

was, no doubt, to throw the Babylonians more and more into the arms of the Kaldi, and to inspire them with an undying hatred of Assyria. Esarhaddon, the rebuildler of Babylon, strove hard to undo the ill-effects of his father's policy, but unhappily, at the close of his reign, he fell into his father's mistake, assigning Assyria to his elder son Assur-bani-pal, and appointing his younger son Shamash-shum-yukin to be sub-King of Babylon. For awhile, indeed, this ill-judged plan seems to have worked well, despite the fact that proud Babylon was again placed in a position of dependence. But when Assur-bani-pal, intoxicated with his successes, began to show an increasingly arrogant spirit towards his brother, and to treat him as a mere prefect, Shamash-shum-yukin, now in full sympathy with his restless Babylonian subjects, entered into an alliance with the Chaldeans, the Arameans, and the Arabian tribes. Amongst his allies were the States of Bit-Dakuri and Bit-Amukkan, along with Nabû-bel-zikri, the grandson of Merodach-baladan. The struggle of Khaluli was thus repeated, and with the same result. After experiencing the horrors of a famine, Babylon was taken, and the brutal conqueror exults in the fact that he had butchered the inhabitants on the very spot where his grandfather Sennacherib had committed similar atrocities.¹ But these acts of savage ferocity brought their own retribution with them. The Babylonians, thoroughly sickened with the brutalities of Assyrian rule, were thrown into entire sympathy with the Kaldi, and on the death of Assur-bani-pal, beholding Assyria weakened by those very struggles which had raised her to the height of military glory, appear quietly to have asserted their own independence under a Chaldean King—to wit Nabopolassar, the founder of the New Empire.

CHARLES BOUTFLOWER.

(To be continued.)

ART. III.—MISSION VILLAGES IN SOUTH INDIA.

THE writer of the following pages will ask the reader's attention to the above subject on the following grounds: First, that he believes he is able to approach it with as unbiassed a mind as can usually be expected, and to view it from a different point to that from which the interesting reports of our missionaries are generally written. Secondly, that he was able to devote three weeks instead of the usual three days which the traveller generally allots to the inspec-

¹ See the *Annals of Assurbanipal*, Col. iv. 71.

tion of this district. Thirdly, on account of the importance which he believes attaches to the conclusions which he draws from the conditions which obtain in those villages. To understand rightly the condition of things in the mission villages of South India it is necessary first of all to have a clear conception of their geographical position. Starting from Cape Comorin and following a line due north for one hundred miles, then turning south-east for another sixty, we cut off an area of land equal in size to one of our English counties, but only a tiny fragment of the vast expanse of India. This area is named "Tinnevelly district," the word "district" being employed to denote the area under the charge of a Collector. In the centre of the district stand the twin towns of Tinnevelly and Palamcottah, on the left and right banks of the river Tambraparni—Palamcottah being the centre of education, seat of the law-courts, and the residence of European and the wealthy native inhabitants, while Tinnevelly, almost entirely inhabited by natives, is the chief seat of trade and business. The work which is being carried on at Palamcottah by the C.M.S., especially the admirable girls' schools under the charge of Miss Asquith, is probably well known to the readers of this paper, and does not strictly fall within the writer's purview. The scene of mission work to which he would direct the reader's attention is situated about twenty miles south-east of Palamcottah. One can only form to one's self an idea of what twenty miles' separation from civilization means in this part of India by realizing the way in which the interval is bridged over. Almost the only means of transit is the common cart of the country. This is simply a flat framework of wood resting without springs on two large wheels. It is covered with a horseshoe-shaped tilt made of palmyra matting open at the two ends. This is drawn by two bullocks yoked to the central pole. The average pace of bullocks is about two and a half miles an hour, so that, allowing for the necessary rests, it takes nine or ten hours to traverse this distance—rather longer, in fact, than the traveller at home occupies in passing from London to Edinburgh. The first part of this route lies through a perfectly level sandy country, which, when the writer passed through it at the end of November, was for the most part as bare of vegetation as a vast tract of seashore. The lines of banyan-trees shading the sides of the road and an occasional clump of palmyras were the only relief to this monotonous view. Traces of past cultivation, however, showed that in favourable seasons part, at any rate, of this tract was productive. The scarcity of rain during the last two years had, however, condemned it to become a sterile waste. The latter half of the journey is

