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Battling and Building amongst the Bhīls



Some Typical Bhils

LONDON
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY
SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.

1914

PREFACE

THIS little history has been written by a lady who asks that it "may be published without her name being given, as the information it contains is culled from many sources, and many others have given helpful criticisms and contributions." On behalf of those who have helped her I would express our gratitude for the labour which has shaped the mass of materials into the present interesting history. I have myself as far as possible compared every statement with the original sources and believe it is absolutely trustworthy.

It is sent out now for the information of many who have asked for a book on the Bhil Mission, with the prayer that God will so use it that all who read it may be helped to more earnest and persevering prayer that the little Bhil Church may be sanctified and built up in the Lord and become a channel of life and blessing to its own land. Its trials and temptations are many and great, and it needs all the help we can give it in this way, for Satan will not let a district be rescued from his rule of darkness, without putting forth his best to keep it. Shall not we put self to death on the Cross daily to make time for prayer to win this interesting tribe for Christ, Who died upon the Cross for us and them?

A. I. BIRKETT.

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Drawing Water from a Well

CHAPTER I

BHIL CHARACTERISTICS AND CUSTOMS

FAR off the beaten track frequented by globe trotters, and with few features of attraction to lead visitors to face the difficulties of the route, on the borderland of Rajputana and Gujarat, lies the sphere of the C.M.S. Mission to the Bhils. Range after range of low-lying hills, rising to a height of 1000 to 3000 ft. above sea-level, some covered with stunted trees and brushwood, others clothed with the graceful foliage of the bamboo, succeed each other; and some of the prettiest spots in India are to be found amongst these hills to reward the traveller who penetrates into these remote regions. The country is intersected with rivers, the courses of which are tortuous in the extreme, and alas, in the great heat, when the need is greatest, they dry up, with the exception of a few pools here and there, where the river bed is deepest or is overshadowed by friendly rocks or trees. They seem to typify the various religious systems which have been current in this country—at best broken cisterns whose waters have failed to meet the dire need of those who relied on them.

The Bhils¹ are one of the aboriginal tribes of India, who

¹ The number of the whole race used to be estimated at 2,000,000, but after the famine of 1900 the census of 1901 gave their number as 1,200,000. The 1911 census gives it as 1,635,988. These figures are only

in the times of the Mahābhārat were lords of all the countries through which they are now sparsely scattered. They were driven to take refuge in the hilly country by successive invasions of Hindus and Mohammedans, the last Bhil kingdom being the small state of Jhabra, which was conquered by the ancestor of the present Rajput chief in A.D. 1550. Driven from the good land, they took to robbery and cattle lifting, proving troublesome neighbours to the Rajput chiefs, who treated them with great cruelty. The Marathas impaled them on the spot, or burnt them to death chained to a red-hot iron seat, if caught red-handed committing serious crimes.

Clans

The race is endogamous, but is divided into an almost endless number of exogamous septs or clans, each with its own tutelary deity. If two septs happen to have the same tutelary deity they do not intermarry.

Appearance and Dress

The Bhil men are generally slight of stature and of medium height, and they allow their long, straight hair to grow until it reaches their shoulders. Their appearance is not suggestive of wealth, many of them only wear a dirty rag round the head and a loin cloth, and go barefoot. The women, who often in their youth are exceedingly good-looking and graceful, adorn themselves with many ornaments, their arms and legs being covered with cheap bangles and anklets. Their dress consists of a short, full petticoat of red or dark green material, a long blue or red shawl covers the head and is drawn over the body, and beneath it they wear a very diminutive bodice. The children, bright, lovable little beings, are rarely troubled with garments until they reach the age of eight or nine.

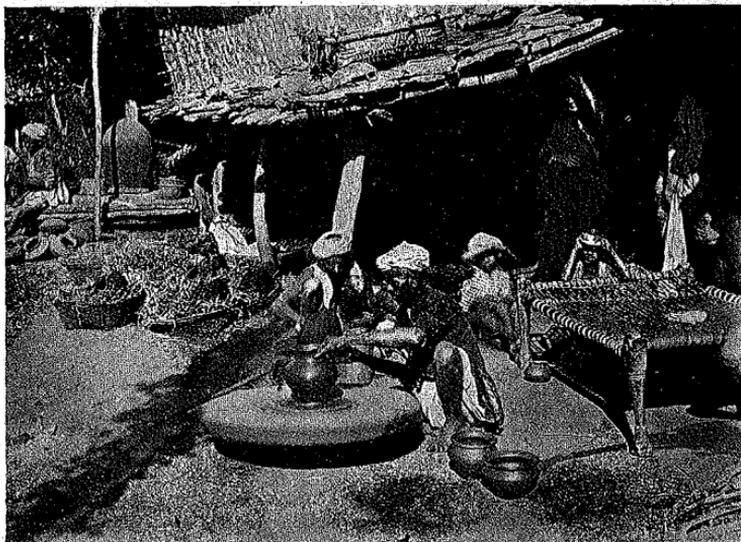
Characteristics

By disposition the Bhils are lazy, suspicious, and addicted to drink, while murder often hardly troubles their conscience more than a cat is troubled by killing a mouse. They are loyal to their own people, generally kind to their women, respectful to their elders, and exceedingly hospitable. They

approximate, as the Bhils are very shy of the enumerator. The C.M.S. Mission works only amongst Bhils living in native States. These are ruled by Indian princes with the advice of British Political Officers.

are almost all heavily in debt, and the tradesmen and money-lenders in dealing with them take advantage of their ignorance to oppress them in the most unscrupulous manner. Wages among them are low in the extreme, varying from twopence to threepence a day, while women are paid at even lower rates than these.

The Bhils are polygamists when they are sufficiently **Customs** well off to afford more than one wife. When women reach



A Hindu Potter in the Bhil Country

a marriageable age they are purchased as wives at a price of about four pounds. To them is delegated most of the hard work, but they go in and out to their fields, or to cut wood and grass on the hills, and thus enjoy far more freedom than their Hindu or Mohammedan sisters. Widows frequently remarry. Divorce is sometimes practised by men and is easily accomplished.

The poorer huts are built of wattle and daub, and the **Dwellings** roof is thatched with grass and leaves, over which heavy boughs are laid to guard it against the wind. Where the

owner is better off, the walls of his dwelling are composed of pressed mud, and the roof is tiled. The house is surrounded by a hedge of brushwood, or cactus, to keep out wild animals and robbers. These houses have seldom more than one room, which is shared with the cattle of the establishment.

Furniture

The furniture is extremely simple, consisting in most cases of a bedstead, a few cooking pots, two or three large earthenware bins made of sun-dried clay for storing grain, a pestle for husking rice, a hand-mill, one or two drinking vessels of brass or earthenware, and a bamboo cradle which swings by cords from the roof, or is carried on the mother's head when the baby makes a journey.

Weapons

Every Bhil carries a bamboo bow with a plentiful supply of arrows, a knife and a sword, or even an antiquated gun, if he can afford one, for use in attack or defence and in hunting.

Agriculture

Much of the land is rocky and barren, but most of the valleys are well cultivated. The richer lands have been appropriated by Rajputs and other Hindus, who have driven out the former Bhil owners; and now in every



A Bhil Baby and his Cradle

valley there are compact Hindu villages with well cultivated fields all round them, while the Bhil farmsteads are scattered over the poorer parts of the country, often on high ground, separated from one another by fields or jungle, so that a Bhil village may cover an area of several square miles.

Bhil agriculture is very simple, the ground being merely scratched over by a very primitive plough drawn by two bullocks. The seed is sometimes sown broadcast and sometimes in drills. The fields are often surrounded by a temporary hedge of bamboo or thorns to keep off stray cattle, deer, pigs, or other wild animals. Two crops are grown during the year, one during the rains ripening in October, and the other during the cold weather ripening in March; but too often the failure of the rains, too much rain, or an unlooked-for frost robs the Bhil of his at all times precarious harvest.

The Bhils are Animists, save where they have come in **Religion** close contact with Hinduism and have adopted Hindu beliefs and customs. Their religion chiefly consists in the dread of sickness and disaster, and they do not seem to have any conception of a supernatural power, except the power of evil. They endeavour to propitiate the angry deities by sacrificing cocks, goats, and buffaloes; and they entertain a strong belief in omens, witchcraft, ghosts, and malignant spirits. They have no temples, but worship either at the shrines of *Mātās* (i.e. goddesses, literally, mothers) beneath certain trees, or at memorial stones erected to the spirits of their deceased ancestors. At the shrines they offer small horses, quaintly shaped in unglazed earthenware with a hole in them, through which the spirit of the deceased is supposed to enter and travel up to paradise. They believe in a future life, and say that there is a great ball or wheel of fire which every male Bhil must face as soon as he dies. If, however, he burns in this world he will not burn in the next, so every boy is branded in several places on his forearm with a hot iron or roll of burning cloth.

There is a certain observance of caste amongst them, though they are by no means so rigidly bound by it as other

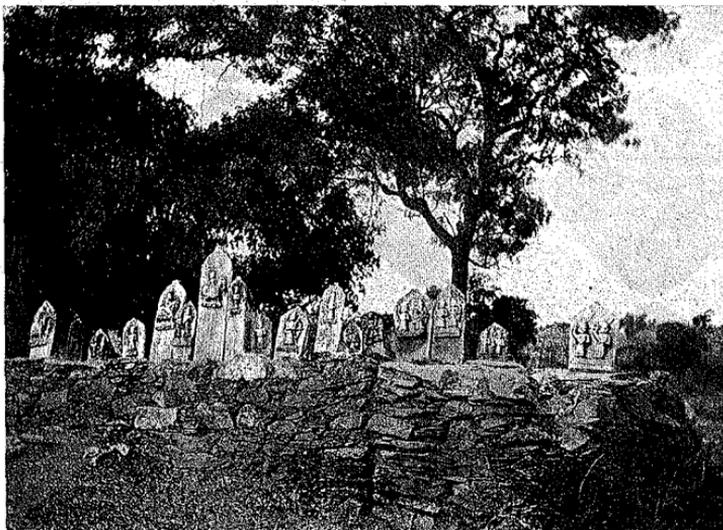
Indians. They are not looked down on as "untouchables" by Brahmans, who freely enter their houses.

Devotee
Sect

The Bhagats or devotees are a Bhil sect much influenced by the Hindu Rāmāpir sect, which deprecates idolatry and worships "Light" and the "Word." Bhagats are forbidden to eat meat or drink spirits, and may not eat or drink with the ordinary Bhil.

Mewar Bhil
Corps

With a view to civilizing these troublesome tribesmen and preserving order amongst them, several Bhil regiments

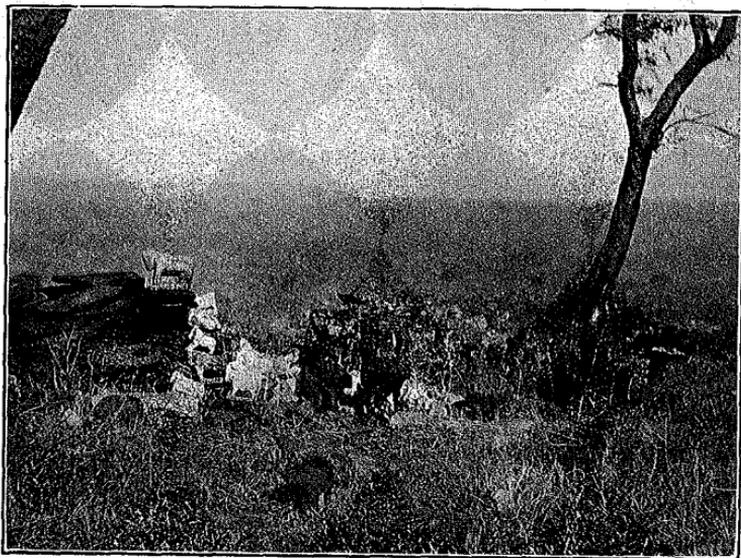


A Group of Ancestral Stones

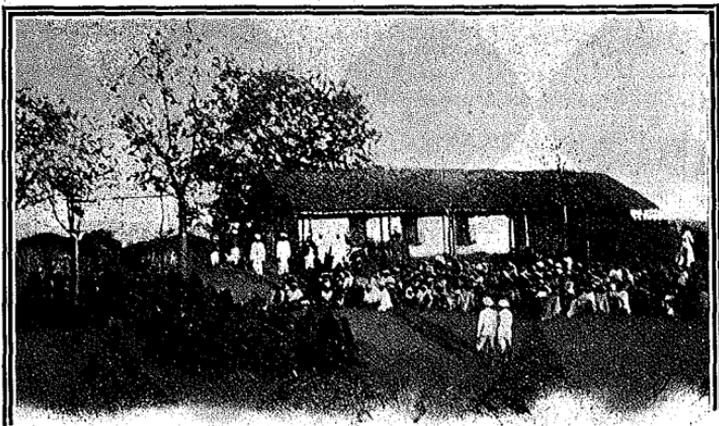
have been formed. This forms one of the most honourable episodes of Anglo-Indian rule. In the Mutiny of 1857 the only native troops in Rajputana that stood by their British officers were the Merwara Battalion (now the 44th Merwara Infantry), the Bhil companies of the Erinpura Irregular Force (now the 43rd Erinpura Regiment), and the Mewar Bhil Corps at Kherwara. The Bhil regiment in the C.M.S. district is stationed at Kherwara, with three companies at Kotra, and one at Mount Abu.

It was the presence of English officers in Kherwara which

led to the sending of the Gospel to these children of the forest. Mrs. Rundall, the daughter of the Rev. E. H. Bickersteth, afterwards Bishop of Exeter, had gone with her husband, Lieut. Rundall, Adjutant of the Mewar Bhil Corps, to this remote station, and her heart was deeply troubled by the degraded condition of the poor Bhils around her. Letters to her father led to a generous offer of £1000 to the C.M.S. to send out a missionary for three years to begin work amongst them. This offer was made when the C.M.S., in pursuance of a policy of retrenchment, was keeping back all its men who were ready to go out. It was accepted; and in November, 1880, the Rev. C. S. Thompson arrived and planted the Bhil Mission in Kherwara. He continued his service until his death in 1900.



Clay Horses dedicated to a goddess



Bhil Converts preaching to Recipients of Famine Relief

CHAPTER II

PIONEERING

CHARLES STEWART THOMPSON came from Easington in Durham, and was accepted by the Church Missionary Society as a missionary in 1880, after three years' training in the College at Islington. He was then twenty-nine years old, and was ordained deacon by the Bishop of London on June 11, and priest by the Archbishop of Canterbury on October 23 of the same year, that he might be ready for the pioneer work that lay before him. Dr. J. Shepherd, of the Rajputana Presbyterian Mission at Udaipur, showed him great hospitality while he was learning the language, and took him for a tour to introduce him to the country.

Pioneer
Work

But while it was easy to reach Kherwara, to reach the Bhils was a totally different thing. The timid and suspicious highlanders doubted which of two things Mr. Thompson had come for—to kill them, or to levy fresh taxes; and the Census taken the very year he arrived added to their fears. Let us read his own account of his early difficulties:—

I hardly dared to speak upon any topic whatever. If I inquired about the family, then how very naturally might they

have looked upon me as another enumerator? If I spoke about their cattle, fields, or crops, then the tax question might have disturbed their minds. To talk about God,—I knew that with them, as with others, nothing could so easily or so strongly call forth their highest fears. There was, moreover, another fear to be overcome. I had hoped to have relieved sufferers, and to have gained a hearing by treating their sick. I found, however, that they were full of fear on this head also. A doctor, who had but just left Kherwara before my arrival, had succeeded, by paying premiums, in getting several Bhils into hospital to be operated on. They have now a wholesome dread of the knife. The consequence is that, although there are hundreds of sufferers lying in the villages, it is a very rare thing indeed to see a Bhil man, woman, or child, near the dispensary. Of course, they looked with suspicion upon me. When I made my appearance in their midst, they, in great fear, I am now told, asked one another, "Who is he?" "What does he want?" "What will he do?" "Has he come to kill us?"

When we began our visits it was almost impossible to get near the people, fear filled their minds. If we met any one, or passed a hut, I endeavoured to be as free and look as unconcerned as possible about things in general. Long before we got anywhere near them, the children ran off to their homes as fast as their legs could carry them. Men and women, peeping round corners, or over the enclosures surrounding their houses, might be seen watching us in all directions.

Then we decided upon spending a week or so in one village, instead of going from place to place. It soon became evident that our new plan was going to work admirably. On the Tuesday we had fifteen visits for medicine or treatment; on Wednesday, thirty; on Thursday, forty-five; on Friday, fifty-nine; and on Saturday, fifty-eight; total, 207. Among the number was the headman of the village. On the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday we held little meetings to make known the Saviour. We did not think it advisable to say too much in this way on our first prolonged visit.

