dark ; but by way of compensation, on bright moonlight nights they never seem to go to sleep at all. In the still, clear air every sound was painfully distinct. Near by a man started singing one of their endless, monotonous songs ; I thought that it would never end. I was not pleased, as we had fixed the Holy Communion for 6.30 in the morning, and that meant being up by 5.30. I suppose I fell into a sort of drugged torpor about midnight, and slept for some hours.

We had a very nice time at the Communion service ; the demeanour was noticeably more reverent than when I was last here. I think all who were able to come attended. As soon as it was over, I prepared to start back, and found that I had forgotten my topee. Starting after dark one naturally goes out bareheaded. I have done this before when starting out before daylight for evangelistic work. As it was only 7.30, it did not matter, but it was fortunate that I had not to stay any later in the day.

1932. *August.* – The people of the Village of the Quarry have decided to rebuild their church. This is not due to growth in the congregation ; all the people in the village are Christian, the majority being Roman Catholics. But the church was getting in a very bad state. It was only mud brick and thatch, the roof resting on tree trunks as pillars. I at once wrote to John Peter, as the plans and estimates must be passed by the local church committee. He was definitely discouraging, and wrote back : “ The people of that village have been talking about rebuilding the church for the last ten years ; I don’t think you will get anything done.” However, he gave me permission to bring the matter up in the church committee.

It may interest you to know how this business of church building is worked. The people are tremendously keen on

it, and our church buildings are the admiration and envy of all our visitors from other parts of India. Our estimate was for Rs. 1500. There are two funds in England from which we may be able to get help, and we put down Rs. 250 optimistically under this head. The people guarantee Rs. 300, some of which will be given in labour, some in cash; the remainder has to be raised by subscription outside the village. I think, as a matter of fact, the people's contribution will be a good deal more than Rs. 300; the stone breakers will break the necessary stone, and they will do all the digging and actual building themselves. We shall need one mason and one carpenter, and we shall have to pay for the cartage of materials. Everything else will be free. I promised the people that, if they worked hard, and got everything ready by August 6, I would bring the bishop, who was coming to head-quarters for a school anniversary, to lay the foundations. The idea was that the old building should be demolished, the materials used to build a small school close by, and the old site cleared for the building of the new church. As it was already the middle of July, there was a good deal to be done in the time.

I went down one day while the work was in progress. Really it was a sight to gladden your eyes, every one, caste and outcaste working together with the greatest enthusiasm. The young men were mixing mortar, the boys carrying bricks from the ruins of the old church, and the old men at work on the building of the school, with the old teacher, minus his shirt, running round and superintending everything. So much for John Peter and his gloomy prognostication. Rather to their surprise, I fell to and worked too, filling baskets with the bricks for the boys to carry.

It was an effort, but everything was ready by August 6. The new school is excellent; they have put into it the doors and windows from the old and much larger building, with the consequence that this is the lightest and brightest school

building I know in India. The bishop came in due course ; he was very tired, and only spoke briefly ; but it was a tremendous thing for the people. Although the congregation is eighty years old, they have never had a bishop in the village. Incidentally, the bishop asked me rather pathetically whether, as a liturgical expert, I could recommend a suitable set of garments for laying foundation stones. There is no nonsense in India ; you have to get right down into a narrow trench six feet deep, and actually lay the stone !

October.—Quite an excitement in the Village of the Quarry. The other day the Roman Catholics were having one of their grand festivals. I think some sort of dramatic performance was in progress, and two young men of the robber caste, Hindus of course, came to see the fun. One of them was wearing his head cloth ; a few of the Christians objected and rather roughly told him to take it off. Then the fat was in the fire. You might be surprised to hear it, but the robbers are socially quite high in the scale of castes, and our young man was most indignant at being ordered about by Christians of much lower caste. What happened next is a little obscure. I gather that the robber started laying about him with his long stick, and some of the Christians did the same. Then, finding that they were standing up to him, and that he was in danger of being really badly beaten, he ran away down the village street towards the main road. Coming in the opposite direction was a Christian from the House of the King, who, seeing a man running away, at once scented trouble and flung his arms round his waist ; whereupon our young bravo pulled out a knife, whether his own or the other man's does not appear, and smote his adversary approximately under the fifth rib. The whole village was on top of them in a minute, but too late to stop the mischief. The wounded man was at once carried off to hospital, whence the latest

news is that, though the wound is quite a bad one, he is out of danger. The two young robbers were secured and carried off to the Roman Catholic priest, a good friend and enemy of mine. The next morning the police were called up from the station seven miles away, and a case has been lodged.