through country more varied and more pleasing. The road approaches the valley of the river Tambraparni. The country becomes more broken and undulating, and it has been possible to discover places where tanks can be constructed and the rain-water husbanded. Around these tanks and along the banks of the river there is a rich culture, chiefly of rice, which grows luxuriantly wherever water can be provided. Here and there in this belt of cultivation we pass flourishing villages, one of which may be dignified by the name "town." Rising again out of the river valley, the last two miles of our journey take us up to the edge of a singular plateau. This is composed of sand and gravel of a brilliant red tint, so brilliant that, seen in the rays of the setting sun, it requires but little imagination to picture it as dyed with blood. Here and there in depressions of the plateau are groups of palmyras, but for the most part this tract is absolutely devoid of vegetation. On its borders stand most of the mission villages belonging to the two great societies. It will be understood, then, from this description of their situation, that they are to all intents and purposes entirely isolated from the rest of India. It is but rarely that one of the inhabitants of these villages moves to another part of India, or that the population is recruited by emigrants from elsewhere. No newspaper penetrates here and the politics of the world are the politics of the village. Public opinion is the opinion of the majority of villagers, and the standards of life which they set before themselves are standards which are lived out in their midst. The policy of the missionary has been to found villages of this type exclusively inhabited by Christian converts. The industry of the locality has lent itself to this policy. All the occupations of the villagers are connected with the palmyra-tree, which, like many other specimens of the palm tribe, can be adapted to a hundred uses. Hence, wherever a plantation of palmyras could be made a village could be founded. The missionaries, therefore, having built a church, gathered their converts around them, and in their own limited locality were much more Christian than an average English parish. The natives naturally looked up to the European family settled in their midst in a manner of which we find only a faint reflection in the respect paid by the inhabitants of a rural parish to the most esteemed of incumbents. The church became naturally a centre of village life; its services were the only variation of the daily monotony of toil. To a people whose ordinary avocations are not arduous, and who are to a great extent their own masters, being able to allot their time much as they like, unhindered by the rigid rules which govern labour at home, this means that whenever a service was held it required very little

self-denial, if any, on the part of the people to insure a congregation.

On Sunday the whole population, with the exception of the very young and the very infirm, would be found at church as frequently as the missionary was able to have service there. The simplicity of life in a rural district within nine degrees of the equator is such as we at home find it very difficult to conceive of. The climate renders unnecessary those provisions for clothing, for housing, and even for cooking, which are to us, in our Northern clime, of the highest importance. A simple hut with mud walls and having but two rooms, thatched with palmyra leaves, is amply sufficient to afford requisite shelter. One or two pieces of thin calico, a few yards long and unshaped in any way, form the clothing of both sexes. A fire lighted in the evening on the ground in the open air with a few sticks is sufficient to cook the curry and rice which are required to form not only the principal meal of the day, which is taken in the evening, but also to provide all that is necessary for the two lesser meals of the following day. Upon a people who live in such simplicity it is obvious that the duties of home sit but lightly. They may spend many hours of the day away from home without having neglected anything which it is their duty to do there. We must not, therefore, attach a fictitious value to the religious feeling which prompts men and women situate as these are to attend daily morning and evening service, with possibly a Bible-class or reading on some evening of the week, and on Sunday to be prepared to spend four or five hours in the church, engaged either in services or in receiving instruction in the Sunday-school. Indeed, we may say that the missionaries of both the great societies have succeeded in the villages of the Tinnevely district in realizing the ideal which "General" Booth has set for the members of the Salvation Army of causing religion to so interpenetrate the daily duties of life that his officers should cause their services to be an indispensable necessity to their people.

This is what has been done in the villages we are writing of. The foundations of a house are not laid without prayer being offered by the pastor; the house, when it is built, is not inhabited till it has once again been consecrated by prayer. No marriage takes place without the advice of the missionary having been sought, and no child is sent out into the world away from its native village except at the desire or request of the missionary. Of course, it is clear that in such a state of things as this is public opinion is necessarily religious opinion. We in England must go back thirteen centuries to find a parallel case amongst ourselves. Then, no doubt, the mis-

