

INTERESTING LETTER FROM ORIENT

FORMER BINFORD TEACHER HAS TAKEN UP MISSIONARY WORK WITH HUSBAND IN INDIA

The Times is permitted to print an interesting letter written from India by Mr. and Mrs. Woodard, addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Otto Fyke. Mrs. Woodard will be remembered as Miss Mable Ewen, formerly a teacher in the Binford school. The letter follows:

American Mission, Madura, India, Dec. 6, 1922.

Dear Friends:

We have been in India only two and one half months but in that time we have had many new experiences and impressions have come. India is a strange and interesting land and in this letter we aim to give you a few glimpses of how one feels in it all before the newness wears off. This was our first opportunity to see the Orient and what a change we find from the West. We arrived at Coimbatore, Cochin, on the 8. 3. Lane steamer on Sept 26th. There was a number of days rough weather on the voyage in which Mabel and Howard proved better sailors than myself. The trip thru the Mediterranean was full of varied interests. At Port Said we had our first view of the Eastern port, but the noises, smells and confusion among the boats alongside our ship was only a mild comparison to those Indian streets. The architectural and sky-line scene were pleasing indeed and in the evening wore the native Egyptian costumes. One fellow in his urban evening quite happy to have his picture taken standing beside Howard. Passing thru the Suez Canal we saw remains of trenches and gun emplacements of the World War. Except for a few camel tracks beside scattered groves of palm trees, there was nothing but sand as far as the eye could see. The newsman made the account of the Wanderings of the Israelites all the more real. We kept the Old Testament history in mind as we passed through the Red Sea and saw Mt. Sinai to the left. After experiencing five hot days on a comfortable, modern boat we can better sympathize with the Israelites as they wandered in the Wilderness and found it necessary to complain to Moses their leader. Now we know Moses was a narretyote man. If we had been in his place we would no doubt have staid under a palm tree fanning ourselves instead of complaining on Mount Sinai. In the Gulf of Aden our captain stopped the boat to give water to a native fishing vessel that had been caught in the calm. There was scarcely a ripple of any breeze and they claimed they could not reach shore. They were waving and shouting frantically as we approached.

We found India a land of wonder. The tall palm trees with dozens of varieties of broad shade trees made a picturesque landscape. The Indian villages are of mud huts and thatched roofs, crowded along narrow, crooked streets where goats, cattle and children have full precedence over traffic. The Missionaries gave us a very hearty welcome. They voted to have a day in one of the homes at the American college in Madura until January 1st. Following that we go to Kodakal to join a language study class. In the meantime we are studying language with a private teacher. Watching the people and describing the customs are also part of every day. Many of the faces are very pleasant and attractive. Especially have we noticed this of the Christians.

The non-Christians love brightly colored ornaments and both men and women have their ears pierced and wear heavy rings. The jewelry which young boys wear quantities of and when they get to the age to which the parents until the ears are almost reach their shoulders. It is told that this is so because all the ornaments their future husbands will give them. Whenever the opportunity comes we go to visit the stations and places of interest. The famous Madura Temple is the stronghold of Hinduism. After seeing many of the temples and practices there we cannot wonder

that the progress of India has been held back. The idols, the sacred bathing tanks, the shrines and customs of worship are another description. They must be smothered and boarded, as well as seen, in order to secure a real picture of them. It seems wherever you go you find the wretched shrines and images. This morning we passed a woman going in an ugly figure carved in stone. Then in some villages there is an enclosure with ten or fifteen brick or fired clay houses. Some of them may be partly broken down, but that does not matter for the people believe that the gods ride upon these in order to protect the rice fields. Superstition and ignorance are the foes that hold back India. Perhaps the first feeling that came to us after the strangeness had worn off, was the tragedy of it all; that a people of such religious spirit should be so misguided. Dr. J. P. Jones' book "India's Problem, Krishna or Christ?" has been a useful guide. There is such a great need for service that one continually finds himself wishing he could multiply his life indefinitely to meet all the demands. We are reminded of how President Davis used to say "I wish I were twins."