Patiently, cautiously, prayerfully, Mr. Thompson went on, and at the end of 1882, he was able to report that the Bhils



The Rev. C. S. Thompson

“had lost their fears and suspicions”; that a great number had been successfully treated at his little dispensary; and that a few lads had been brought to Kherwara to attend a school he had opened on his verandah. The Rev. H. P. Parker, the Calcutta Secretary, who was subsequently Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, having visited the infant Mission and reported very favourably upon its prospects, Mr. Bickersteth gave the Society another £1000 with a view to a second missionary being sent.

Between 1884 and 1900, the Rev. and Mrs. G. Litchfield, who had previously worked in Uganda, the Rev. and Mrs. W. B. Collins, and the Revs. H. J. Peck and H. Mould joined the staff, but from ill-health and other causes were compelled, sooner or later, to leave this field of service.

While Mr. Thompson itinerated in the more distant parts of the country, these missionaries worked in and around Kherwara, trying to gain the confidence of the people by school and medical work. In this they were very successful, having congregations on Sundays which sometimes numbered over a hundred listeners. Mrs. Litchfield opened a girls' boarding school at Kherwara and it prospered for a time, but had to be closed through opposition. Mr. Mould spent much of his time at Kotra. The Rev. E. P. Herbert was lent by the Gond Mission to take charge when Mr. Thompson went on furlough in 1896, and again during the great famine.

The Rev. Arthur Outram, a grandson of Sir James Outram—who is best known in connexion with the relief of Lucknow but who did a wonderful work in taming the Bhils and winning their confidence in 1828–38—joined the staff in 1897. After studying the language at Ahmedabad he was married to Miss Gertrude E. Withers, and began work at Kherwara at the beginning of the famine.

Firstfruits

It was not, however, till 1889 that the missionary saw the firstfruits of his labours. Suka Damer, a man belonging to the Bhagat sect, with his wife and four children were baptized in that year. He had been with Mr. Thompson for nine years, and had accompanied him on some of his

itinerating tours, and one may well believe that it was the witness of the missionary's life as well as his teaching which brought the first Bhil convert to Christ. Mr. Thompson wrote of him: "He is as bold as a lion for his Master." He died in 1909.

During the years 1887 to 1893, schools were opened at the out-stations of Lusadia, Biladia, Ghoradar, Sarsau, Kotra, Educational Efforts



Four Generations of Christian Bhils

Suka Damer, his daughter, granddaughter, grandson, and great-grandson.

and Baulia, and Mr. Thompson was much encouraged by the sustained interest shown in them by the ruling chiefs, especially by H.H. the Maharajah of Idar and H.H. the Rao of Ghoradar, both of whom gave generous assistance on several

occasions, while several of their feudatory chiefs gave considerable help. In addition to his extensive itinerating and medical work, Mr. Thompson carefully superintended these schools, encouraging the unwilling children with treats and tempting prizes.

Literary

He also prepared and published a simple catechism and a translation of parts of the Prayer Book in the Bhil dialect of Gujarati, as well as a Bhili-English Grammar and Vocabularies.

Famine

In 1899 the rains completely failed, causing a famine which lasted till the rains of 1900. The loss of life from starvation and disease was terrible, and was increased by the looting, for many were killed in defending their homes, and the survivors were left without food or the means wherewith to buy it. Relief works were started at various centres, and the out-station schools were utilized as food kitchens, especially for the children. These relief centres were speedily surrounded by hundreds of Bhil children and many adults, who showed in greater or less degree the awful ravages which an insufficient and unwholesome diet had wrought on their bodies and constitutions. Having neither work to do nor food to eat, nor even water to drink except when brought from a great distance, the people, at all times lacking in resourcefulness, were absolutely helpless.

**Acute
Suffering**

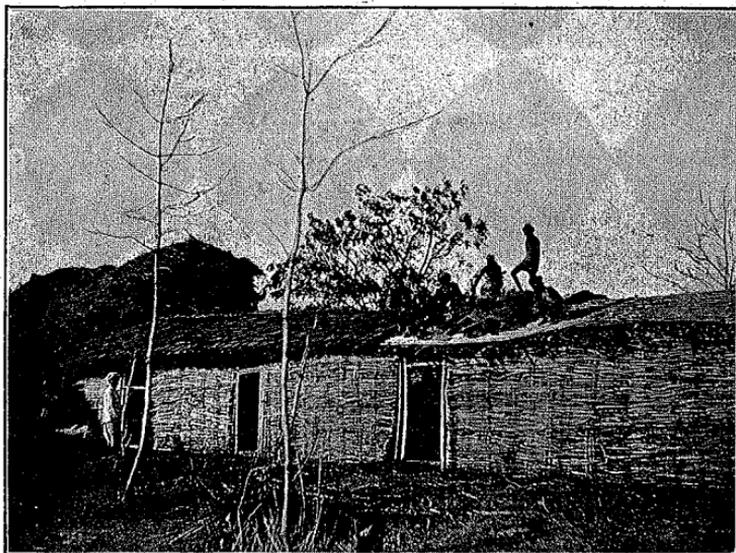
Many fled from the villages in search of food, leaving wives and children behind to their fate. Many succumbed to an early death, hopeless and exhausted. The Commanding Officer of the Bhil Corps wrote from Kherwara at this time to one of the papers as follows:—

It is horrible to go into the Bhils' huts and see a row of living skeletons sitting, waiting for death. They just look up when I go in, and say, "Salaam, Father," and relapse into silence. Every tree capable of being used that way has been stripped of its bark for food. Every palm tree has been cut down, pounded between stones, and eaten, and now only the black rocks and sun-baked mud are left. All cattle are dead and eaten, and water is dried up in nearly all the wells. I said at the beginning of the famine that under no circumstances could more than fifty per cent. escape ;

but unless aid of a very substantial kind comes, and that soon, ten per cent. only will be left alive in July.

In order to cope with this terrible situation, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Outram divided the district into two parts, Mr. Outram taking the Kherwara side and Mr. Thompson the Gujarat side of the work. Valuable help was given by the Resident at Udaipur, who provided camels to transport the grain. The difficulty of this task may be gauged by the fact that many animals which were obtained from other

Famine
Relief



Famine Relief Work: Building Temporary Houses

districts to bring the grain from the railway station at Udaipur (fifty miles distant from Kherwara), died for lack of water and fodder en route; and, moreover, every bag of grain had to be escorted all the way by armed Sepoys, kindly provided by the Commanding Officer, to prevent its being looted by the many bands of robber Bhils who infested the country.

An orphanage was started at Kherwara in 1899 by Mr. and Mrs. Outram, and all possible measures were employed

Orphanage
Opened

to alleviate the sufferings of the famine-stricken children, who were passed on from the Political Superintendent's poor house, or drafted in from the relief centres. "In most cases," Mr. Outram wrote, "the poor children were too weak to walk, and so were carried in large baskets on men's heads. Bhils invariably walk in single file, and as they approached they formed a semicircle in front of the bungalow, and each one deposited his basket at his feet, and gradually a little Bhil uncurled and sat up in each basket. Poor little things, they were generally too neglected and emaciated to be saved; many revived for a time, but the improvement was in most cases only transitory."

Cholera
Epidemic

In spite of all that could be done, numbers perished, not only from hunger, but from disease, which often follows in the track of famine. A terrible outbreak of cholera occurred which swept away many of the enfeebled people. During this epidemic Mr. Thompson lost his life.

Death of
Rev. C. S.
Thompson

On May 19, 1900, Mr. Outram, who had been attending cholera patients all day at Kagdar, a few miles from



Memorial to the Rev. C. S. Thompson

Kherwara, received a message by runners from Baulia telling him that Mr. Thompson was ill with cholera. He started off immediately with food and medicines, but on reaching Kalbai after midnight, he met a sad procession of people from whom he learnt the following tidings. Mr. Thompson had left Baulia at 3 a.m. the previous morning, endeavouring to reach Kherwara, but at Jhanjari, about three miles from Baulia, he told his bearers to stop under a big tree, and there he peacefully passed away at noon, too weak to give any particular messages, simply sending loving greetings to all. Bhagwan, his faithful servant, was then seized with the fatal disease, so the bearers brought Bhagwan and the body of Mr. Thompson right through to Kalbai, a distance of ten miles, where Mr. Outram met them. A grave was dug on the little hill opposite the Kalbai school, and just as the dawn was breaking the weary body was laid to rest there, in the very heart of the Bhil country. The spot is now marked by a marble cross presented by a Southampton sculptor who read of Mr. Thompson's death in the "C.M. Gleaner."

That lonely grave is a standing witness to the eternal truth of the precious promise, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." These words have been strikingly fulfilled in the Bhil Mission.



The House of Sat Guru Das

CHAPTER III

THE DAWN OF LIGHT

History of
a Devotee
Leader

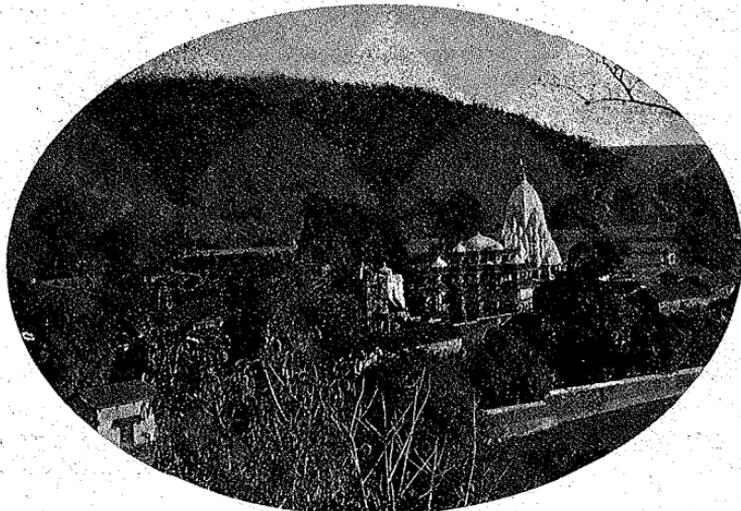
REFERENCE has been made in a preceding chapter to a sect of Bhils called Bhagats, or devotees. In the village of Lusadia, about thirty miles from Kherwara, lived the celebrated leader and teacher of the Bhagats, Shurmal Das by name. In his early days, he had been a most desperate character, not only a murderer and a robber, but he had fallen even lower than the ordinary Bhil in the scale of crime, stooping to murder women for the sake of their anklets and bracelets. Many wonderful stories are related about his subsequent life. He determined to do penance, and for thirteen years he is said never once to have stood upright. In the hot weather he sat surrounded by fires; in the cold season, he would wear only a rag on his loins. Twice he rolled over stones and fields and hills to a village two miles off, and once to a Hindu sacred place, called Samlaji, three miles away; once he ate one and a quarter pounds of red pepper; another time one and a quarter pounds of molten lead,¹ and is said to have licked up boiling

¹ In 1887 Mr. Thompson wrote, "Until recently, I looked upon Shurmal Das as an ordinary reformer; but by living near him for nearly a year I have come to the conclusion that he is a successful impostor. He owes his present position and influence to a long, steady, and growing system of deception and lies" ("Hill Tribes of India,"

butter from a brass dish. At the end of the thirteen years, he was able to rise up and walk freely, and was regarded as superhuman, becoming an object of worship in all the district round. His hut stood on the slope of a hill in the southern part of the village and there he kept the sacred fire always burning. He was supported by the offerings of his followers. He taught his disciples by singing to them to the accompaniment of his drum, and they repeated each line after him, as the majority of them could neither read nor write. One of his hymns reads as follows :—

The sinless God will come with an army on a white horse,
 From his mouth will go forth the Spirit,
 He will come in great pomp, decorated with jewels,
 To save the world, and all quarters will hear him.
 Swords will be turned into garlands,
 And he will marry the heavenly (sanctified) bride.

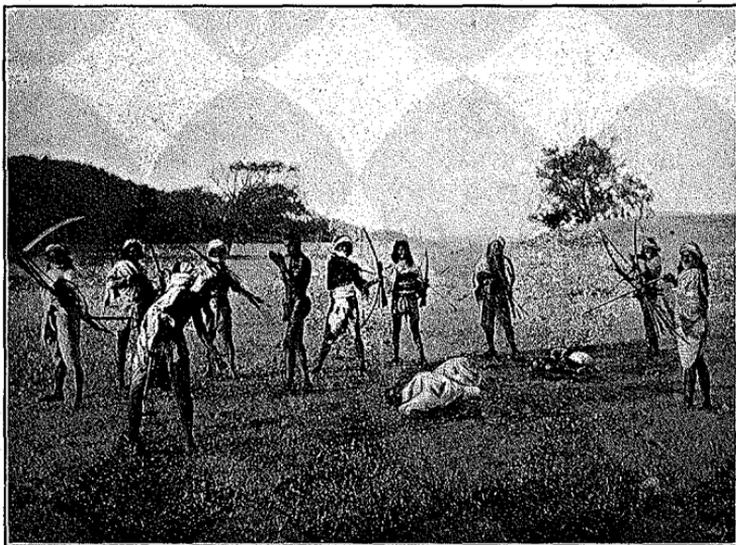
**Bhagat
 Hymn**



◆ Samlaji: a Hindu Sacred Place

p. 25). He must, however, have been a really ascetic devotee, for some of the best of the converts believe that the things told of him here really occurred. It is quite possible that he deceived his disciples by swallowing mercury instead of molten lead, but his drinking boiling butter is a perplexing problem, for Sat Guru Das, a very sincere convert, says he saw it blaze as he drank it up. The "Encyclopædia Britannica" suggests that Richardson, who performed similar feats in Europe in the seventeenth century, anointed his mouth with a protective composition; but I do not think this possible.—A. I. B.

As the time of his death approached, he gathered his disciples around him and foretold many things. He told them that a terrible famine would shortly occur, and teachers would come from the north and the west, and teach them the true way of salvation from a book, free of cost. They would teach them also about the true God, and a sinless Incarnation born of a virgin. Eventually, a temple would be built for the worship of the true God on a hill, which he indicated in the middle of the village. His disciples asked



Hindu Traders captured by Bhils

him when these things would take place and he replied, "When a certain tank in this neighbourhood would be repaired."

Leader's
Exhortation

He exhorted his followers to worship the sinless God, Whom they could not see, because He was like air without any form. They were to pray to Him with uplifted hands, and not to bow down to stones and idols like their ancestors. They were not to steal or commit wickedness and were to refrain from looting cattle or killing cows. They were to endure suffering, to be faithful to the end, entwining

themselves round the worship of the true and sinless God. They were to understand that if they continued to worship with true heart and soul, they would go to the Great Master, and if not, their habitation would be hell.

About a year after the death of Shurmal Das, the famine of 1899-1900 came upon the land. The rivers dried up and the grass on the hills was scorched and burnt by the long protracted heat. The first to suffer were the animals,—cows, buffaloes, bullocks, upon which the Bhils so largely depend for their livelihood. Day by day, the grain stores in the houses became less, and the women and children were forced to go out into the jungles to search for grass-seed, which they ground up and made into a coarse kind of bread. When this supply was exhausted, the starving people ate roots, bark, and leaves of the trees, and ghastly tales are told of women and children being murdered, when found in possession of a small piece of bread.

Lusadia, the home of the Bhagats, shared the common affliction and Sava, one of the leaders, was not exempt. He was a devout man of mystic temperament, intensely devoted to the teaching of Shurmal Das, his former leader, and very prejudiced against the work of the Mission and the teaching of the missionary. Sava had at that time two children, of whom the elder, Lalu, a boy of ten, had long attended the mission school, and was able to read the fifth book. At last this lad fell a victim to one of the prevalent famine diseases, and one day he asked that his relations and friends might be called to him. This was done, and repeating the old prophecies, he begged them to give up their deeply rooted ideas concerning defilement incurred through eating with men of other castes, as there was no truth in them. When dying he told his father and mother he was going to a beautiful country to be with God, and he implored them to meet him there. He called the names of each one in turn, telling them to answer "present" as he named them, and then fell back dead.

His son's death made a profound impression upon the father, but although recognizing in it a direct call from God,

Fresh
Openings

God's
Call

Sava hardened his heart against the truth, and his disciples followed his lead. Again God spoke to him, and this time his wife, succumbing to poor feeding and unhealthy conditions, was called from his side. The self-satisfied heart of the devotee leader, however, again refused to yield, though restless and unhappy. He would sit brooding alone in his hut, keeping the sacred fire burning, and feeling there was none left to care for or help him.

**Catechist's
Visit**

In 1901, Mr. E. Walker, who was lent by the Gond Mission to help in evangelistic work during the absence of Mr. Outram on sick leave, came to stay at Lusadia, and while he was there, the catechist, Mr. L. Hurry, came over from the village of Baulia to examine the school, and twice he addressed the village leaders in words of earnestness and power. His message stirred them to a spirit of inquiry, and God Himself spoke to those who had hitherto opposed. The Bhagats assembled one night at the head Bhagat's house, wrote a long account of their late guru's teaching and prophecies, and appended the following petition to the letter which they sent to the missionary :—

**Devotee's
Letter**

Before we heard your teaching, our Guru taught us these things on which we rest our faith. If all takes place as our Guru has spoken, then we will accept your teaching. Our Guru has said that a Shepherd will come. . . . Tell us plainly where your religion has come from, and what is its foundation. We have become devotees in order to attain the true way of heaven and salvation.