sionaries of Augustine in the South, or of Cuthbert in the North, gathered round them, at Canterbury and Durham, converts who formed settlements similar to those we are describing. But such a state of things has long passed away in England. Now in every parish we have a certain number who are direct opponents of religion; we have likewise a considerable number of those who, though not hostile to Christianity, are letters alone of religion, and there is, therefore, but little temptation for those who profess to be actuated by religious motives to be making their profession hypocritically; if they are not for us, there are two camps ever waiting to receive recruits who shall be against us. There they can obtain the society and recreations which they desire: they lose nothing socially by being separated from the religious element of the parish. The word "excommunication" has no terrors for them. But in a Tinnevely mission village "excommunication" is as dread a word to-day as it was in England in the reign of King John. To be separated from the Church means to them to be cast out of the only society they know, and to have withdrawn from them those services which they have looked upon, not as privileges only, but as necessities. There is therefore a very strong temptation to simulate the religious feeling, if not to be actual hypocrites. Nothing can be more pleasing than to see, as the writer had the privilege of seeing, how Sunday is spent among these simple people; but what has been already written must guard the reader from attaching an undue importance to what is thus seen. With this caution we will endeavour to picture the scenes presented to us on two successive Sundays spent at two typical villages, Nazareth and Mengnanapuram.

Nazareth is the headquarters of the S.P.G. Mission. It has for many years had the advantage of having been the home of Canon A. Margöschis, whose personal influence is enormous, and whose devoted work is well known through the length and breadth of India. The land on which the village is built and by which it is surrounded is the property of the Society, and the palmyra-trees growing on it are let out at a moderate rental to the villagers. The village consists of two parallel main streets, well laid out, and at the end of one of them, in an open space, stands the church. It is a low building, with a square tower at one end. Were it not that the building is whitewashed outside and that the green Venetian shutters which close the windows catch the eye, at a casual glance it might be taken for a village church of moderate size at home. Directly you step inside any such illusion vanishes. You find yourself in a building of which the windows give some faint suggestion of Gothic architecture, whereas the pillars are decidedly Classic; in fact, the shell of the building

is not at all unlike a district church built in the thirties, under the influence of Philistine churchwardens. The floor is of concrete, polished by the feet of thousands, and unencumbered by pew, bench, or chair. The chancel, raised one step above the nave, contains appropriate choir-stalls; and above them, again, we see an altar as handsomely and elaborately draped as in one of our churches at home. Passing through a gate close to the church, we find ourselves in an enclosure which contains the schools and other mission buildings. In addition to the ordinary elementary and advanced schools, a large building is devoted to technical instruction, which is most efficiently imparted. Another building close to the missionary's bungalow is the Hospital of St. Luke, where many thousands of cases are annually administered to by Canon Margöschis, who is equally at home in medicine and divinity. Beyond the hospital stretches the singular desert of red sand already described.

It is 8.30 on Sunday morning. Outside the mission bungalow is gathered a long line of choristers, robed in scarlet cassocks covered with short white surplices; behind them stand two native pastors entirely in white. One moment more and the missionary, fully robed, takes his place in the procession, which moves towards the church, led by the cross-bearer. As we near the western door, a processional hymn in Tamil strikes up. Entering the church, the scene is most striking. From western end to chancel step is one dense mass of humanity. A church which in England would be seated for about 350 here has a congregation of 900. On the south side stand the women and girls, each one dressed in the graceful garb of the country, the only observable difference being that the women pass one end of their cloth over the head, to satisfy the requirement of the Apostle. On the north side stand the men and boys, very variously clothed and unclothed: some of the poorer men wearing nothing but a loin-cloth, others, more prosperous, enveloped in ample folds of cotton or muslin. The service is fully choral, and the singing is such as many a Vicar of a country parish at home would be well satisfied if his choir could produce. This early service consists of Morning Prayer and celebration of the Holy Communion, and the number of communicants would cheer the heart of an English pastor. From a village whose population is not more than 1,200 nearly 300 communicants present themselves each Sunday. It was the writer's privilege to preach on this occasion, and he will not readily forget those lines of dark faces ranged along the floor, all eagerly drinking in the words which fell from the lips of the Tamil interpreter, and eagerly scanning the face of the preacher, to gather from

his expression and tone an anticipation of the meaning of the strange words which fell from his lips. At noon another service was held, conducted by one of the native pastors, and yet once more the congregation assembled to join in a full evening service.

The following Sunday was spent at Mengnanapuram, a place which will ever be associated with the name of Mr. Thomas, who was for so many years connected with it, and whose wife and daughter still carry on as far as lies within their province the work of the late pastor. It is four miles from Nazareth to Mengnanapuram across the *terai*, or sandy waste, and when half that distance has been traversed, one sees rising out of palmyra groves the beautiful spire of Mengnanapuram Church. Surprising indeed is the contrast between a village, which can only be approached on horseback through the deep sand, and which consists of mud huts, similar to those previously described, and the noble stone church, which recalls memories of Doncaster. The building is indeed a magnificent one. It is cruciform, with a lofty tower and spire, and the great height of the roof makes the interior most impressive. Walls and pillars are alike of stone, and the open floor, devoid of benches, gives apparently additional breadth and height to the building. It is said to seat over 2,000 persons, and is not unfrequently filled on special occasions by contingents from the neighbouring villages, the population of Mengnanapuram itself being about 1,000.