All around are evidences of the great help England has been to India. The main roads in this district are graded and gravelled. They can best be appreciated after a trip out into the districts where the roads are very poor. The South Indian Railway Co. keeps the right-of-way in good shape and has built a station here at Madura. The accommodations are on the 1st and 2nd class plan as in England and on the Continent. First class rates are double the 2nd class and about five times higher than the 3rd class, but in travelling 3rd one must forget the words cleanliness and comfort. The story is told here that a government official asked one day the question: "Why do you Missionaries travel 3rd class?" Whereupon one of the old Missionaries laughingly answered: "Because there is no 4th class."

Madura has a population of 150,000, but it looks more like an overgrown village than a city. There is no city electricity so kerosine lamps serve in the lamp posts and in our homes. Cattle and sheep lie in the streets and here it is that the people spread out their paddy or rice to dry. Getting through the streets is sometimes a problem, but every trip is full of new sights and interests for us. The native dress is very strange in all the bright colors imaginable, purple, dark red and browns seeming to be the favorites. However some men wear only a loin cloth and the children no clothing whatever. Often as we go by, the children are playing games in the streets in groups of two or three. We find them full of mischief and playing pranks at times but there is not the spirit of real happy play as in America. Fear or dread of something seems to restrain them. Living amidst such ugly images of gods and surrounded by superstition seem to us two reasons for such an attitude. The little girls usually have an old lock on their faces and seem like little, dwarfed women. This morning a thirteen or fourteen year old girl passed by with her two-year-old baby on her hip. That helps one to realize the meaning of child marriage. Madura is the center for this Madura Mission District. This district is divided into five main sections called Local Councils. In order to secure better supervision for the church work. The size of this mission's task is shown by a study of these figures:

North Local Council, 550,000 people.
West Local Council, 470,000 people.
Central Local Council 483,000 people.
South Local Council 320,000 people.
East Local Council 720,000 people.

Total 2,575,000

On October 14th we went to visit Rev. and Mrs. White of the South Local Council and spent six days in visiting their work in the villages. According to the statistics above, their district is smallest in population being only 320,000, but that looked big enough indeed for the work of one family. I (Clarence) went around with one of his native pastors, a very able and energetic man. He told me that he had 56 villages in his pastorate alone. Of these 25 had Christians but only 17 had organ-

ized congregations. The other villages were waiting for the Gospel message. Surely it was of such a place Jesus spoke when he said: "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest." It gave me a strong feeling to walk thru the villages still untouched and waiting for the messenger. In one village the head man or mayor went around with us. We went over one section of the village and when a crowd gathered around, the native pastor spoke to them. There are 25 or 30 there that are ready to be baptized but so they must be trained first so they know better what Christianity means. On being questioned about the village still untouched the pastor replied that he needed funds to place catechists there. It was a joy to see a village with such a catechist of teacher and to hear him speak enthusiastically of the work being done. Whenever possible we went to visit his school. This was the same building as that used for a church, but in using the term building we mean something much different from an American school building. The walls are of mud about two feet in thickness, no seats, but the children sit on the floor. In some instances the interior walls were whitewashed and decorated with pictures, and it seemed to be the pride of the village.