Another letter followed the first, containing amongst others the following words :—

If you have come with the shield of truth and the sword of wisdom, then we are ready to run into the sea while you hold us. Not only we, but all will follow us. You go on receiving us. But first of all if you do as we teach there will be great profit, and in the end the work will be pure. This is our petition.

**Religious
Discussion**

In answer to these requests, a three days' discussion was held, when Mr. L. Hurry, a Gujarati catechist lent by the Sindh Mission, answered their questions from the Bible. The devotees assembled in the rest house, with their

musical instruments, and, as most of their tenets and precepts are embodied in their hymns, the first day was spent in listening to the verses as they were sung, and taking down their explanation. Mr. Hurry then commented on each separate verse, pointing out the Scriptural truths contained in them. On the second day, there were twenty-eight Bhagats present, some of whom belonged to a village about five miles distant from Lusadia. In order to be present they had come in the previous night, and as the room in the rest house was too small, the company adjourned to the school. For three hours they listened most attentively while the subjects mentioned in their letters were explained from the Bible one by one, during which time a solemn stillness and calm pervaded the meeting. Jungle people are very suspicious, and they might have thought that the catechist was reading what was not in the book, so, to disarm suspicion, a young man of their number, who had studied in the school, was asked to read the Scripture passages aloud. They were surprised beyond measure that their Guru's words tallied so wonderfully with the Scriptures. The following day the hearts of missionary and catechist were rejoiced by three men sending a third letter saying that they were convinced that Jesus is the Sinless God, and expressing the wish to become His disciples. Sava was one of these three.

What had occurred in the meantime to change the attitude of three leading opposers so that they became willing disciples of the new faith? Sava's account of it was as follows: One evening, he was sitting alone in his hut, looking out on a land devastated by famine; whole villages, in some cases left without owners or inhabitants, were fast becoming the habitations of jackals. As he looked on his own lonely home, bereft so recently of wife and son, he felt himself indeed alone and forsaken. Then, too, he reflected that the new teaching was undoubtedly gaining ground, and his own position as a religious leader, with all its accompanying advantages and honours, was being roughly threatened. Where would it all end? Besides, had they not promised that if the Sahib could answer their questions they would

God's further Call

accept his religion. Surely there was no other alternative left him but to take refuge in flight. He would go down to some place in Gujarat, where he would beg alms for himself and his one remaining daughter. There at least he would be spared the disgrace of seeing his followers forsaking him and his teaching for this foreign doctrine.

The lonely man sat far into the night planning ways of escape from his intolerable position. But it is best to let him tell the story of that eventful night in his own words :—

I slept and dreamt. Then a voice came as from the door, "Son, Son, are you awake or sleeping?"

"Maharaj, I am not sleeping, but awake."

"Why do you intend to flee, the work is mine. If you flee the people will die, and if they perish you will be responsible. There will be famine and this year nothing will ripen. This kingdom is passing away, and another kingdom will come."

On hearing this I remained wrapped in thought, and taking a slate I wrote down the words I had heard. It was about midnight. I sat on meditating. Then Jiva, a fellow Bhagat, came in and said, "Maharaj, Maharaj, what has happened this night?"

I replied, "Why have you come? Tell me this, and afterwards I will answer your question."

Jiva answered, "No, tell me your story, and afterwards I will speak."

I said, "Look at this slate."

He looked, read it, and began to laugh.

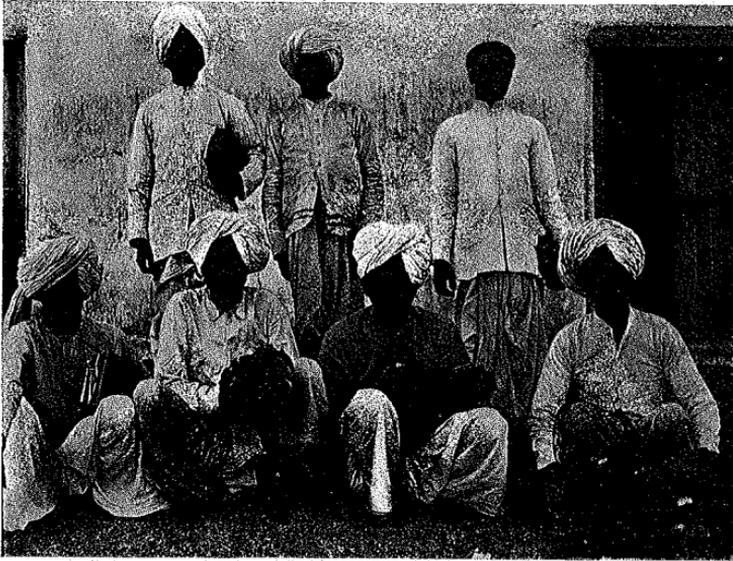
Then I said, "Now, what is your story?"

Jiva said, "I also have seen in vision one like a man who said, 'Why do you fight against me? I am come to give you the Scriptures. Take them, the work is God's.'"

Afterwards yet another joined them, and when morning had dawned they all three went to Jiva's house, and calling another of the Bhagats related the vision to him. At length Sava spoke, "Do not retreat. It is the work of God. I thought of flight; but God has laid hold of me and prevented me. Have courage and accept this religion, fearing nothing. Should all our relatives and friends and the Bhagats cast us out, we will dwell apart from other men in a separate quarter of the village, as the despised sweepers are forced to do. Come, let us accept this religion."

All four resolved to become Christians, but one was kept back by his mother, and only three went to the missionary

to tell of their desire. Other relations joined them, and Mr. Walker was busy teaching them when he was stricken down with blackwater fever and had to be carried out of the country.



Group of Bhagats who became Christians
Sat Guru Das is on the extreme right, with a drum.

After about three months' teaching, twenty-two converts were received by baptism into the visible Church of Christ on November 7, 1901. At his baptism Sava took the new name of Sat Guru Das, which means, "Servant of the true Teacher." On becoming a Christian he lost the alms of his disciples upon which he had hitherto subsisted. He therefore took up farming, and has been able to support himself and the family he now has by his second marriage. Thus a nucleus for a Church was formed at Lusadia during troublous times.

**Fresh
Nucleus of
a Church**



Giving Medicine to Famine Sufferers

CHAPTER IV

ADVANCE

Relief
Work

WE must now return to the time of Mr. Thompson's death, to pick up the threads which we dropped to tell of the fruit it has borne. The news of the terrible sufferings of the Bhils aroused much sympathy, not only in India, but in England and America also. Friends of different denominations sent generous help to the famine-stricken people. The Irish Presbyterians at Ahmedabad and Parantij gave most valuable hospitality and other help to C.M.S. men, at a time when they were overwhelmed by famine relief work in their own field. Offers of personal service from the C.M.S. and other Missions in Kashmir, the Punjab, and the United Provinces were gladly accepted and the volunteers gave most valuable aid. Mr. and Mrs. Outram broke down and were relieved by the Rev. J. W. Goodwin who remained in the Mission till his death at Bombay on November 9, 1901. His kindness and readiness to help will long be remembered by his fellow-workers.

Expansion

At the end of the rainy season following the great famine, the Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Birkett, from Lucknow, took temporary charge of the western side of the Mission, living at Baulia, and soon had the joy of welcoming the Rev. W. Hodgkinson and Mr. G. C. Vyse, the recruits sent out to

replace Mr. Thompson. Biladia was selected as the headquarters of the western side of the Mission, a bungalow was built there in the spring of 1901, and thither the orphan boys were transferred from Baulia. Mr. Hodgkinson was put in charge of the new station after the rains, and about the same time Mr. Vyse went to help at Lusadia.

In March of the same year, Miss Bull from Benares and Miss Carter from Azimgarh took charge of the girls' orphanage at Kherwara, and in July, Mr. Hurry, who has been mentioned already, came from Sindh. As none of the European missionaries were familiar with Gujarati, Mr. Hurry's native tongue and a dialect of which is spoken by the Bhils, he was a great help in dealing with the devotee inquirers, and later on the Sindh Mission gave him up as their offering for work amongst the Bhils, though he was already preparing for ordination. Soon after his arrival he carried on the work of translating the Prayer Book begun by Mr. Thompson as far as the Office for the Churching of Women.

Everywhere these new workers were welcomed and gladly listened to, for it became more and more evident that the attitude of the Bhils towards the message they had received so coldly in Mr. Thompson's time was completely changed. The orphan children, too, were responding to care and nourishment, and changed lives began to bear witness to the transforming power of Christ.

During the rainy season of 1900 the Mission had distributed bul-corn as far as it people had not had when a plague of land. Rats every-successive sowings a field of its maize They invaded sheds, devouring hand. Eventu-as mysteriously they came.



The Rev. J. W. Goodwin

locks and seed could, but the time to recover rats invaded the where devoured of corn, or cleared cobs in a night. houses and store whatever came to ally they vanished and suddenly as

The Rat
Famine

At all the mission stations children crowded to the schools for the daily allowance of grain, and relief work was eagerly welcomed by the impoverished people. Advantage was taken of this readiness to work to provide proper buildings at Lusadia, which the movement among the devotees had made an important centre. The little rest house which Mr. Thompson had built, having two rooms, one above the other, that he might retire to the upper one for uninterrupted prayer, was enlarged to a four-roomed bungalow, and a large school and houses for the teacher and a catechist were built.

Many employed on these works wished to learn about Christ, and an inquirers' class was formed for them; this was at one time attended by as many as 180 Bhils. The sick and ailing were lovingly cared for by the lady doctor, Mrs. Birkett, and her assistant, who put forth specially strenuous efforts to preserve the lives of the wee babies who, with their mothers, would probably have perished during that time of privation but for her kindly aid. The long deferred rains at length arrived, and brighter days dawned on the Bhil country once more.

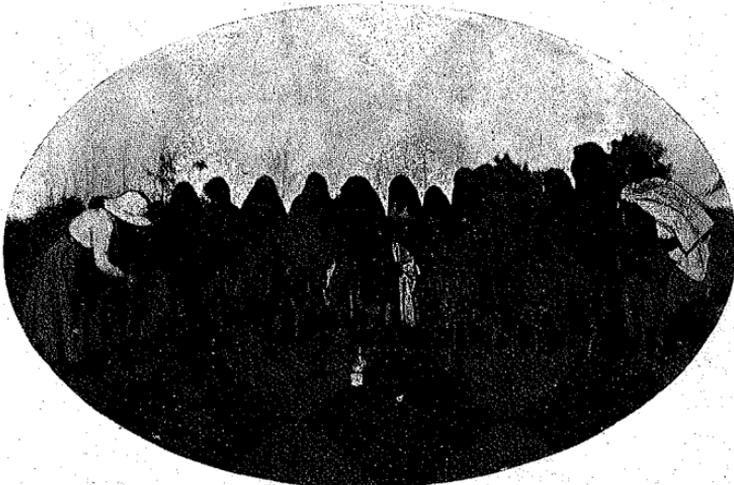
Transfer
of Girls'
Orphanage

After the rat famine, Mr. and Mrs. Birkett returned to Lucknow, so there was no one to teach the women and girl converts from amongst the Bhagats at Lusadia. This need and the insufficient accommodation for the girls at Kherwara led to the transfer of the orphanage to Lusadia, at the close of 1902. It was not an easy undertaking to move such a number of children to a village about thirty miles distant, in a country where there are neither railways nor made roads, where water is scarce, and where wild beasts and robbers are a source of real danger. The caravan started off in charge of the stout-hearted Indian Christian matron. With it were two bullock-carts to carry the few possessions of the orphans, and the younger and less robust children were allowed to ride in them by turn. A buffalo, a cow, several goats, and some chickens, were amongst their most precious treasures, and as occasionally some of these would escape and make a dash for freedom amongst the hills, followed by

several children in pursuit, there was considerable delay until the wanderers had been recaptured, and the progress of the cortège never attained to great speed. God wonderfully protected the little band on their journey, and at length they were eagerly welcomed by the two missionary Miss Sahibs, who had preceded them. They were soon installed in their new quarters, rejoicing in the free, open situation which proved very beneficial to the health of the children.

The Sunday following their arrival, fifty-three Bhils were baptized. The service was held in the schoolroom, a long room with doors instead of windows, to admit both light and air. Many of the male candidates arrived picturesquely clad in red

A Large
ingathering



Mrs. Birkett attending Women and Children Famine Sufferers.

blankets which had been distributed during the famine. Armed with bows and arrows, their black hair floating wildly over their shoulders, they were wild and strange-looking men indeed. Before they could receive the rite of Baptism, they were obliged to submit to a ceremony which is unnecessary in European circles. Nearly every male Bhil follows the Hindu custom and wears a long lock of hair, called the *choti*, on the top of his head. They believe that in a future state, when they may be falling into some place of

torment, a friendly being will seize them by this lock of hair and pull them up to a place of safety. So before the baptisms took place, Prema, the catechist, worked diligently with a pair of scissors, cutting off the *chotis* of the men. Mr. Outram, who had returned from England in 1901, and had been privileged to baptize the previous twenty-two converts, came over from Kherwara to administer the rite. The Bhils entered into the service with great earnestness, and after it was over it was touching to



Lusadia Church: Congregation laying the Tiles

see the welcome given by the older Christians to the newly baptized. In some cases they literally hugged one another for joy.

**A Pressing
Need**

Many now became inquirers and the schoolroom was too small to hold the increasing numbers who came to the services. The worship of the converts, too, was frequently disturbed by goats or perhaps by a buffalo calf which strayed in through the open doors and was ejected with difficulty. Even the Bhil Christians themselves recognized the need for a place set apart for the worship of God. At this juncture,

in 1903, Mr. Vyse called them all together and told them the story of the Uganda Christians building their own churches, and left them to think the matter over. After consultation they determined to build their own church, if they were allowed to build it of mud and small stones like their own houses. Having just emerged from famine, they were unable to meet the cost of wood and tiles and the payment of carpenters; these, however, could be paid for from the Sunday collections which had accumulated since 1901, with the help of a few extra donations.

Voluntary
Labour

The next day a little band went up to mark out the foundations for the sacred edifice, the site having previously been secured in 1902 for a sum of Rs. 50. A further discussion arose as to the size of the building. Some remarked that as they were only a small company of believers, the dimensions of the building need not be very large, but others, whose faith was stronger, replied: "In a short time, a goodly number will become followers of the True Way, so we had better make the building large enough to accommodate those who will also become disciples of the Lord Jesus." This counsel prevailed, and the site was marked out for a building large enough to seat four hundred people. Then came the work of clearing away the scrub and brushwood, followed by the digging for the foundations. It was hard work, but the men with pickaxes and spades, borrowed from the Mission, commenced their voluntary labour with a will. Women and girls, with round baskets on their heads, marched backwards and forwards carrying the dry earth dug up from the trenches, to a shallow pit, into which they emptied their loads. Girls brought water in earthenware pots and poured it on this dry earth, and a man with a heavy pole mixed it until it reached a proper consistency, and then the women filled their baskets with the wet mud, and carried them to the trenches to make the foundations. So by degrees the mud walls rose higher and higher, and although at times progress was slow because the number of workers was small, yet they were enabled by God's grace to persevere until at length, about the middle of

Church
Building

May, the walls were finished. When the difficulty of providing wood for the roof arose, the Maharajah of Idar, General Sir Partap Singh, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., aide-de-camp to the King Emperor, on being told of the need, kindly consented to allow as much wood as was required to be taken from an old teak forest not far distant.

**Successful
Completion**

About this time heavy clouds began to gather and many feared that rain would come before the church roof was completed, and that would have meant serious damage to the mud walls. So the Christians roused themselves to a final effort. A general invitation was issued that on a certain day whoever would join in tiling the roof would receive food in return for labour. On the specified day the church building and compound were literally swarming with workers. The orphan children carried baskets of tiles on their heads from the kilns, the carpenters were busily laying split bamboos across the wooden rafters, and many hands were swiftly handing up and placing the tiles on the bamboo work. Cheerfully the workers toiled all through the long hot day till night descended and put an end to their efforts. The church roof was finished before the rains began, but still much remained to be done to complete the interior. Here the women and girls helped greatly in giving the floor and walls a nice even surface by plastering them with wet mud smoothed over by hand.

**Church
Furniture**

The church furniture was exceedingly simple; no pews were needed for a congregation which preferred sitting on the floor, and a hollowed-out trunk of a tree served as a font, harmonizing well with the mud walls.

**Naming the
Church**

On 13 February, 1904, the Bishop of Nagpur came and formally dedicated the mud church to the service of God. Before the opening ceremony he called the Christians together and asked what name they would wish to give their church. He himself proposed that it should be called either St. Andrew's, or St. John's in the Wilderness, as they were so far from civilization. Sat Guru Das, whose education had been somewhat limited, sat in thoughtful silence, and then said, "Sir, I know little of St. Andrew and nothing at all

about St. John in the Wilderness, but we built this church for the love of Christ, and to me there is no name like the name of Christ. We would like it to be called Christ Church." So it was named Christ Church, and the Bishop dedicated it amidst great rejoicings.