The services on the Sunday in question began at 7.30 with the celebration of Holy Communion, at which there were about 280 communicants. This was followed at 9.30 by a service for children, which is not usually held in church, but which had grown out of a suggestion that the writer should address the children in the Sunday-schools. In place of the original idea, all the children of the schools were assembled in church, to the number of about 400, and a short service was held specially for them. In many ways it was a contrast indeed to the children's services we are accustomed to at home. The children sat cross-legged on the floor, and there were none of the difficulties of discipline and order which we sometimes have to grieve over in England. They sat as quiet as mice, listening to the address that was translated sentence by sentence to them, and showing not the slightest unwillingness to answer any question that was put to them. Some, indeed, amongst the elder ones might be observed taking notes of the heads of the address. After the service was over they filed away two by two—the girls through one door, the boys through another—in absolute silence, their bare feet making no noise on the concrete floor, and their soft clothes no rustling as they moved. At noon

took place the chief service of the day. This consisted of Morning Prayer and sermon, and was attended by about 1,300 people. No doubt the presence of a stranger caused the number at this service to be rather larger than usual, but the service was ordinarily attended by not less than 1,000. This was followed by a Sunday-school for adults, also held in the church, and lasting for about half an hour. In the afternoon men who are members of the Young Men's Christian Association go out in parties to heathen villages in the neighbourhood, and hold outdoor services there. Instead of visiting one of these services, the writer was asked to attend the evening service at a small Christian village about four miles from Mengnanapuram. One of the schoolmasters volunteered to act as the interpreter, and, guided by him and a body of young men from Mengnanapuram, we rode slowly along the very sandy roads to the place of service. The church stands on a rising ground, and in the open space in front of its gate grow two magnificent banyan-trees. Under these trees, more than fifty years ago, Mr. Thomas stood on his first visit to the district, and, in the course of an address to the people, foretold that the day was coming when a Christian church should be built in that village. Many years ago that forecast was fulfilled, and a church, simple indeed in its architecture, but sufficient for its purpose, now occupies the centre of the village. We found the pastor had drawn up his people in two lines under these historic trees to receive us.

The voices of welcome proved a little too much for the equanimity of our steeds, and some little time elapsed before we could calm their feelings. Then, dismounting, we were ushered into the church, which was immediately filled to its utmost capacity by the crowd that followed. The building would have been considered a small church at home, but by some means or other over 800 people contrived to find sitting room within its walls. The village has the reputation of having very hearty services, and certainly the singing and responses at this service fully bore out that reputation. On the other hand, there was considerable slackness about what might be termed the order and discipline of the congregation. Persons entered and left the church freely during the progress of the service, and children were allowed to walk about unchecked. The furniture and fittings of the church, too, were in an unnecessarily slovenly condition. Extreme simplicity in such fittings may be expected where the available funds are so infinitesimal as they are in the native churches in this district. But simplicity is always compatible with neatness. Here, alas! they are generally found divorced, and what was found in this church is, it must be confessed, the rule in churches and

schools which are entirely under native supervision. This is partly due to the fact that the word "tidy" has no place in the Oriental vocabulary. That neatness which is so dear to the English eye is remarkable by its absence in the sunny East. Gorgeousness where means allow and tawdriness where poverty demands take its place in Eastern climes. Partly, also, it is due to the lack of personal influence of the pastor over his flock. In a country like India, where social order has fixed itself in lines which cannot be altered, respect is paid to social position in a way which we cannot understand in a country where liberal traditions have broken so largely the barriers of rank. But in India all this is different. A pastor, however able he may be, and however excellent an education he may have received, yet, if one of his brothers is a palmyra climber and another a bandy driver, these facts are never forgotten by his fellow-villagers. To their mind he still belongs to the class from which he sprung, and from which, according to the caste traditions of his country, he can never depart.