Naturally the Christians came to see me to ask for advice. In this case the advice can be summarized in three words: "Tell the truth." It is a perfectly clear case; there are dozens of witnesses, and there ought to be no difficulty in securing a conviction. But the police hardly ever will trust the truth; they seem utterly unable to resist the temptation to fabricate evidence which is not there. Dozens of cases in which there is enough evidence to convict a man ten times over are thrown out because the police will make the witnesses say more than they know; a clever lawyer naturally concentrates on showing up the part of the evidence which is false, and thereby discrediting the part which is true.

November. — A later development in the stabbing case. It was rather a shock to hear that the leading Christian lawyer in the district was appearing *for* the Hindu and against the Christians. The trial seemed to be spun out inordinately, and I have now found out the reason. It happens that our magistrate, who was trying this case, is an old Cambridge friend of mine. The defence naturally assumed that I should have prejudiced his mind and that the case would go against them. Therefore, knowing that my friend might be transferred soon, they found all kinds of ways of delaying the affair, and in the end were successful. The case was the first taken by the new magistrate; and as he is very loath to convict anybody except on unimpeachable evidence, our young friend was acquitted. I need hardly say that the police had been up to their usual

tricks, and I blame them for confusing and losing what ought to have been a perfectly clear case.

The Christians are very much depressed. They are rather a timid folk, not easily able to stand up for themselves ; and when the Government seems in this way to give licence to lawlessness, they feel themselves helpless indeed. In addition, the young man and his family have been very foolish ; they have been boasting and threatening, and one or two Christians who have passed through their village have brought back tales of intimidation. I decided that the best thing to do was to go and see the lad myself.

The village has only about seven houses. When I got there a woman ran out and told me that a big boy in her house (the cousin of the lad I was looking for) was very ill with smallpox. He is studying in the fourth form in our school in the Village of Light, and I know him quite well, so I went in to see him. I found him lying on the floor frightfully ill, his mother sitting by and fanning him with what looked like a bunch of feathers. I have never seen any one so bad ; he was simply covered with smallpox from head to foot, and it seemed to be impossible that he should recover. But they told me that the worst was over, the fever was actually abating, and that he would get better. I asked him whether he would like me to pray, and he said : " Yes." Opinions are divided about praying in a house where all are Hindus ; they cannot really join in prayer " in the name of Jesus," and there always is the danger that they may think it just a kind of magic, like the mantrams mumbled by their holy men. On the other hand, our prayer is so utterly different from theirs, and the simple fearless way in which we can go to our heavenly Father for everything is one of the greatest witnesses to the truth and power of the Gospel. So generally I pray when there is opportunity, making the words as simple as

I possibly can so that they can follow. In any case this boy has been for years in a Christian school, and has I think more than a glimmering of Christian faith. As it happened, the boy I came to seek came in just before I prayed; I find that he too was for two years in the school in the Village of Light, so he also knows something of what prayer is.

Then we sat down outside to talk; they were very friendly. I did not ask the young man: "Did you do it?" The temptation to say "No" would have been too great. Instead, I started off: "There is one thing that was not quite clear to me about the case. Did you do it with your own knife, or did you snatch the other man's?" At once he replied: "It was my own knife," and then went on eagerly: "Sir, what else could I do? They were fifty and I was one. I could not bear the pain of the blows, and so I ran away. If I had stayed there I should have been killed." This is largely true; I have a certain amount of sympathy with him; there was nothing premeditated about his crime, and in this land of violent tempers, where nearly every one carries a knife, such sudden affrays are terribly common and not infrequently fatal. I explained to him that such things must not be done, and that he was very lucky indeed to have got off this time without being punished. At once he cried out: "Have I not been punished? Two months in jail waiting for trial and Rs. 300 for the case?" (In fees to the lawyer and bribes to the witnesses!)

His father then broke into the conversation: "It was so important to get him off for the sake of our good name. We have always borne a good reputation. Ten generations we have lived here, and in all that time, there has not been a K.D. in the family." (K.D. means "known depredator.") To be thus recorded leads to certain grave inconveniences, and the disgrace of it is greatly feared by respectable

people. But in some villages well known to me almost every adult male is a K.D., and those who are not ought to be.)

I spoke as suitably to the occasion as I could, and told the young man that, if he went on in this way, I would do my best to see that he was a K.D. as soon as possible ! He promised that there should be no more intimidation ; and, telling him to come and see me soon, I took an affectionate farewell of them all.

Later. – The young man with the smallpox has recovered. He is an astonishing sight. There practically is not an inch of natural skin on his body. He now says that he wants to become a Christian, but that his family will be against it. We have Christians from that caste, but not from that particular sect of it. I think he is sincere, but we will not hurry about it.