On the same day the first confirmation took place, when twenty Bhils were confirmed, and the following day the Lord's Supper was celebrated, when the newly confirmed partook for the first time of the Holy Sacrament. **First Confirmation**

The mud church has no special features of architectural beauty, and doors, windows, and walls in many cases are somewhat crooked, yet to many of the Christians it has a beauty of its own, for not only did their hands help to build it, but it has been to many of them a very Bethel, a meeting-place with God. The faith of those who advised its roomy proportions has been amply justified, for on special occasions the church has been completely filled with a congregation of reverent worshippers.

About a month after the dedication of the church, a strong proof was given by the Christian community of the reality of their faith. It was during the festival of Holi. This festival takes place in the spring time of the year, and is observed with more or less vigour all over India. At the rising of the new moon, the large drum, which is kept in the headman's hut in each village for various purposes, is sounded. Here the villagers assemble, sing vile songs in honour of the goddess Holi, dancing round in a circle to the beating of the drum, and this continues night after night, for a longer period each night, as the moonlight increases. The full moon is the climax of the horrible festival. A huge bonfire is built in the centre of the village, the headman sets it alight, and the villagers dance round it the whole night long, throwing in offerings of cocoanut, grain, or clarified butter, while calling on the goddess to send them good harvests. Intoxicating spirits are freely partaken of, and as the night wears on the singing of foul songs is interspersed with the shouts and yells of the drunken dancers; the drum-beat becomes faster and more furious and an onlooker watching **A Heathen Festival**

the reeling figures dancing in the light of the flames, might well imagine that he is gazing on some scene from the infernal regions. It is a veritable pandemonium. The women attired in new dresses, and decked out with new ornaments, take part in both singing and dancing, and also in the feasting, which is a great feature of the Holi. Any evil act committed during this festival is said to bring the perpetrators into favour with the goddess in whose honour it is held.

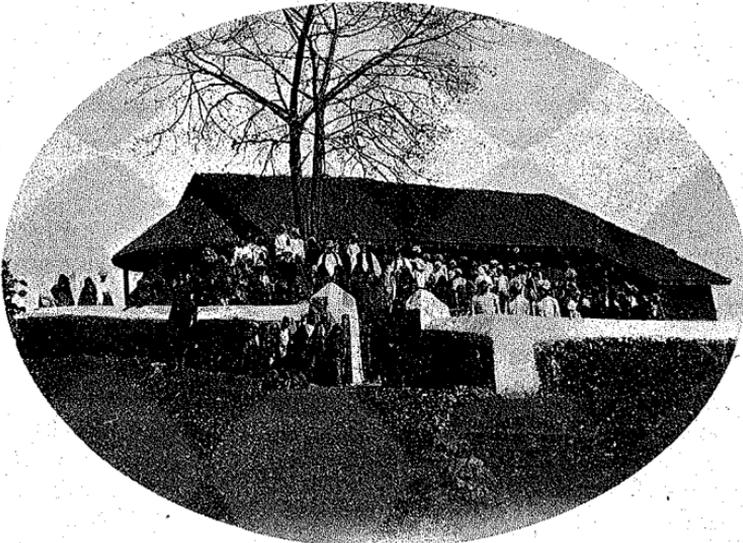
**Christian
Resistance**

Hitherto the sacred fire had always been lighted near a large banyan tree, in the centre of the village. This was close to the new church, in a field surrounded by the houses of the Christians. There was a strong feeling that the fire ought never to be lighted there again, where the revolting songs with their evil suggestions would ring in the ears of all the members of the Christian households. A meeting of the chief men was called to consult as to what was to be done about the Holi fire, both Christians and non-Christians being present. The representatives of the heathen section were very angry at the proposal that the fire should be lighted in another place. They were, however, rather divided amongst themselves, some asserting that the spot made sacred by immemorial custom could not be changed, while others held that the place did not greatly matter. They ended by asking for a few days in which to think it over, and promised to return and give the Christians their answer. Several days elapsed, when soon after daybreak one morning the headman of the village and another of the non-Christian leaders appeared at the mission bungalow, with the message that they were determined to light the fire on the old spot, and if the Christian leaders wished otherwise, they should have given longer notice. The missionary replied that the Christians were equally determined that it should never be lighted there again, upon which the deputation left without further comment. Shortly afterwards a service was held in church, and reading the account of Elijah's action on Carmel, Mr. Vyse exhorted the Christians to stand firm at all costs, and to rely upon God's unfailing help.

Then followed a time of humble confession of sinfulness on the part of the Christians, and earnest petitions that those who were opposing themselves to the truth might be brought into Christ's fold. After the service, a short consultation was held, arranging that, in case no answer was received from the non-Christians, the place should be watched all night, and any attempt to light the fire should be resisted.

The long day was drawing to its close when at length Sat Guru Das came up to the bungalow with beaming face, reporting that the non-Christian leaders had been to tell him that they would light the fire right on the outskirts of the village at some distance from the Christian centre. Thus God answered prayer, and the dreaded struggle between those nearly related to each other was averted. That evening a little company met in the courtyard of Sat Guru Das's house and there, near the disputed ground, a short praise service was held to thank God Who had given the victory. The ashes of Holi fires of previous years still remain to mark the spot, but, as long as there are Christians

Prayer
Answered



Dedication of Christ Church, Lusadia: after the Service

in Lusadia, we believe that the fire will never again be lighted on its ancient site.

**Additions
to Mission
Staff**

During the foregoing years, the mission staff had undergone considerable change. Mr. and Mrs. Outram, who had done such strenuous service in the famine time, were reluctantly compelled by ill-health to give up work in India. Mr. Hodgkinson, the resident missionary at Biladia, had married, and with the coming of his wife a new day dawned for the girls and women of that station. Many sick and suffering Bihls have had abundant cause to praise God for her skilful and loving ministry in times of sickness. When Miss Bull went home for furlough, another lady, Miss Newton, was appointed to the staff of women workers at Lusadia. As she soon took over charge of the orphanage, the senior workers were able to do much more direct evangelistic and itinerating work in the villages around. At the close of 1904, Mr. and Mrs. Birkett rejoined the staff of the Mission, and were located at Lusadia, where a second bungalow had been erected. A few years later, in 1909, Mr. Vyse married Miss Ellwood, daughter of the Rev. J. P. Ellwood, and brought her to his home amid the rejoicings of the boys of the Thompson School. They very soon visited Lusadia for Mr. Vyse's ordination, and the whole Church was glad to welcome one who was to prove such a source of strength to the work at Kherwara.



A Bhil Greeting

CHAPTER V

TIMES OF BLESSING

THE years 1905 and 1906, which marked such a high tide of religious zeal and fervour in Wales, also brought seasons of quickening and blessing to India. In the Khassia Hills, at Sialkot, and at other centres also, the flame of revival was kindled. In the Bhil country in 1906, a foretaste was given of the still greater things God was about to do three years later.

For the first time in the annals of the Church in Bhil-land, a Christian mela was held in Lusadia. The Christians assembled from Kherwara, Biladia, Khetadara, and other places, and camped in grass shelters near the tank, which is about a mile away from Lusadia. A large shed, with walls and roof of grass, had been erected for the meetings. Sports and competitions found many eager competitors, and numerous traders spread out their wares in little booths, and did a brisk trade in the various commodities which they offered for sale.

A Christian
Mela

But the great blessing given through the religious services was the most striking feature of the mela. They were quiet and unemotional in character, but the Word of God in all its

Confessions

searching power was brought to bear on the hearts of many still in the initial stages of Christian life and experience. On the concluding day, the services were held in the church, and there the appeal to conscience went home with the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit, resulting in public confessions by about eighty people, old and young, of various sins committed by them,—a rug stolen ten years ago; a watch stolen; grain to be sown for the orphanage farm turned into money and used for themselves by four young men; other acts of deception, pride, anger, covetousness, and, alas, gross sins of the flesh, were brought to light at that time. Some confessed with sobs which almost prevented their speaking, especially a mission agent, who told how he had got careless in his efforts for the salvation of others, and anxious for worldly gain for himself. Others walked up to the chancel steps, faced the congregation, folded their arms and bowed their heads, and bravely told out what no power of man could have made them confess, their attitude a characteristic mixture of Bhil independence and Christian humility. The service was exceedingly orderly, the confessions were heard and the missionary accepted willingly—restored money, or promises of restoration as soon as it could be earned. Before partaking of the Holy Communion next morning, a few further confessions were made, and two of the officiating missionaries were also led to ask forgiveness for troubling letters which had passed between them.

**Preliminary
Cleansing**

Thus the mela closed, and although it was not the long-prayed-for revival, it was undoubtedly the necessary preliminary cleansing of which the young Church stood in need before it could receive the greater blessing. There had been little or no sense of joy and victory such as usually accompany revival scenes, and the dominating note was that of humbling and penitence before God. There were two marked results of this mela. First of all, a clearer spiritual perception of the evil of sin was gained by the Christians. Then, too, the line of demarcation between Christians and non-Christians became more strongly defined, so that it was no longer easy even to be a nominal Christian, much less to

be a whole-hearted follower of Christ. The reproach of the Cross had become a reality.

Two years later, God again visited the Bhil Church with marked blessing through the parochial mission held at the beginning of 1909. Much prayer had preceded this effort and had paved the way for the wonderful working of the Holy Spirit. A Parochial Mission

The mission opened on Sunday, January 31, at Khetadara, one of the out-stations, and the special missionary was Mr. Chanan Khan, a Punjabi Christian. From the first it was evident that the Spirit of God was drawing the people, and day by day the little schoolroom was the scene of many a spiritual conflict.

At first the ground seemed rock-hard, but the work of conviction went on steadily. God laid His hand first on the missionaries and workers, and showed them the unsuspected sinfulness, pride, and unbelief, which were the real hindrances; and when they had been brought very low before the Lord, then the real break came. At the morning meeting, suddenly, two Christian lads were stricken down with grief, and for some time there was such crying and wailing for sin that some of the villagers thought that there must have been a death in the adjoining house, and one man started to take down his axe to go out and get wood for the burning. Perhaps they were not so very much mistaken, for the old self truly died in some of God's children that day, and as they were brought low before the Cross they learnt something of the secret of resurrection life and victory through the blood of Jesus Christ. One man had steadily refused to come to the services, and the last morning when some one went to fetch him, he fled. Then three of the brethren met together for prayer for this special man and he came to the afternoon service, drawn there by the power of God. Conflict
Conviction

On Thursday morning the mission in Lusadia was opened by a prayer meeting which was a very blessed time of waiting on God. The ground at this station was more prepared for blessing; there was a spirit of greater expectancy and longing, and the Master Who planted the longing in the Prayer

hearts of His children more than satisfied them with His abundant goodness. At Lusadia simultaneous prayer was a great feature of the meetings, and many learnt to make their petitions deep under the searching influence of the Spirit. Evening by evening they gathered for hymn singing, and truly profitable and happy times were spent, the sense of fellowship and love deepening every day.

**A Memor-
able Day**

Sunday, February 7, will ever be a memorable day in the annals of the Bhil Church. At the early meeting the veil was lifted from many hearts, and a vision was given of the appalling sinfulness of the individual sins wherewith the Master was being wounded in the house of His friends. At Morning Prayer the love which brought Jesus to die for sinners broke down the last barriers between God and His children. One lad confessed that all through the meetings he had been hardening his heart, but the sight of the Lord's Table and all the love with which Jesus was waiting to receive him quite broke him down. Several backsliders were brought back to the Lord, and the three brothers to whom God first revealed Himself in the early days here were specially touched by the Spirit, and their confession of sin opened the way for the weaker brethren. That morning the Spirit just swept through our Church, confession followed confession, and the secrets of many hearts were laid bare. The non-Christians present were seized with such fear and trembling that they got up and left the church, and one young man of good position, who had long been desiring to come to Christ, left in deep distress, recognizing the Truth, but not yet able to forsake all for His sake. May the love of Christ even yet constrain him to do so. In the afternoon came testimony and praise, followed by signing of temperance pledges and restoration of stolen monies, and a joyous sense of deliverance from sin and the possibility of victory through the Blood of Jesus began to be evident. The evening meeting was the crowning time, and the picture rises before the mind of that final gathering of the mission. On the brick floor of the schoolroom is seated a group of Bhil Christians in a circle round the oil lamp, the light

of which falls on their faces and white garments. The missionary is kneeling in the centre, cymbals in hand, his upturned face aglow with fervent adoration. Outside the seated group move with solemn rhythmic motion a circle of dancers, singing and praising God in the dance, as truly as David did of old, led by one of their own people, who improvises a hymn of praise to a well-known native air. The whole scene suggests worship and adoration, and a fervour which is little known to the Western mind, and seems to foreshadow in some faint measure that glorious day when all nations shall worship before Him Whose Name is above all names.

The following year saw a further development in our Christian community, and many new lessons were learnt by those who were privileged, at no small cost of physical endurance, to attend the first convention for Christians held at Nadiad, which is a small town in the centre of the Gujarati-speaking country. Seven missions were represented, and it was very interesting to see the different contingents arriving, with happy, expectant faces, from their various stations. Some of these bands of Christian men had marched several days, preaching at a number of villages en route; thus the fact of a Christian convention being held had been widely proclaimed and had given many opportunities for presenting Christ to those whose curiosity had prompted them to enter into conversation.

**A Christian
Convention**

A large company of Christian Bhils, from most of the C.M.S. stations and out-stations, travelled together the thirty-four miles, more or less, to Idar Road Station, some in carts, some on horseback, the majority on foot. One night, or rather part of it, for the word of command to get up was given at 1 a.m., was spent on the way, camping under a wide spreading tree, and they were off by two o'clock, travelling by the light of lanterns, so as to be able to rest during the heat at mid-day. There was much that was new and strange to many; the railway train, the cities, the macadamized roads, and, the greatest wonder of all, the

great number of fellow-Christians, which demonstrated to them that the Church of Christ does not simply consist of a few hundreds, but is a large and growing body,—the Holy Catholic Church.

By the first evening the grass sheds which had been erected for the many visitors were well filled, and at five o'clock they met in the shadow of the church for the opening meeting of the convention. It was an impressive sight day by day to watch the sea of upturned faces, and to realize that many of those eager listeners had only within a short period turned from darkness to light. Day by day the Holy Spirit worked in many hearts, and in the closing meetings the intensity of conviction increased. Sorrow for sin led in some cases to open confession, and joy and peace followed when the burden of sin had been lifted. In the sectional meetings, too, much blessing was given, and they gave an opportunity for more individual dealing with souls. The grass sheds in the evening were often the scene of joy and praise. Groups gathered round for hymn-singing, and drums and cymbals were not allowed to lie idle. These were times of happy fellowship, when the educated and cultured brother from a town centre would sit side by side with the simple and less-educated brother from the village or jungle, both of one heart in praising the Lord.



Bhils bringing Grass for Building Sheds

It was good, too, to see in the women's and girls' sheds how, after a little while, shyness and constraint vanished and a spirit of love and unity increased. The little party of Bhil girls and women were conspicuous, because they still retain their characteristic dress and ornaments. For this reason many at first eyed them with suspicion, wondering if they were Christians at all, but soon their doubts vanished, and the right hand of fellowship was extended from all quarters.

The convention closed with a meeting for praise, and many touching testimonies were given of blessing received ere the large body of 2000 Christians dispersed to their different homes. Perhaps one of the most striking testimonies to the convention came from a Hindu official, who, witnessing the united gathering of so many different missions, inquired with no little astonishment, "Have all the Christians become of one religion?"

Steady progress followed the wave of blessing which has been recorded in this chapter, and there was a very beautiful atmosphere of fellowship and unity amongst the Christians. At the same time opposition became more marked, and a time of perilous conflict followed. As in all kinds of war strategy the severest attacks are aimed against the leaders, so the adversary has sought with more or less success to entangle those who were separated of God to be the leaders of the Christian community. Some who had formerly followed hard after the Master fell into the old habit of drinking spirits, and conscience once most sensitive to the gentle influence of the Holy Spirit grew hard, proud, and callous. Faithful rebuke from those who were their truest friends was proudly resented.

Increased
Conflict

For the last two years a sifting process, slow but sure, has been going on, and the chaff is being steadily winnowed from the grain. Nearly all the congregations are mourning over diminished numbers owing to excommunications; and especially has this been the case in the Church of Khetadara, where a number of persons were cut off from Christian fellowship for having deliberately taken part in heathen festivals, the exorcism of evil spirits, and other heathen rites.

There are also great divisions amongst many of the Christians; envy, hatred, and malice are easily aroused; the temptation to immorality is strong; drink and superstition hinder progress; and there is very little missionary zeal on the whole. Nevertheless there are signs of the shadows passing, five men who were excommunicated at Lusadia for taking part in the Holi have been re-admitted to communion, and hope and faith look forward to the dawning of a brighter day, when the Bhil Christian Church shall become the shining witness to the truth which the Master intends her to be.