We at home are accustomed to value a man according to his personal worth and ability, but in the East it is not so. Consequently, many of the native pastors, estimable men in every respect, are still without real influence among their flock. And they for their part would be the first to acknowledge that it is so. Indeed, they instinctively showed this by their mode of addressing their European fellow-labourers. They cannot realize that we desire to stand on the same platform with themselves as fellow-priests in the Church of God. They invariably address the European with the same titles of respect that are used by their lay brethren. It must also be borne in mind that it is but rarely that one finds the organizing and governing qualities, which are probably the leading characteristic of the English race, at all fully developed in the South Indian character. This probably explains the failure of the policy adopted a few years since by both the C.M.S. and S.P.G. of replacing the European missionaries by native pastors. It is an object which, of course, we must always have in view to make the Native Church entirely independent of aid from outside. It must always be a source of weakness in the Church in India if it is to look to Europe for a permanent supply of pastors and teachers. The time must come when it is to be entirely officered from its own ranks, but we must learn not to hurry that day. The experiment alluded to above turned out to be almost a complete failure. Disappointing though this was, one of the societies, the C.M.S., has had the courage to acknowledge its mistake and to return almost entirely to its old plan. A slight variation has, indeed, been made in that

plan, but this variation is an undoubted improvement. Instead of placing their European missionaries at three or four fixed centres, with the charge of the surrounding district, they now spend their whole time in itinerating from village to village and giving that superintendence and assistance, which are necessary in order that the work of the Church may be kept up to its proper standard. The S.P.G. still adheres to the experiment, which it began at the same time with its fellow-society, of withdrawing the European missionaries and replacing them by natives. But the results are eminently unsatisfactory. If we look to statistics we find that the number of Church members shows but slight, if any, increase, while if we ask the missionaries themselves they with one voice deplore a policy which they look upon as fatal.

Before closing this paper it may be well to point out the remedy for this state of things, which was very strongly borne in upon the mind of the writer during his visit to this interesting district. There is, no doubt, very much to be thankful for in the religious life of these villages. We at home might learn lessons of humility and faith from many shining examples of the Christian life which are found in these quiet hamlets. But we must, at the same time, not blind our eyes to the helplessness and want of independence which sap the strength of these little colonies, and will, if neglected, prevent them from ever fulfilling the high destiny which seems to be placed before them. The difficulty may be briefly stated as follows.

Without European superintendence there appears to be nothing before them but disorder and disintegration. On the other hand, if they are continually to be under the charge of a foreign chief, they will never quit the position of children in a nursery. The problem to be solved, then, is how to develop an independent and self-reliant character in their own pastors. This, I believe, can only be done by freeing them from the trammels by which they are now bound. They must be removed from a sphere of work where tradition debars them from freedom of action to one where their real power will be able to grow and develop. The solution, then, of the problem will, I believe, be found if we encourage some of the ablest among them to become independent missionaries in a country where they will be permitted complete freedom of action and development.

Such a sphere, I believe, may be found in the mission districts of Central Africa. There, instead of being overshadowed, as they are at home, by the deadening social influence of castes higher than their own and by the paramount influence of the European, they would be surrounded by a people who would at once acknowledge their intellectual superiority and be pre-

pared to receive teaching from them, while at the same time they would probably succeed in infusing into the Oriental some of that vigour of character which is strongly marked in the Central African races, especially in those of the Uganda district. A few years of such work might prove of immense blessing both to the teacher and to the taught. Now, one of the great difficulties which besets work in that particular mission-field is the unsuitableness of the climate to the European constitution. Hence, the work of the Church in that district has been carried on under the disadvantage of a continual change of teachers. Every two or three years the European missionary in Central Africa has to give place to a successor. But to the native of South India the climate would scarcely differ from that in which he was born and brought up. He would, in fact, feel at home there, and be able to use all his powers, unfettered and unhindered by the disadvantages of an uncongenial climate. Returning to his native land after ten years of independent work, he would approach his people from an entirely different standpoint. He would find that the liberal influences which result from travel and from mixing with the world would have broken down those barriers which seemed insuperable so long as his village was the world. He would feel his position enlarged, and, realizing what his true function was, he would assert that position in a manner which could not be denied. His flock would find that, while the same man had returned to their midst, he had returned wondrously transformed, and he for his part would discover that now he had no difficulty in obtaining that respect for his opinions and obedience to his decisions which would enable him to enforce that discipline among his flock which is now conspicuous by its absence. Officered by pastors of this description, strong in their emancipation from the tyranny of effete tradition, the Church in India will soon find itself able to dispense with that helpless dependence upon European support which is now its greatest weakness, and also, apparently, its only strength. Under such a changed order of things, we might expect to see—and we should be justified in expecting—that the native Church would be able to govern and support itself without English assistance, and to make that rapid progress in the conversion of India to Christianity which can only be expected to take place when the work is done from within, not from without.

A. E. LOVE.