On the Sunday morning Mr. White and I left early in a bullock cart for Malankkara, where he wanted to see the work of a new catechist. After a three hour ride we came in sight of the village. A large crowd with banners and drums were coming out of the village to meet us. When we got out, the first ceremony of greeting was their placing of flower wreaths about our necks. This being decked with garlands was a new one to me, but we found the same welcome in each village. We were late in arriving but the people wanted a procession so around town we had to march. They made it a point to march right around the Hindu Temple and I wondered how the priests liked such performance. On our arrival at the church bells were rung off, and taking all together with the drummers and flute players it seemed indeed a strange Sunday observance. But Mr. White explained it was just their way of expressing welcome. The interior of the church was decorated with palm branches. About 300 people managed to get inside and the service began. The Indian songs or lyrics did not sound musical to me but the folks sang with much spirit. I spoke with the catechist as an interpreter. That afternoon we walked over to the village two miles away walking along the banks of the rice fields. There we were met by similar ceremonies. Due to shortage of funds Mr. White had been compelled to stop this catechist's salary which was five dollars per month. This occurred several months before and he did not know just what we would find. You can imagine our hearty surprise to find that the teacher had gone on with his church work and earned support for his family as best he could by doing carpenter work. He is a graduate of our seminary in Pausanthal. One person whom he presented for baptism was a stalwart, young Indian who was wearing the American service ribbon with others on his military coat. I asked him about it and he said he had served in the Allied army. Since then I have learnt that India sent 1 1/2 million men for the Allied armies. Following the service we hurried back to our evening meal and the open-air prayer meeting. That night we slept in the church. Early the next morning we started out on foot again directing the driver to follow as soon as ready and so we went on visiting the villages. These visits in bullock carts have made us very glad that we are to have a Ford. One missionary put it this way: "A Ford increases one's efficiency about 30 per cent."

It was during this visit that word came to us of the sudden death of Rev. W. M. Zumbro, principal of the American College in Madura. Since then service after service has been held in memory of him by the people. It seems that many folks all over Southern India knew and honored him, from the message that he wrote to his family. Realizing the shortage of teachers in the college I offered to help until another one had been secured. A class was given me in Bible study meeting four days a week. There are eighty four in the class and I have found it very interesting. Their questions have made me glad I had a theological course in Seminary. They are kind minded fellows. I have watched them on the athletic field so well in the chess room and have decided that young men of India are much like their American brothers. Soccer football, hockey and tennis are their favorite games. They also hold track meets and several such competitions have been held since our arrival. There are 215 students in the college, and many each year are refused admittance because of economic reasons. I have learned to know one student especially well. His father is a Christian pastor on the West coast. The boy told me he wanted to become a medical missionary, but he knew he never could afford to pay for the schooling necessary. While here he has been borrowing school books from his friends for his study, because he could not afford to buy his own. We want to help him in some way, if at all possible.

This last week we have had heavy rains and floods. The poor people have suffered much. Their houses were broken down and today's report states there are over 800 families homeless. The damage to the crops may amount to \$60,000, was one estimate that I heard. That means a loss to a man in a land where the majority of people are so poor that they afford but one meal per day. The farms here are planted largely to rice. South of here there are the cotton farms. The farming implements are very crude. The plow is a large crooked stick with a strip of iron covering the tip. This scratches thru the soil but does not turn a nice furrow like our plows. Oxen are used for draft purposes. Small donkeys serve in carrying burdens on their backs. Sometimes the load is so heavy and large you can with difficulty see the little fellow striding along with his slender legs almost bending under the strain. There are cows and water buffaloes in abundance but that does not mean very much. The best milk cow only gives about one quart at each milking. American farmers would call such animals boarders. Much attention is being given now by missionary organizations to the possibilities for economic improvement. The church of India, if it is to be a strong, viable organization must be self-supporting. This will be possible only as the people make better use of their resources. The crude implements and methods must give place to better ones. This will be a gradual process for the present condition of poverty must be met, until the people are able to buy some machinery. Work will be easier. Nad people is full of rich possibilities in this regard. This is the Robber caste people, whose traditional occupation is thieving, but who are now being won to Christian living. The district missionary working there wrote me a letter concerning them in which he states: "Most of the Kallars who work at all work on farms. This is increasingly so as they leave their traditional occupation. If they get water in the next few years as seems likely now (Government plan of irrigation) it will be even more so than now. Thieving is the only thing in sight that can be carried on in large enough scale to reach a considerable number of the total Kallar people. If there is anything we can do to help them, let us try to do it. It holds more promise than any other industry for the Kallars." In writing this he is speaking about 80,000 people who are concentrated in the Tirumangalam region. For 75 years teachers, pastors and missionaries have been preaching truth and honesty in that country now the result are coming in the movement away from crime and toward education.