Bhil Woman in gala dress



Thompson Memorial School, Kherwara

CHAPTER VI

KHERWARA AND EDUCATION

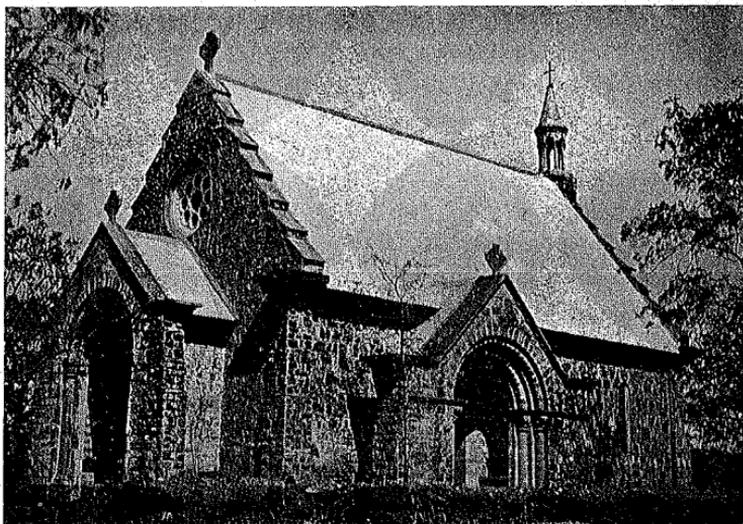
KHERWARA stands in a valley 1050 feet above the sea, and is the head-quarters of the Mewar Bhil Corps and of the Political Superintendent of the Hilly Tracts of Mewar. The Charitable Dispensary (not connected with the Mission) is supported by the Mewar Darbar and the chiefs of the Kherwara Hilly Tract. The beautiful little church, dedicated to All Saints, is built of the dull green serpentine stone found in the neighbourhood, from the design of Col. Sir Swinton Jacob. Both the English residents and the converts use the church and the well-cared-for little cemetery in mutual harmony and good will. The Station

In the second chapter, with its record of the founding of the Mission, we noted Mr. Thompson's efforts to establish elementary schools amongst the Bhils. Recognizing the great civilizing and uplifting influence of educational work amongst these wild people, he and his fellow-workers founded twelve village schools, which, under their unceasing care and supervision continued to flourish until the time of the famine. In consequence of this scourge, whole villages became deserted, many children perished, and school work for the time being was brought to a standstill. As soon as the effects of the famine had to some extent passed away, efforts Educational Work

were once more made to develop the educational work, but these attempts were fraught with special difficulty.

Difficulties

Permission to open any more new schools, even for Christian children only, has of late years been withheld by the ruler of one of the States in which the work is carried on, but it is hoped that, in answer to many prayers, this restriction will soon be removed. The greatest and commonest difficulty is getting Bhil children to attend school regularly; for as soon as they are able to work they have to take their share in minding the flocks and herds which graze in the jungle, and in guarding the crops from monkeys, squirrels, birds, and other depredators. The wild life on the hills or in the field has far more attractions for the average youthful Bhil than books and lessons and school discipline, while very few parents have yet understood the great advantages which education brings to their children. Christian parents, however, are learning to place a higher value on education and in some cases, where there are two or more children of a school-going age in one family, the difficulty is solved by sending each in turn on alternate days.



All Saints' Church, Kherwara

Kherwara was the only mission station till Biladia and Lusadia were occupied in 1901 and 1902. Here Mr. Thompson began his medical and evangelistic work, and here he opened the first mission school in his verandah. That school is still the centre of the educational work, and claims some notice in our history. Before the great famine it only reached the lower primary standard, and the brighter boys were sent to Sadra in Gujarat or Rutlam in Rajputana for higher teaching to prepare them to be schoolmasters.

Kherwara
Mission
School

During the famine the schools were kept open but the children made little progress and the teachers were scattered, so in 1904 Mr. Vyse collected all the youths who had learnt in former days into a monitors' class to prepare them to supply the need for teachers. In 1902 the Biladia and Kherwara Boys' Orphanages had been united at Biladia, and in 1909 the more studious boys were transferred to Kherwara, and the monitors' class was developed into a school, now called "The Thompson Memorial School," as it was enlarged in his memory by the addition of class rooms and a large hall to be used for public lectures and meetings as well as for gatherings of the whole school at prayers, etc. This school prepares boys for the Government Gujarati School Final Examination, a certificate of passing which admits to the Government Teachers' Training College at Ahmedabad and to minor government posts. Here the best Christian and non-Christian lads from the village schools, many supported by an endowment in memory of Mr. Thompson, study for the last four years of their course. The first two successful students passed in October, 1910, though it should be mentioned that they had to be sent to the Irish Presbyterian Mission School at Anand for the last three months of their preparation, as the C.M.S. staff was shorthanded for the time being. It is intended that the best of those who pass should complete their education by a two years' course at a Christian Teachers' Training College, now being built by the Irish Presbyterian Mission at Anand, that they may be well-equipped for the work of lay pastors or teachers, to whichever they are called of God.

Thompson
Memorial
School

Some of the students on leaving the school, have taken up work as teachers in the primary schools; while two students and one teacher have offered for the work of lay pastors, and are undergoing a special course of training to fit them for their high calling. Thus there is every hope of the educated Christian Bhils becoming the spiritual teachers and evangelists of their own people.

A School
Mela

It had been Mr. Thompson's custom to assemble the boys from all the schools of the Mission once a year at one of the centres for sports and games, and the giving of prizes for the year's school work. This happy custom was revived when the new buildings of the Thompson School were opened. These buildings were begun in 1910, and in almost any other place would have been ready for use in a few months, but in Bhil-land where the labourers are nearly all unskilled, have no desire for work, and when actually at work are somewhat lacking in speed, things move but slowly, and it was not till November, 1911, that the glad public opening took place amid such an assembly as Kherwara had never seen before. Masters, boys, and the elders of the various congregations, as well as all the parents of the children, were invited to attend. It is not usual to answer invitations in this land, so it was not known how many guests to expect, but as the idea was new and the greater number would have to travel many miles through the jungle, it was feared that few would respond. On the appointed day, however, party after party of visitors continued to arrive and the hearts of the missionaries were grateful that all the accommodation a Bhil wants is a little space of ground to sleep on, and that he will wait patiently any length of time for his food. Relay after relay went into the orphanage for refreshments, and no sooner were big piles of unleavened cakes ready than the busy cooks had to commence again, for a new batch of lads or their friends had arrived. The mission compound that night was teeming with life. Every available room was occupied, and hall and verandah were covered with sleeping figures. Tents had been erected for missionaries and their friends.

The first day was Old Boys' Day and was spent chiefly in sports. Many of the Sepoys who had at some time or other attended the school joined in with the others. There was the usual high jump and other sports so dear to English boys, but, in addition, the national weapon of the Bhil came into use in the shooting competition with bows and arrows.

Old Boys'
Day

In the afternoon prizes were distributed and the new hall was filled to overflowing; 600 must have been present on that great day. Many were the approving ejaculations from the parents and friends, as one little brown figure after another received a piece of cloth as a school prize, or a shining piece of silver for being first in some sports' competition, and all were happy. The officers and ladies of the regiment showed their interest by their presence, which added much to the importance of the day's proceedings. In the evening a magic lantern lecture, with hymns and a little talk, drew a good audience once again to the newly-built hall.

The next day was given up to the Christian lads and masters. Scripture Union meetings and a special meeting for masters only were held. By the end of the third day all the guests had left, and thus terminated one of the happiest experiences the school has ever known.

Educational work is essentially a work for the future, but from time to time immediate encouragement is given, such as is shown by the following instance. A lad after completing his school course passed the seventh standard examination, and became the teacher of a newly-opened school. Soon after he commenced work in his new sphere, the chief of the village, who was inclined to be favourable to Christianity, called him to his house. There, seated in some state and surrounded by the leading men of the neighbourhood, he began to ask the young Christian master questions concerning his religion, questions by no means easy to answer. Standing there, the only Christian in that heathen darbar, the youth was not dismayed, but, after quietly listening to all the questions, he took his Bible from under his arm and offered it to his

A Faithful
Witness

questioner, with words to this effect: "Sir, I am not clever enough to answer all your questions, but if you will read this Book and ask God to give you light in your heart, it will answer all that you need to know." The chief was evidently impressed by the quiet answer, and shortly afterwards sent his sons to learn at the mission school. Since then more than one family has requested to be instructed for baptism.

**Opening a
New School**

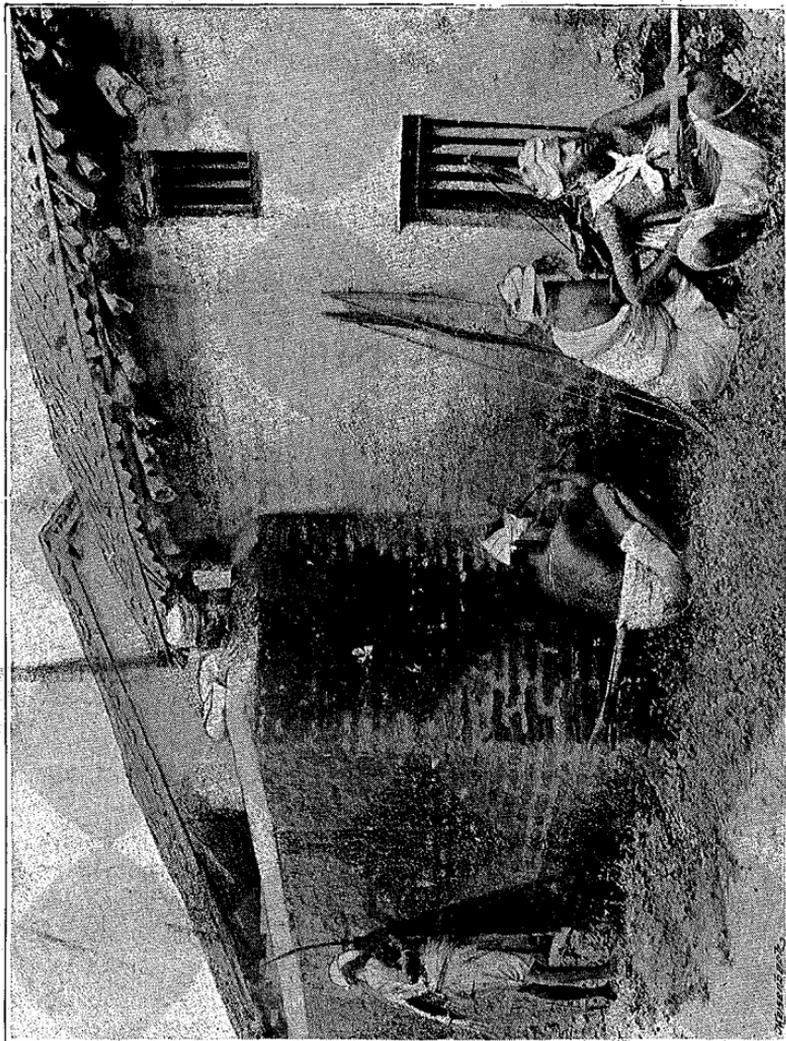
About twenty miles from Kherwara, away from all restraints of man and Government, stands a large *pal* or village surrounded by thick jungle, through which no Bhils who are not inmates of the *pal* venture to go in the dark, but those within this stronghold of nature fearlessly go forth without any weapons. Even the little children do not fear the wild animals, for there seems to be a truce among these denizens of the jungle, whether wild beasts or people. But should a trader go with goods for sale without assured protection from the headman of the village, the people would think nothing of taking his life for the sake of his goods or even for his clothing. Such are the people of a place in which a little school was started in January, 1913.

A Christian teacher had married a famine orphan from the Lusadia Orphanage, and she had since found that her relatives were living near the village described above. A Bhil may arrive at his relations' house without notice and be sure of a welcome, and however long he stays he can reckon on receiving the best his host can give all the time. The young couple had already visited their relations once, and now the teacher went again, accompanied by a more experienced Christian to support him in his request for leave to open a school. In a few days they returned with the joyful news that they had been well received, had been questioned by some devotees about the new religion, and had been offered a room in which the teacher and his wife might live and give lessons in reading and writing, provided that the sahib would *never* want to build a bungalow in the village.

To prove their independence of outside authority and

laws the villagers told the following story. A Mussulman trader, taking a little tobacco, salt, and molasses with him, visited the village, hoping to be able to set up a small shop there, and a friendly Bhil partitioned off one end of his house for him. Some small boys, the eldest not more than

Young
Thieves

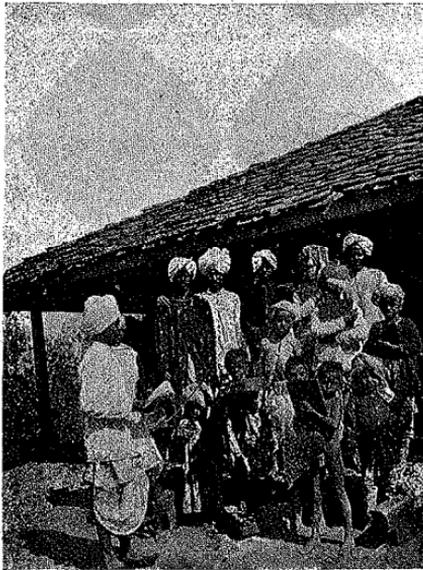


Bhil Thieves at Work.

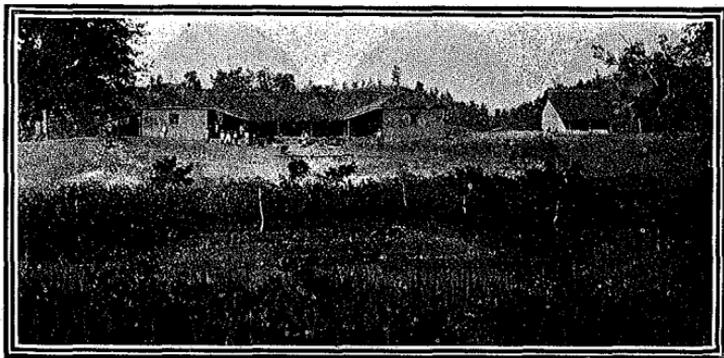
six years old, spied the vessel of sweet stuff and in their little minds planned out a campaign of stealth. Four of them resorted to a quiet part of the jungle, and in a way they had doubtless often witnessed, set about asking the jungle spirit whether their endeavours would be fraught with success or failure. One boy sat down on his haunches and began to rock to and fro, aping the man familiar with evil spirits, working himself up into a sort of frenzy, while one of the others, with an arrow head in his hand tapped the bowstring above him asking, "Brother, shall we go or not, and shall we be successful?" "Yes! Go, my son, the way is clear, be brave, and gladly bring away the spoil." Having ascertained the advice of the jungle spirit they set out. After dark they crept up to the house and dug a hole in the wall through which the smallest member of their party could creep. Having crawled in, the boy passed the contents of the vessel of molasses to his companions outside, and so stealthily and cleverly did he manage it, that the merchant sitting and talking only a few feet away knew nothing about it till next morning. He immediately made the theft known, and the headman made all possible inquiries, but to no effect. The little culprits might never have been found out, had it not been that one showed no signs of hunger for the midday meal; this roused the suspicions of his fond mother's mind, and after some persuasion he told her the whole story. Instead of being punished the children were extolled for their cleverness, and the merchant was told he could not expect anything else if he came to live with them.

Not very long after the above visit the missionary was invited to go and see the teacher settled in the village. So with as little delay as possible taking his bottle of water and some sandwiches, he set forth one morning to the village, twenty miles away, accompanied by three Bhil Christians, one to play the drum. With just a little misgiving they entered the new land, but the shyness and suspicion of the people gradually wore off as the missionary first played with one child at shooting with bows and arrows, and then drew another

to see an English pocket knife (which eventually he was allowed to keep), and a third became acquainted with the pocket flashlight. By ten at night a small company had assembled to hear the Christians sing their songs and preach about their great Teacher, and then, in the early hours of the morning they left the hut, whilst the Christians strove to snatch as long and sound a sleep as cattle, dogs, smoky room, and hard floor for a bed would allow. They returned homewards to Kherwara rejoicing in having established an understanding and friendship with these wild people.



A Village School



The Boys' Orphanage at Biladia

CHAPTER VII

BILADIA

BILADIA, which lies on the chief road of the country along which many pilgrims pass to the sacred shrines of Rikabdev in Rajputana, became a mission station, with Mr. Hodgkinson as its first resident missionary, in 1901, after being an out-station since 1888, when Mr. Thompson built a school and rest house there. The latter wrote, "This place would make a capital centre for work and ought to be the head-quarters of a missionary." So another of the points which he considered to be of strategic value was occupied soon after his death.

For the nine years following the famine the orphan boys from the Gujarat side of the Mission, about thirty in number, were settled at Biladia and occupied the greater part of the missionary's time and care. They varied much in age and temperament, but all were wholly uneducated, and had known nothing beyond the free and open life of the jungle. Besides the ordinary routine of the school it was soon found necessary to give the elder lads some manual work, and efforts were made to teach several of them trades, such as carpentering, weaving, etc., but with little success. Eventually it was decided to start a farm on which they could learn to earn their livelihood like other Bhils.