The young criminal has also been in. I am afraid I have a *penchant* for young men who get into trouble, and I was very glad to see him. He is very handsome, though rather dark in colour ; very well formed and strong, aged about twenty-two, married. He said : “ Sir, please give me a job ; I want to be always with you. Then I can be good.” If only I could. But what could I give him ? I have a gardener, a convert, who cannot be turned off ; and there is nothing else that this boy is fit for. I asked him whether he would think of going into the police (set a thief to catch a thief !) or whether I should try to get him a job as peon to the collector or some one. But he did not like either of these two ideas ; rightly, I think. Both jobs are full of difficulty and temptation. So I am afraid he must be left in his village. They have some land, but I imagine that for four or five months every year he is without work, and then comes the uncontrollable impulse to wild mischief and devilry. Do not think that he is on his way to becoming

a Christian – yet. But there is too much good in him to be lost, if we can find any means to save him.

1933. *April.* – Church building has been going on well in the Village of the Quarry. Some time ago we solemnly set up the door posts. I got them on tick from the industrial school, but told the people that I would not give the order for the window frames till the Rs. 50 had been paid for the doors. The inevitable happened. When they were ready for the windows, there was no money in hand. The old teacher is supposed to be going round getting subscriptions, but I think he has been rather slack ; and when a little money has come in he has at once spent it on lime for mortar, and they have gone on building up such parts of the walls as they can without the frames. He probably thought in his heart of hearts that when the time came I would relent, and either get the windows on tick as well or pay off the debt myself. Nothing doing. My excellent colleague at the industrial school, when approached, quite firmly said : “ Show me first your penny.” And I have paid out all I possibly can. It is their church, not mine, and it is fatal if they are going to rely on the European to help them out always when funds run short.

For a moment we were at a standstill. Then, of all unlikely people, the girls’ school came to the rescue. They are always earning a little money in odd ways, and have quite a big fund for missionary work. Unknown to me, a whole lot of them made a pilgrimage to the village, saw the work and approved it, and on their return cheerfully handed over Rs. 25 ! Then the teacher made an expedition to a big city where a good many of our people live. I thought that his outing would cost about Rs. 15, and he would bring back Rs. 15 in subscriptions, and we should end up all square. But after everything was paid he had Rs. 35 in cash ; and oh, joy ! came back with a promise

of 2000 tiles for the roof. Getting money from our dear brethren here is rather like getting money from a Scotsman ; but the one thing for which they will always give is a church – and then, great and wonderful is their generosity.

Well, we were more than able to pay off our debt, and then we took delivery of the precious windows. I have just been down to place the first of them in position with solemn prayer. This is another of those services that seem to have been left out of my Prayer Book ! What would you do in the circumstances ?

I wish that I could say that the spiritual temple was rising as fast as the earthly. But it is hard and slow work. On those who ought to have been the leaders we seem as yet to have made no impression. But with the poorer and outcaste section I think God is beginning to have dealings. Their head-man tells me that he has definitely given up drink, and I am sure that he is speaking the truth. One or two of the young men have said the same ; and I think all are fighting against it. At least, they are beginning to have a conscience on the subject, to feel that if they want to have Christ they cannot have sin as well. That is a hard conflict ; we know it ourselves, do we not ? Do you remember that deep, expressive line in *The Hound of Heaven* : –

Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.

It is so hard, so hard until we surrender and find that in His will is our peace. I never read the end of that great poem without tears : –

Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me ?

.
How little worthy of any love thou art !

.
All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms.

I am quoting from memory – but you see all through that Thompson had learnt that great lesson – that you never can hurry a human soul. God has been so wonderfully patient with us. So often, I have knelt down at night –

Bitter with weariness and sick with sin,

(that is another grand missionary poem for you!)¹ and He has come so gently, and called me back to service just for one day more, and then for another day after that. And we are so often impatient with those for whom He died. You cannot hurry them, but

with unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy . . .

it leads on to the conclusion. I wonder if I have been able to make you understand even a little how one loves them. If I tried to write it down, it would sound too ridiculously sentimental. Rom. ix. 3 comes nearest to it. And surely this love itself is a wonderful token of His abiding with us. In our weakness and sinfulness we could not love like that of ourselves. “The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”

Sometimes, when it is blowing up for the monsoon, the clouds hang about the hills for days and no rain falls, and with us all is still bright burning skies, and – what is that in the R.V. of Isaiah xxxv? – glowing sand, I think. And then one morning, we wake up and find that all the tanks are full. The rain has fallen far away in the hills, and has flowed down to us through streams and watercourses. “And their soul shall be as a watered garden.” “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.”

¹ *St. Paul, Myers.*