We have spent one week end at Pausanthal, which is only four or five miles from Madura. Here is located one splendid educational work, the High school, Vocational school and Teachers' Training school have a total enrollment of 847 boys. The Theological Seminary has 46 students. Some after our reaching the bungalow, Dr. Miller, principal of the school, took me to see the Trade school and then the experimental farm. These are underway for an indeterminate period of time.

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Here is a series of "good turns" with a splendid climate for which credit is due Troop I, Ashland, W. Va. Pined 50 trees, cleared streets, removed debris from lot, where horse had partly buried, during a heavy snow. Gifted houses, set out 90 trees and helped find boy who had run away from home.

CO-OPERATE WITH BOY SCOUTS

Thirteen theological seminaries in various parts of the United States are showing active interest in co-operation by including training for future scout leaders as a regular part of their curriculum.

BOY SCOUTS AID BIRDS

Carrying food daily through the winter to game refuge, and distributing it at places where thousands of wild birds congregate, is one way Troop No. 1, Hamilton, Ohio, has of carrying out the sixth scout law, "A Scout Is Kind." During the autumn migration of birds the boys throw food along the lake shores after the sanctuary birds had been banded now for the year. It is said the birds now recognize the scout uniforms as a sign of friendliness.

like homes on Sunday morning to hear the church bell. On entering the church, we found almost every seat occupied, which meant that about 600 were present. The preacher for the day was one of the native teachers. He used the Tamil language. We could not understand the sermon, but we could appreciate the force and eloquence that he possessed. When he referred to some Biblical passages many of the students opened their Bibles and in other ways showed alertness and keen interest. They used some of our beautiful hymns translated into Tamil, and they sang with much spirit. When the service was over we went out, wishing that many of our folks at home could have been present also, in order to realize what their interest in the Orient was really accomplishing. We passed by the main school hall in order to see the 260 children leaving their service. The church is not large enough to seat both groups at once so the other hall is used. On Monday morning we visited the Seminary during chapel period. Some of the women are also taking courses with their husbands so as to fit them for women's work out in the pastorates. There were many strong, able looking faces in this student group.

It seemed strange to have no cold weather on Thanksgiving Day and it will seem stranger to have no snow on Christmas. Most of the trees keep their leaves throughout the year. Foreign mail arrives once a week and that is always a red letter day. We wish to thank the many friends for sending steamer letters to us, when we sailed from New York. We read a few each day on our way across the Atlantic. One person sent us the Tribune "Comic Sections" and after we had read them we shared them with others. Later we wished we could have brot them right out here.

"Uncle Sam," "Andy Gump" and the "Kernal" would have been a new page in the marriage history. We find the missionaries real human beings in fact seldom have we met such a cordial group. Their hearty welcome will be a cherished memory with us. We will be glad when our language examinations are passed so we can commence on the real job. Our little boy Howard, is well and growing fast. He celebrated his first birthday here on November 18th. Some of our fellow-workers have spent fifty years in the service for God and India. It is with a similar hope that we start our new work. May this be a very happy New Year to you all.

Cordially yours,
Mable E. and Clarence E. Woodard
Address until Nov 1923 Kodakal, Madura District, India.

Has 7 as Roll Center

The bureau of railway economists has just prepared a list of cities having a large number of railroads entering. The outside sections says Railroads in Terminal and electric railroads are not included and the list is confined to cities having eight and more lines entering. Chicago, 20; St. Louis, 20; Kansas City, 14; Toledo, 14; New York, 12; Birmingham, 11; New Orleans, 11; Cincinnati, 11; Houston, Tex., 10; Fort Worth, 10; Memphis, Tenn., 10; Des Moines, 2; Detroit, 8; St. Paul, 8; Springfield, La., 5; Atlanta, Ga., 5; Denver, 5.

A FEW SCOUT "GOOD TURNS"

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