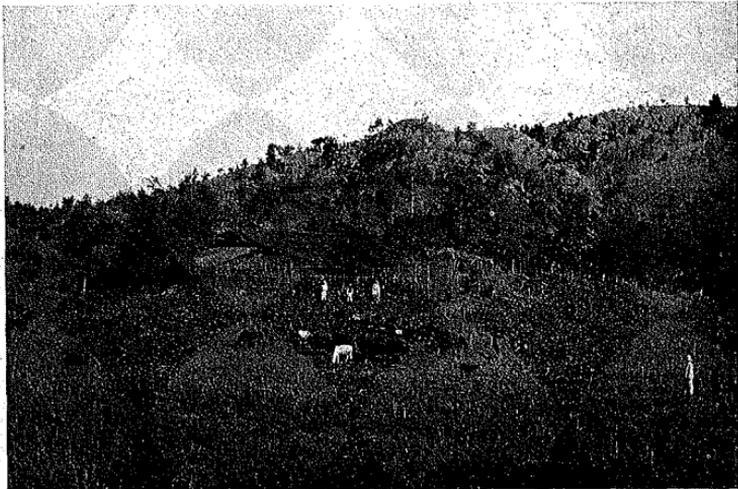
Boys'
Orphanage

Farm

A plot of land was obtained near the bungalow and a

well sunk, and all the boys were taught the rudiments of farming, the elder ones giving practically the whole of their time to this work, and in their spare moments learning enough to enable them to read their Bibles and to manage their accounts. The younger ones spent the greater part of their time at school, but were required to do a certain amount on the farm also. As farming is the natural vocation of the Bhil this effort has proved a success. Ten of the old boys are now married and settled out on farms of their own, and the majority of them are doing well. In some cases God has so prospered them that they have been able to pull down the simple houses erected for them on leaving the orphanage, and to erect more substantial houses such as are used by well-to-do Bhils. They are also the proud possessors of bullocks, cows, and goats, while some own even the more expensive buffalo.

Three of the boys have become teachers in village schools, after passing the highest standard then taught in the Thompson School, and are now hoping to pass the Government School Final Examination, and receive the coveted government certificate. Better still, one of the former orphans felt



A Bhil Farm

called of God to evangelistic work and is now preparing for the Readers' Examination.

Day School The great hope for the regeneration of Bhil-land lies in the education of the young, so it is a matter for joy that the day school in Biladia, after a somewhat chequered career, is now well attended by numerous Christian as well as non-Christian children.

Converts Besides the orphan settlers there are only a few Christian families in Biladia, consequently a recent addition to their number caused great joy and added considerably to the standing of the Church. For many years, Gala, the mission gardener, had listened to the Gospel and regularly attended the Church services; but, although he seemed to be drinking in the message of God's love, he showed no inclination to accept it. Whenever he was spoken to he would promise to think it over but would venture no farther. A severe struggle was going on in the man's soul, and from time to time he would express his intention of joining the Bhil regiment at Kherwara, and even went so far as to ask over and over again, for a recommendation to it, although he knew full well that no Christian is allowed to enlist. On one occasion, in answer to the missionary's pleading that he should definitely decide for Christ, he replied, "If you mention this subject to me again, I will run away, I will not remain in your service." The matter, therefore, was allowed to drop for a year or two, but eventually the grace of God prevailed, and in spite of many attempts on the part of heathen relatives to hinder this step, he and his wife and four little girls were baptized. He had formerly remarked when pressed to decide, "Not yet, but when I do make up my mind I will never break my word," and he has kept true to his promise in the strength which God has given.

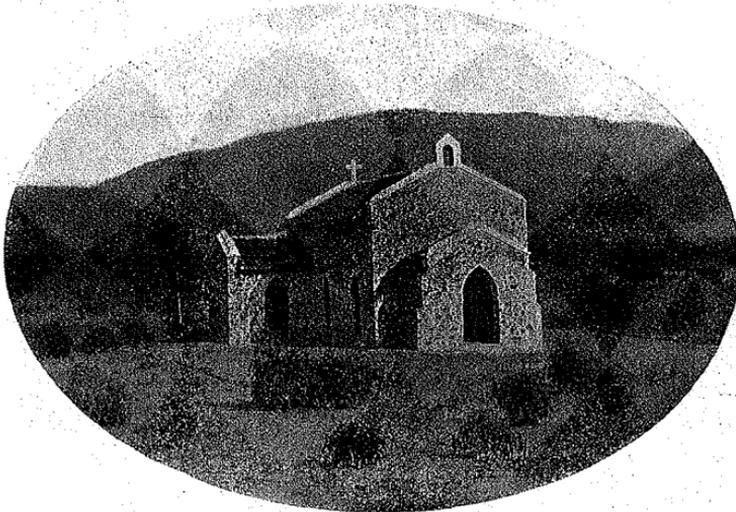
**Building
of the
Church**

The Church services in Biladia were held Sunday by Sunday in the schoolroom until 1908, when a small stone church was erected. The site chosen for the new edifice is quite near the main road, and passers-by, attracted by the sound of drum and cymbals, often turn aside to listen. The church, which makes no pretensions to beauty, is built of rough hewn

stone, and has no furniture save that which is necessary for the minister. At the east end it is surmounted by a stone cross, the Christian symbol, witnessing to Bhil, Hindu, and Mohammedan alike of God's love to us in Christ. It is called the Church of St. Andrew, in the hope that those who worship there will bring others to Christ, even as Andrew "brought his own brother Simon."

Since 1909, when the boarding school was transferred to Kherwara and the ophanage practically came to an end, more time has been devoted to making known the Gospel in the

Evangelistic
Efforts.



St. Andrew's Church, Biladia

surrounding villages. Those in the immediate vicinity are visited during the hot weather, while the camping season makes it possible to reach those at a greater distance.

During an itineration in the winter of 1912-13 the message was welcomed on all sides. Never before has there been such a manifest willingness on the part of the people to listen to the Gospel. It would seem that here, as in other parts, signs of a great advance of the Kingdom of Christ are beginning to appear. May God in His mercy hasten the day.



A Bhil Church Band

CHAPTER VIII

KOTRA

LOOKING back over the years it is helpful and cheering to trace God's Hand overruling circumstances which at first sight seem most contrary to the spread of His Kingdom.

First
Efforts

In 1891 Mr. Thompson, after several previous visits, opened work at a village called Kotra, situated about fifty miles from Kherwara, which offered many facilities for reaching a large tract of hitherto unevangelized country. Kotra comprises two independent villages, one a small cantonment of the Mewar Bhil Corps, which lies on the right bank of the Pamri in Rajputana, and the other a simple Bhil village in Gujarat on the east of the river. It was in the latter that Mr. Thompson erected a rest house and a school, and the Gospel message was proclaimed there until 1900.

Retreat

After the great famine the work in Kotra was abandoned, and owing to lack of workers to occupy it, and, above all, owing to lack of funds for necessary repairs, the disused school and bungalow were dismantled and the materials sold. Not without sorrow was the decision made to give up Kotra, and only those who have faced a similar situation can realize the cost of relinquishing an outpost once held for the Master.

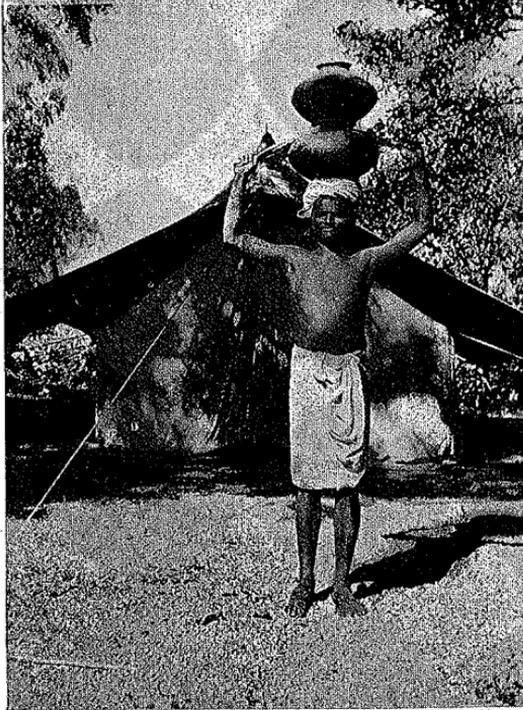
After a long interval, a missionary climbed the natural barrier of massive hills beyond Som, and following the River Wakal along its rocky gorge, reached the small cantonment, near which the ruins of deserted school and rest house, gradually crumbling into decay, made their mute appeal. For ten years the appeal had seemed in vain, but prayer was made for Kotra, and one by one the barriers were removed. A bungalow in the cantonments fell vacant, and the Commanding Officer at Kherwara, Col. C. Hutton Dawson, a warm friend of the Mission, at once informed the missionaries that it could be purchased on reasonable terms. It was privately purchased, and then arose the question of workers to occupy it. Miss Bull, on whose heart the needs of Kotra had pressed heavily for years, was free to go, but it was not considered advisable for a lady to go alone to such a distant outpost. Quite unexpectedly, a lady at home offered to go out at her own charges to help wherever she might be most needed in the Bhil Mission, and so in November, 1911, Miss Bull started off with the new recruit from England and several whole-hearted Christian servants, and once more Kotra was occupied in Christ's name.

Re-occupa-
tion

The timidity and suspicion which greeted Mr. Thompson on his arrival at Kherwara also marked the reception which awaited them in the Kotra district. The usual report was circulated in the bazaar, "The sahibs have come to make us all eat beef and become sweepers." One evening, when the little band, with hymn books, drum, and cymbals, went by invitation to a village about a mile and a half away, and sat down in the appointed place, not a soul turned up to listen to them. It was somewhat depressing, but, nothing daunted, after a little prayer among themselves, they started the hymn-singing. By and by a scared-looking youth appeared, and bursting into their midst during the singing of a hymn, in a frightened voice hurriedly delivered a message to the effect that all the people in the village were away, else they would have been only too glad to listen. This was a palpable lie, for figures could be distinctly seen peeping through the fences of the houses and fields. However,

False
Rumours

the missionaries immediately packed up and took their departure. Some weeks later a nice open-faced youth came up to the bungalow. He said he had attended Mr. Thompson's school as a small boy, and now he wanted to learn more. His knowledge was tested, and it was found that he had not forgotten how to read and write easy words,



"A nice, open-faced youth"

and his arithmetic soon came back to him. It was also discovered that he lived very near the place where the hymn singers had been so coldly received. Instantly the question was asked, "Why were we treated so badly here, and why would not the people come to listen to us?" "Oh," was the answer, "they heard that you were *men* dressed up in women's clothes, and that you had come to steal their women

and children, so they shut them all up inside their houses—but they are sorry now, and wish you would go again.”

From the very first the evening meetings on the verandah of the bungalow were well attended, and plenty of patients came every day for medicine and treatment, so gradually the prejudice was broken down. Meanwhile visits were paid to the surrounding villages, where the reception was almost invariably friendly.

Itineration is carried on during the cold weather, but only those villages are visited from which invitations are received. At first certain roughly outlined plans were made as to the villages to be visited, but generally these plans have been more or less altered, as a deputation of village headmen would appear at the tent door, dressed out in their best, with bows and arrows, swords, villainous-looking knives, and, if possible, an old gun, to add to the imposing effect, and they would plead so urgently for a sojourn in their midst before the mission party left the neighbourhood, that they usually succeeded, and away would go the camp to some unknown little place tucked away among the hills, and never before visited by white people.

A Bengali gentleman who was travelling in these parts asked for a guard to accompany him, and, when told that the mission ladies rode about everywhere without one, expressed great surprise that they had not been robbed or murdered. But the people realize in a wonderful way the beauty and truth of the religion presented to them, and know quite well that the missionaries are their best friends. Were it not that they are so terribly bound down by ignorance, superstition, and the dread of evil spirits, many would doubtless accept the Good News immediately, and acknowledge with their lips, what it is evident they really believe in their hearts.

Meanwhile much good is done by the very presence of the white ladies in these dark places. One woman is quite certain that her life was only saved by their appearance in her village. She and her husband were both ill, and the man's *other* wife declared that this poor woman had an evil spirit,

Arresting
Influence

and was "sitting" on the husband, and causing all the trouble. The missionary was assured that, not long before, a neighbour of this woman had been put to death with a red hot iron, because suspected of being a witch; and another woman had her legs cruelly burnt for the same reason. Truly "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." It is hoped that soon God will open the way for one or two little village schools to be started in the district, and so not only may the children be brought under daily Christian influence and instruction, but through them the story of redeeming love may permeate the dark ignorant hearts of those living around Kotra.



Cart to carry away the Spirit of Sickness from a Village



The Medical Mission Premises at Lusadia

CHAPTER IX

MEDICAL WORK

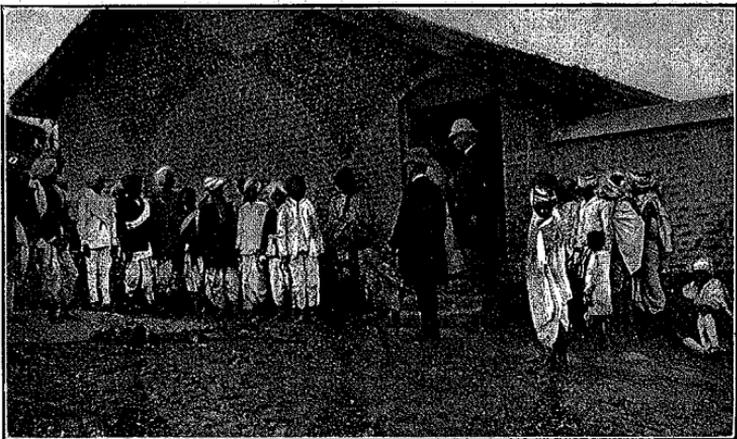
THE Bhils have very few real remedies for sickness, though some use roots and herbs which they obtain from the jungle when needed. Caulterizing with a hot iron is frequently used instead of a mustard plaster. The lobe of the ear is often tied round tightly to cure a bad eye, or the big toe to cure or prevent indigestion ; but sickness is almost invariably attributed to evil spirits, so charms, exorcism, and similar superstitious practices are at once resorted to. A snake or scorpion bite will be treated by brushing the patient with a leafy branch, while a spell is muttered by the wise man. Superstition and dirt often greatly aggravate the sufferings caused by the unskilled attempts of relations and friends to relieve the patient. Mr. Thompson's sympathetic nature was deeply stirred by the sufferings of these poor ignorant people in times of sickness, and he began the medical work which has ever since formed a special feature of this Mission. Not only does it relieve actual suffering, and so make known the love of God in the only way many people can understand, but it has proved an effective means of overcoming their prejudices and superstitions.

At Kherwara the missionaries undertake no medical work, **Biladia** as there is a hospital and dispensary under government

auspices, but Mrs. Hodgkinson's medical work at Biladia has already been spoken of, and all the missionaries carry medicines on their itinerations, and give every help they can to the sick, who look on all white people as skilled doctors.

Lusadia

At Lusadia, the medical work under Mrs. Birkett's superintendence has become a strong evangelistic agency. In 1905, new buildings comprising dispensary, operating room, and drug store, and also two wards, one for male and one for female patients, were erected to replace a small dispensary built by Mr. Thompson. In the centre a convenient house was built for the hospital assistant, but soon the attendance of patients increased so rapidly that he had often to vacate his own dwelling to accommodate patients who had travelled long distances for medical aid. This rendered a further extension an urgent necessity, and funds were raised, for the most part locally, by his untiring efforts. A new block for women, which brings the total accommodation for in-patients up to twenty-four beds, was opened by Mrs. Eyre Chatterton, the wife of the Bishop, in January, 1912, amidst much local rejoicing. The work of the hospital and dispensary has exercised a softening influence in various directions. In many instances opposition and prejudice have been



Opening a new Ward, Lusadia Medical Mission

disarmed by this gentle ministry. Although there have been few actual conversions as a direct result of the medical work, and spiritual results are always difficult to tabulate, yet from time to time, encouraging tokens of God's blessing have cheered the hearts of the workers.

In his report [for 1909 Mr. John Brand, the hospital assistant, tells the following striking incident: "Ever since the Rat Famine¹ the household of Rupa had heard the

The Conversion of Rupa and his Household



Starting out on an Itineration

Word of God. His daughter embraced the Gospel and was baptized, but the others were kept back by superstitious fears and the opposition of their friends. Generally in times of trouble they sought unto their old gods, but twice when they

¹ See page 33.

found no help and were in sore need, Rupa prayed to Christ and said, 'Hitherto I have worshipped other gods, but my troubles have not grown less, now leaving them I seize the hem of Thy garment. If Thou be the True One, cut short my trouble that I may thank Thee and worship Thee alone.' His prayer was answered but in a few days he forgot his promise. A third time he fell into trouble. This time his wife was very ill. In spite of heathen remedies, she was so troubled that for a month she cried through the whole of every night. At last he called exorcists of every kind to cure her, but in spite of all their charms and noise she got no better, so he prayed to the evil spirit saying, 'Show me a little improvement that my heart may have peace, or else to-morrow morning I shall take her to Lusadia.' Next morning she was carried in and he told his tale to the hospital assistant, who warned him not to tempt God by breaking his vow a third time. He examined the patient but finding no disease thought it must be a special chastisement, and gave a simple medicine as a placebo, saying, 'Do not be afraid, God will send you relief.'

"Many Christians and heathen came that night to sympathize with Rupa and his wife, for they are well known people, and all were told that there was no disease but that it was the 'grip of the hand of God.' The patient slept comfortably all through the night, and next morning husband and wife bore witness to her health and peace before their numerous visitors, who, were amazed at God's power and love. Their faces were radiant with joy and they eagerly desired baptism. Even now Rupa was a little afraid of the evil spirit and hesitated to remove its shrine from his house, but at last he carried it out, threw it away, and was baptized."

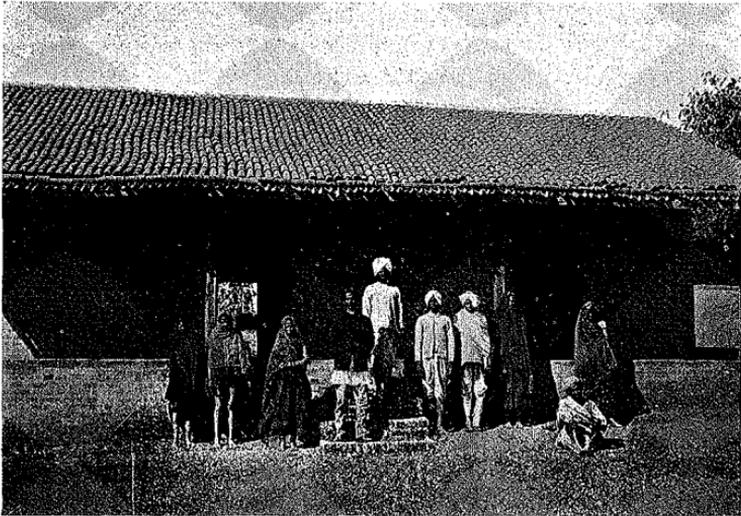
Animism

This story may seem incredible in England, but evil spirits are very real to all Indians, and the events related here are just what occur in work amongst Animists all the world over, as is shown in Warneck's "Living Forces of the Gospel," a most useful book on work among Animists.

One other result of the medical work may be related. In the spring of 1912, a man came to the hospital for

treatment, suffering from consumption. His condition improved slightly under treatment, and the faithful teaching of the message of salvation brought peace and comfort to him and his wife, who accompanied him. After five months' instruction he was baptized, and passed away shortly afterwards. He was laid to rest by moonlight in the little Christian cemetery, in sure and certain hope of the glorious resurrection hereafter. His wife was admitted as a catechumen, but left after her husband's death.

Patients come in from an adjacent native State, where at



Hospital Staff and Patients, Lusadia

present, with the exception of two elementary mission schools, no missionary work is being done, and while further educational or evangelistic effort would be regarded with disfavour, a strong medical mission would undoubtedly be able to win its way in that large district of 1447 square miles, with its unevangelized population of 101,103 souls. A medical man to do surgical work is most urgently needed, as many cases of great suffering have now to be sent away unrelieved.



The Church at Mori

CHAPTER X

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

THE great task before all missions, in addition to that of evangelizing the heathen, is the building up of a strong indigenous Church in the wisest and best way.

The young converts had a unique and most valuable lesson in Church organization when Bishop Eyre Chatterton visited Lusadia in 1909 and ordained Mr. Vyse to the diaconate. A great number of converts who had come from all parts of the Mission, were able to enter fully into the solemn service of Ordination, as it was conducted in Gujarati, their own language. There were 192 worshippers in Christ Church, the "cathedral" for the time of the Bhil Mission; and a company of eighty believers gathered round the Lord's Table at the close of the Ordination. The greater number of these had been children of darkness ten years previously, but were now rejoicing in the light and liberty of the sons of God.

This was the first and so far the only time a Church of England ordination has been held in the vernacular in this diocese, and its taking place among them was a

source of great joy to the whole community. It gave them knowledge and insight into the different offices in the Christian Church and the responsibilities attaching to them, which we trust are calling forth increasing prayer for the bishop and clergy. It is earnestly hoped that before many years are past the Church will be provided with a ministry ordained from amongst its own members.

In the Bhil Mission efforts are being made to train the converts in self-government by means of a council, which has the special feature that all the married men in the Church are invited to attend it and take part in the debates and vote. The object is to make all realize that they are really responsible Church members, and that the Church is their own and not a foreign one. Since most of the converts have been baptized in this century, and are totally unaccustomed to representative government, it seems best to let all the men meet at the council. They have discussed such matters as the admission of low-caste converts, temperance, marriage customs, heathen festivals, and social customs, and the council has proved a powerful means of educating the converts both in morals and religion. All the five congregations are within a day's walk of the centre, and walking is the only means of locomotion, so these council meetings are not prohibited by cost. Each congregation has a committee to manage its local affairs. This is at present nominated by the missionary, with the help of the lay-pastors, but before long it will probably be elected by the congregation. The way is thus being prepared for representative government, which must be introduced when congregations spring up so far from the centre that all the men cannot attend the annual meeting.

The worship in church is as Indian as possible. All the congregations sit on the floor. The canticles and hymns are in Bhili metre, set to Bhili tunes, and are sung in Bhili fashion. The precentor sings each line alone, and the congregation sing it after him to the accompaniment of drum and cymbals. All sit while singing. Our Church of England services, when thus modified, seem as suitable

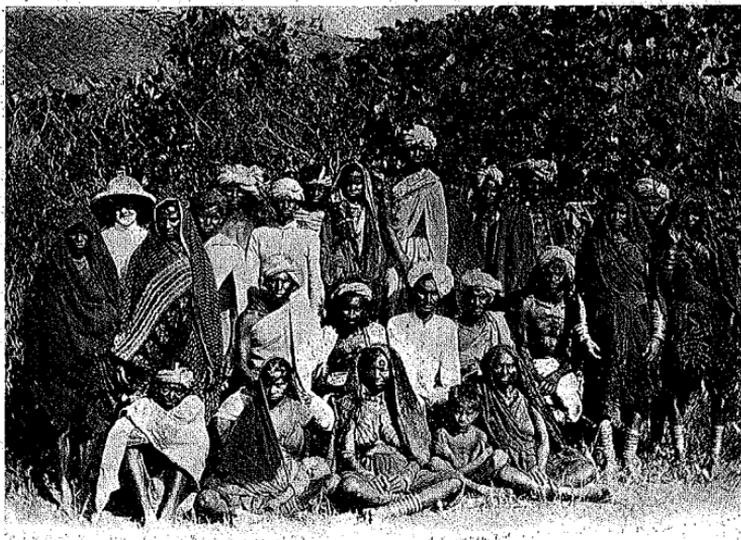
Church
Council

Worship

as could be desired, and never lose their deep spirituality. The great difficulty is to translate the prayers into language simple enough for illiterate people. It is hoped that the Psalms may soon be put into Bhili metre, and then even the most illiterate will be able to sing them after the precentor. The Bhil Hymnal contains a hundred hymns, of which about half, and those the favourites, are original hymns written by the Bhil converts themselves. The rest are borrowed, with kind permission, from older missions in Gujarat.

Ministry

In the Bhil Mission all the catechists are under the Church council which pays them, and they act as lay pastors of the Christians among whom they live, holding the Bishop's licence. They also evangelize the heathen near them, and thus the Church is being trained to feel that the responsibility for evangelization is theirs, not that of the foreign missionaries. When the missionary is absent the lay pastors conduct the services and act as chairmen of the Church committees. When both missionary and lay pastor are absent, the leading or best educated man in



The Beginnings of a Congregation

the congregation conducts the service and gives the address. The licensed lay pastors and other laymen do very valuable work, but as they cannot administer the Sacraments the need of an ordained ministry is keenly felt.

The Bhil Church Council receives a grant of about £50 a year from the C.M.S., and this is diminished by one-fortieth every year. In the present circumstances of mission work in India this is the only possible plan. The offertories in church, which are the only way the Bhils contribute, and which include the missionaries' offerings, amounted in 1912 to £33. Out of these monies the Church pays its lay pastors, and provides everything it needs. The lay pastors get £1 a month, as a maximum, and are allowed to farm. When there are ordained ministers, the Church council hope to pay them perhaps up to half as much again, and still allow them to farm. Finance

The Christians have built two churches. The one at Lusadia (see p. 36) is a substantial one, with mud walls and a tiled roof. The congregation contributed all the unskilled labour with their own hands, and they relay the tiles themselves every year. The other, at Mori, is wattle-and-daub, and was covered at first with a leaf roof, but the people have just bought tiles and made it a better roof. This church was built on their own initiative, without consulting the missionary. The pastor merely asked his permission. It is erected in the corner of a field, and there are no title-deeds. This may be insecure, but it has obviated the difficulty of asking for land in a native State, where such proceedings by the foreigners are much objected to. The council has built two parsonages, which are just ordinary Bhil farmer's houses, and is digging two wells for its pastors.

All catechumens are brought before the Church Committee, and none are baptized without their consent. All discipline is administered by the Church itself, and the Bishop only excommunicates when the offender is reported to him for excommunication by a committee. Discipline

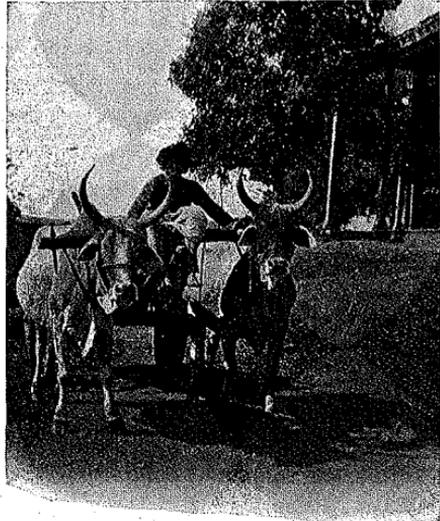
There are larger or smaller congregations in connexion with Lusadia, Khetadara, Jesingpur, and Mori. In the two Out-stations

more distant of these villages there are resident lay pastors, while Mori is visited from Lusadia. Khetadara, with its difficulties, has already been mentioned, but it has been cheering to see very definite advance in two out of three of these little congregations since regular Sunday worship has been conducted in their midst. They are also visited weekly when possible by one of the lady missionaries from Lusadia, and persevering efforts are being made to raise the spiritual tone of the Christian women to a higher level, the great difficulty being that the majority of them are unable to read.

Co-oper-
ative Society

Reference has been made to the condition of debt and difficulty in which most of the Bhils pass their lives. In order to help them to free themselves from the hands of the moneylenders and to raise them to a measure of independence, a Co-operative Society was started in April, 1906. Non-Christians and Christians alike may benefit by this institution, lest the hope of membership should bribe men to become Christians. During the first five years of its existence the Society made a profit of £22; of this it retained £15 for the use of its own members, and used £7 to help those of its members who live in two rather distant villages to form two daughter societies.

It borrows money at $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., and lends it to its members at $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. These are very low rates, for Bhils have generally to pay 75 per cent. or more to the local moneylenders. Money lent to the society is protected by four safeguards, viz., (1) only trustworthy men



A Bullock Wagon

are elected members; (2) the liability of every member is unlimited; (3) loans are only granted for approved objects; and (4) every one wishing for a loan must bring two sureties. As in each society each member knows every other, and is liable for the money lent, they all watch one another's use of the loans most carefully, and there has been no loss through members failing to pay interest or to repay loans.

The members now possess 103 head of cattle through the help of the society. In addition to this, six farmers have been helped to pay debts, three to make wells, two to build houses, two to embank fields, and one to make a tank for irrigation. The Society's greatest use, however, is the splendid training it gives its members in the proper use of money, thus teaching thrift and honesty, strengthening their characters, and fitting them for the work of governing their own Church.

**Benefits to
Farmers**



Some Christian Children at Lusadia

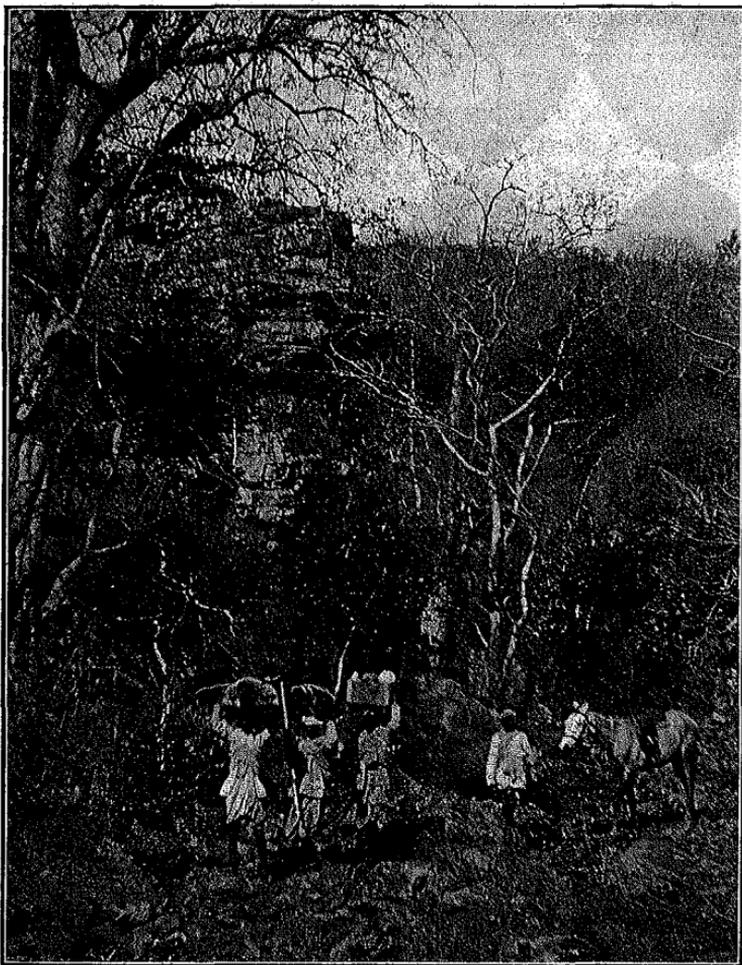
CHAPTER XI

WOMEN'S WORK IN CAMP AND STATION

OF late years the number of inmates of the girls' orphanage has been greatly reduced through the marriage of the girls to the orphan boys, so that of the large number of girl waifs sheltered during the famine only five remain under the Mission's care. There is, however, a thriving infant school at Lusadia for the village children. Weekly Bible classes for women, both at Lusadia and Biladia, are held by one of the lady missionaries.

The more definite opportunities for evangelistic work amongst the women are found in the camping season. Writing in 1895 of itinerating work in its usually accepted sense, Mr. Thompson compared it to ploughing the sand of the seashore. Indeed, a visit of a few brief days amongst this unenlightened, untaught tribe cannot possibly make much impression. It has been found therefore more profitable to cover a small area, and to make longer visits than is usually

done in other Indian Missions. Some of the lady missionaries often arrange to camp first in the villages where there are already Christians, feeling the urgent necessity of giving additional teaching to the women beyond the instruction they receive at Sunday school and at the Sunday services. In the Kotra district the work lies entirely among non-Christians,



On the Way to a Camping Ground

and there the joy is often given of proclaiming the Message to those who have never previously heard of Christ.

Perhaps a short sketch of a day in camp will give the best idea of the opportunities and privileges of this work. It is early morning, and from the huts around come the subdued sounds of the whirr of the grinding mill, showing that the women are already astir to provide enough meal for the bread for breakfast. After a time, as the day begins to dawn, the outer curtain of the missionary's tent is lifted, and the Christian servants, who are, indeed, fellow-workers in camping time, and possibly a few of the village Christians, gather for a short time of Bible reading and prayer. Armed with a few necessary drugs, visits are then paid to the sick folk who have asked for help, and however little the missionaries' medical knowledge may be, they are not exempted from doing their utmost to help the suffering ones, who have unlimited confidence in their capabilities. Various visits to Christian and non-Christian houses fill up the morning hours, and at mid-day the Christian women, released for the time being from household cares and field work, come and sit in a circle on the floor of the tent for teaching. Reading lessons, Scripture teaching, instruction for Baptism or Confirmation is given, and often it is nearly three o'clock before the last of the scholars leaves. It is uphill work for these dear women, who have never been taught anything beyond the practical duties of everyday life, and it is pathetic to watch their efforts to master the difficulties of the alphabet sheet or first reading-book. But they are very patient, and although they have to stand jeers and taunts from their less enterprising neighbours, some have definitely set before them as their goal to read God's Word for themselves, and are not easily discouraged.

The hour after sunset is usually devoted to the children, many of whom have been out all day in the hills guarding the cattle. There is quite a rush for the Miss Sahib's tent, not solely for the sake of the teaching, but when once the fear of the stranger is overcome, the wonderful things contained in the tent, such as chairs, table, lamp, etc., are an

inexhaustible mine of interest to the youthful Bhil. The reading-sheets are far more easily mastered by the younger brains of the children than by the scholars of middle age. Scripture stories and Bible verses are quickly learned,—thus the hour with the children passes rapidly. One evening a Bhil boy of about twelve years appeared at the tent-door, his long hair shaded his timid, eager little face, his lithe, upright form was scantily clothed—he was, in fact, a typical heathen Bhil child. “See, Miss Sahib,” he said, pointing to his bare leg, “I have been out on the hills to-day, and my axe slipped and cut my leg while I was chopping wood, will you give me some medicine to cure it?” The wound was not a bad one, but he was made happy by having it attended to, and was very proud of the clean white bandage, which showed up well on his brown skin. He came from a heathen home, and the bad leg was an excuse for coming every evening to the tent not only for medicine, but for teaching too. One evening, when most of the children had left, this little lad lingered there, and began turning over the leaves of a few old magazines on the table. Presently I turned to him, catching the words, “Isu kyán?” (“Where is Jesus?”) spoken very softly as he steadily examined the picture. “What are you looking for?” I asked.

“Where is Jesus?” was the unexpected answer.

“Where have you seen a picture of Him, for I have none here?”

“Some weeks back,” was the reply, “the sahib was here, and he showed us pictures with the big light (magic lantern). One picture was of Jesus, with His arms stretched out so”—(and he threw his arms back), “and they had put great pegs” (using the word for the iron tent pegs) “into His hands and feet. I want to see the picture of Jesus again.”

A little talk followed of the great love of the Lord Jesus which made Him willing to suffer so, and with bright, eager eyes, the little Bhil lad from that dark heathen home listened to the story we all know so well. Was it unconscious thirst in the heart of that wild little Bhil that made him remember

so well the picture he had only seen once, and made him wish to see it again ?

Later on a fire is made at a little distance from the tent, and, when a few others have joined them, the Christian servants begin to sing a native hymn to a well-known melody with the usual accompaniment of drum and cymbals. By degrees well-shrouded forms saunter up to the fire—a few of the braver spirited of the non-Christians, attracted by the sound of the singing. The evening ends with a short Bible reading and prayer, and some who have come thus under the friendly cover of darkness for the first time become interested and venture to come again. As the fear and shyness wear off, they will linger sometimes for a chat round the fire with the Christian servants, who as a rule are not slow to avail themselves of such opportunities of telling others the truths which have become precious to themselves. Sometimes a magic lantern display takes the place of the evening hymn-singing. This brings together a larger number of people, and often there is a fair sprinkling of women and children, who as a rule do not come out to evening meetings.



Bhil Woman in Working Dress

Sometimes invitations to visit the women of the higher caste Hindu families are received, generally as a result of medical work. A Hindu lady, who from time to time has been an inmate of the hospital, expressed a wish to be visited in her own home, and one day, late in the rainy season, an opportunity occurred of complying with her request. In these high-caste circles, a certain amount of etiquette prevails, so, in conformity with their rules, word was sent beforehand

of the proposed visit, and the number of Christians who would accompany the Miss Sahib, for it would not be considered polite to visit a lady of rank unaccompanied. A message of welcome having been duly received, the little party, consisting of the Indian hospital assistant, his wife and two children, another Christian woman, and the missionary, set out, armed with Bible pictures, a few Scripture portions, tracts, and hymn books. At the entrance of the village, women were watching, and with many words of welcome escorted the visitors to the chief house. There a large crowd of women was already assembled, and the hostess came forward and greeted the newcomers with gentle courtesy. After a little preliminary conversation, Bible pictures were shown and explained, Christian hymns were sung, and with great eagerness the dear women tried to join in the singing. After about two hours the missionary rose to take leave, but the hostess would not hear of such an early departure, and took her to an inner room, to rest till the meal in preparation for the guests should be ready. A young girl was told off to fan the visitor, and a woman with a long palm-leaf was instructed to whisk off the flies. The hostess herself meanwhile superintended the cooking of the food. Then a little group of women gathered round the white woman, and asked many questions about the foreigner's home and relatives. Presently an old lady whose face was lined with care, looking up, said sadly, "Miss Sahib, I have always sorrow at heart. My husband and two sons are dead. I am old and all alone." As simply as she could the missionary spoke of the great Father's love for all His children, the bereaved and lonely ones being His special care, and proceeded to try and unfold something of the message which had brought her into their midst. How far those, who, in advanced years, hear thus the good tidings for the first time, are able to enter into its meaning, is very doubtful, but as the missionary concluded, the old lady again spoke. "Miss Sahib," she said, "we in this village are just like the animals, and so are our children. We eat and sleep and drink and die, and are no better than the beasts. We

are only women ; who would care for us sufficiently to come



Orphan Girl with Water Pot

and teach us the true worship ? No one cares for us, we are only women." These haunting words linger on in the memory of the writer as they voice the pathetic cry from hundreds of Indian villages, where, unvisited in trouble, uncared for in sickness, untaught in youth, many thousands of women are left to face the bitter sorrows of this world, without a gleam of comfort for the present, or a ray of hope for the dark and unknown future. There are many such villages in Bhil-land. Does no one care ? No, that is not true. God the Father so cared that He gave His best to meet their need. The Son of God so cared that He gave His life for them.

One, the pioneer of this Mission, following the footsteps of His divine Master, loved not his life unto death, that the message of life might reach the poor untaught Bhils. How much do we care for the souls for whom the Master thought it worth while to die ? Upon the answer to this question depends in large measure the extension of His kingdom,

the hastening of His return, and our own personal share in the joy of the final harvest.

APPENDIX I

STATISTICS OF THE C.M.S. BHIL MISSION DISTRICT, FROM THE REPORT OF THE CENSUS OF 1911

State	Area in sq. miles	Towns	Villages	Population	Schools	
					Non-Mission	C.M.S.
Mewar	1285	2	221	32,439	2	5
Dungarpur	1447	3	713	159,192	11	3
Idar	1112	1	646	135,206	15	5
Pol	135	0	85	4,972	0	2
Malpur	49	0	51	5,125	2	0
Total	4028.	6	1716	336,934	30	15

The C.M.S. is the only Society working in Dungarpur and Pol. The figures for the other states are an approximate estimate for those parts which are worked by the C.M.S.

APPENDIX III

CHURCH STATISTICS ON DECEMBER 31, 1913

VILLAGES	Average attendance at Divine Service	NO. OF CHRISTIANS						Communicants	SUNDAY SCHOOLS					BAPTISMS			Confirmees	Excommunicates	Re-admissions	Marriages	Burials	Church Committee Meetings	OFFERTORIES			
		Men	Women	Children	Orphans	Catechumens	Total		Schools	Teachers	PUPILS.				Adults	Children							Total			
											Men and Boys	Women and Girls	Total													
Lusadia . .	52	42	46	94	6	4	192	53	1	4	75	47	122	...	6	6	...	7	5	6	2	4	RS	A	P	
Biladia . .	...	20	21	36	4	...	81	26	...	...	...	...	...	...	3	3	...	8	...	...	1	2	224	10	8
Jesingpur .	13	11	11	26	...	2	50	12	1	1	10	24	34	2	1	3	...	4	...	1	...	1	42	0	6	
Khetadara	7	12	12	27	...	1	52	12	1	1	8	5	13	2	3	5	...	28	...	1	...	1	81	11	6	
Mori . . .	9	12	14	24	50	5	3	21	4	5
Kherwara .	27	12	7	6	12	...	37	8	...	...	...	...	...	1	2	3	...	3	...	1	...	3	116	11	7
Baulia	4	5	4	18	0	2	0	9
Total . .	108	113	116	217	22	7	475	116	3	6	93	76	169	5	15	20	...	53	5	9	3	11	509	3	9	

APPENDIX IV

CHRONOLOGY OF THE BHİL MISSION

1840

July. Mewar Bhil Corps raised.

1877

Feb. Conference on Non-Aryan Tribes at Salisbury Square.

1878

Sept. 29. All Saints' Church, Kherwara, consecrated by the Bishop of Calcutta.

1880

Nov. 27. Rev. C. S. Thompson reached Kherwara.

1881

Nov. 7. Rev. C. S. Thompson begins to treat patients and visit villages.

1882

Mar. 29. School in verandah begun.

1884

Nov. 19. Rev. and Mrs. G. Litchfield arrive.

1885

Mar. 16. First attempt at village school, in Karcha, near Kherwara.

1886

May 8. Grant of Land at Lusadia.

1887

- April 21 Rev. C. S. Thompson selects site for Biladia bungalow with
-22. Nathabhai Sahib.
The Kherwara girls' school was opened by Mrs. Litchfield.

1888

- Sept. 2. Rev. and Mrs. G. Litchfield transferred to Benares.
Dec. 18. Rev. and Mrs. W. B. Collins arrive.

1889

- Dec. 15. First baptisms—Suka, his wife, and four children.

1890

- Feb. 9. Prema Hurji baptized, after being poisoned by his elder
brother.
July. Strike in Biladia school, because twenty boys were examined
in the first book and failed.

1891

- Dec. 15. Kotra resthouse built.
Kotra school opened.

1892

- Jan. 13. First Christian marriage—Prema and Amari.
„ 16. Para Rao Sahib gives land for a school at Kalbai.

1893

- April 18. Baulia school finished.
The Kherwara girls' school closed through opposition during
this year.

1894

- April. Rev. and Mrs. W. B. Collins transferred to Meerut.
Nov. 23. Revs. H. J. Peck and H. Mould arrive.

1895

- Dec. Rev. H. J. Peck invalided home.

1896

- Jan. 30. Rev. E. P. Herbert arrives to take charge of the Mission.
Mar. 21. Rev. C. S. Thompson sails from Bombay on furlough.

1897

- Nov. Rev. A. Outram arrives.
Bokla school building begun (finished in 1898).

1899

- Mar. 8. Rev. E. P. Herbert at Aden on his way home.
Sept. 6 and 27. Rev. H. Mould writes from Kherwara about the beginning of famine relief. He leaves the Mission soon after.
Sept. 27. Rev. and Mrs. A. Outram begin famine relief work.
Oct. Rev. A. Outram opens dispensary and boys' orphanage.
Mrs. Outram opens girls' orphanage and school.
Dec. Rev. C. S. Thompson returns from England.

1900

- May 19. Death of Rev. C. S. Thompson.
" 31. Mr. J. C. Harrison arrives from Lucknow.
June 1- Rev. F. Westcott of the S. P. G. Mission, Cawnpore, at
July 15. Kherwara, helping the Outrams.
June 100 tons of maize, sent by "Christian Herald," New York, reaches Udaipur.
" 9. Rev. E. P. Herbert and Mr. J. C. Harrison arrive at Baulia to take up Mr. Thompson's work.
July 22. Dr. A. H. Browne from Amritsar and Rev. E. Rhodes from Kangra arrive at Baulia. Dr. Browne finds Mr. Harrison ill at Biladia. Mr. Wilson, an Indian medical assistant, from Amritsar, joins him later.
July. Nearly 9000 receiving relief.
Aug. Rev. A. E. Day arrives.
" 17. Rev. and Mrs. A. Outram leave for Agra, and are invalided home; Rev. J. W. Goodwin and Mr. G. W. Tyndale-Biscoe taking charge.
Mrs. Dawson (wife of the Commandant) takes charge of the orphan girls till the Misses Davies and Richardson, lent by the Z.B.M.M., arrive.
" 19. Dr. Browne has dysentery; Dr. Orbison of the American Presbyterian Mission, Lahore, is with him, and stays a month.
" 25. Mr. Harrison invalided to Mussoorie, and Mr. Herbert for a voyage to Aden.
Sept. (1st week) Sergeant MacArthur, 2nd Battalion K.O.S.B., joins Mr. Rhodes, who has been transferred to the Gujarat side.
Sept. 20. Close of acute stage of famine.
Mr. Rhodes returns to Dharmasala with dysentery.
Nov. 20. Sergeant MacArthur rejoins his regiment.
" 27. Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Birkett arrive at Baulia from Lucknow.
Dec. 6. Rev. J. W. Goodwin brings Rev. W. Hodgkinson and Mr. G. C. Vyse to Baulia.
" 15. Dr. and Mrs. Browne return to Amritsar from Biladia; thirteen orphans, Lalji their housefather and Nanka their chokidar, go to Baulia.

1901

- Jan. 19. Mr. E. Walker arrives, lent by the Gond Mission.
 Mar. Miss Bull and Miss Carter take charge of the girls' orphanage at Kherwara (thirty-three girls), from Miss Davies.
 July. Mr. Luxman Hurry arrives, in the first week, lent by the Sindh Mission.
 Aug. Meetings of Bhagats at Lusadia.
 Oct. 17. Mr. Walker invalided with blackwater fever.
 „ 26. Rev. A. Outram returns from England.
 Nov. 7. Twenty-two converts (including children) baptized at Lusadia by Rev. A. Outram.
 „ 9. Death of Rev. J. W. Goodwin at Bombay from blackwater fever.

1902

- Aug. 29. Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Birkett return to Lucknow.
 Dec. 14. First seven Khetadara converts baptized at Lusadia.

1903

- May. Walls of Lusadia Church complete.
 Dec. 3. Thompson Memorial Fund closed (Rs 8243.12.9).

1904

- Jan. 8. Miss Newton arrives from Meerut.
 Feb. 13. Dedication of Christ Church, Lusadia, by the Bishop of Nagpur. Twenty Bhils confirmed.
 Mar. 2. Holi fire removed from its old site, Lusadia. The Khetadara school opened early in this year.
 May 3. Rev. and Mrs. A. Outram leave Kherwara, invalided home.
 Sept. Mori—the school is flourishing.
 Nov. 25. Rev. and Mrs. A. I. Birkett appointed to Lusadia for permanent work.
 Dec. School opened at Jesingpur.

1905

- April. Jesingpur: land for rest house lent by Thakor of Bhentali. Lusadia: Land lent by Thakor of Karcha for medical mission. Dispensary, two wards, hospital assistant's house built; and also cookhouse, servants' quarters, and stables for new bungalow.
 May 1. Mr. Luxman Hurry ordained deacon.
 July–Oct. Correspondence resulting in the closing of the schools at Khetadara, Mori, and Jesingpur. They were closed for the holidays on June 30, and must not be re-opened without permission.
 Aug. Mr. John Brand, hospital assistant, arrived at Lusadia *vice* Mr. Reuben.

Sept. 10. Good rain began and lasted three days in answer to prayer on the Gujarat Missionary Conference Day of Prayer. There had been no rain since July 29, before which it was good.

Dec. 25. Lusadia: A Committee of Bhīls manages the Christmas Feast.

1906

April 2. Lusadia: Co-operative Credit Society started.
Nov. 13-16. 1st mela at Lusadia; missioner, Rev. W. G. Proctor.

1907

Jan. First baptisms under mohuda tree, Jesingpur.
May 5. District Church Council holds its first meeting, twenty-six Indian members from twelve villages.
Dec. 25. First service in St. Andrew's Church, Biladia.

1908

April 20. Lusadia D.C.C. Agents' Committee; Premji, Peter, Kanda, and Waja accept service under the Council. D.C.C. Standing Committee Pastorate Fund formed, C.M.S. grant Rs 60 per mensem.
Dec. 20. Rev. Luxman Hurry ordained priest.

1909

June 15. Boarding school moved from Biladia to Kherwara, and named the Thompson Memorial School.
Aug. 1. Kherwara Standard VII opened.
Dec. 18. Mr. G. C. Vyse ordained deacon in Gujarati at Lusadia.

1910

Mar. 17-21. Gujarati Convention at Nadiad.
April 5. Mr. Luxman Hurry transferred to Bombay.
May. Mr. Vyse has enteric fever. Thompson School: all fourteen boys pass Standard VII examination.
Nov. Miss Shaw comes as an honorary helper.
,, 3. Eleven Thompson schoolboys appointed teachers by Conference.
,, 4. Three Thompson schoolboys accepted by D.C.C. for training as Readers.

1911

Feb. 2. Rev. C. L. Shaw joins the Mission.
Mar. 30. Conference adds the School Final Standard Examination to the Thompson School.
Oct. Singra Dhula and Halia Deva pass Vernacular School Final Examination, after three months at the Irish Presbyterian School, Anand.
Nov. First school mela at Kherwara.
,, 26. Miss Price joined the Mission at Lusadia as an honorary helper.

1912

Dec. 22. Rev. G. C. Vyse ordained priest at Nagpur.

1913

Jan. Miss Newton leaves on furlough, and resigns on her approaching marriage.
April. Bhil delegates go to the Central Church Council at Jabalpur for the first time.
Oct. 25. Miss R. R. Watts joined the Mission as an honorary missionary in local connexion.
Nov. 17. Bhil Rising on Mangad Hill suppressed.
Nov. 24. Rev. and Mrs. W. Hodgkinson transferred to the Gond Mission.

1914

Jan 6. Teachers' Training College opened by Irish Presbyterian Mission: three C.M.S. Bhil students admitted.
March. Printing begun of the revised Gujarati Prayer Book.