

MISS HESTER A. HILLIS,

INDIA; 1886-7, THE END.

"India's coral strand" has been of intense interest to the occident ever since Vasco De Gama visited it, and to the English-speaking people ever since the days of Queen Elizabeth. "The wealth of Ormus and of Ind" attracted the muse of Milton; "the mines of Golconda" have been the popular synonym for measureless wealth. Native princes were once covered with "barbaric pearl and gold" it is true, yet the first request brought to Europe from an Indian ruler by De Gama was for "gold, silver, coral, and scarlet." He sought to enrich himself with Christian gold and European coral, to make India a "coral strand" by foreign more than by native treasure.

India's material wealth and wants were emblems of her intellectual and her moral possessions and needs. The Indian language was richest among heathen tongues because Indian thought was richest; the religion of India was mightiest among pagan systems because noblest among nature worships. Indian thinkers have been profound, and Indian search after God has often been earnest and sincere. But if the Malabar prince had appreciated India's spiritual needs as fully as her financial wants he would have sent a more earnest request for teachers and for missionaries than for coral.

Missionaries and teachers have not waited to be sought after. Men and women have offered their services and hastened to that field in great numbers and with a sublime self-denial.

It has doubtless been most fortunate for the Hindoos and for missions among them that the English gained the supremacy there rather than any other people, and also that the English government has assumed direct control in the place of the East India Company.

It is true that statements the reverse of complimentary to English rule in India have been made, and none could well be more impassioned or extreme than those of Amrita Lal Roy in the *North American Review* last year. It is also true that candor will not permit us to say that England has either been consistent in her legislation as to the transportation of opium in India or just in forcing the drug into China, but we must still believe with Gen. Upton of the United States army when, after an official study of Indian affairs, he said:

"No stranger free from national prejudice can visit India without rejoicing that England controls the destiny of 200,000,000 of people; neither can he observe the great institutions which she has founded for their moral and physical amelioration, without hoping that, in the interests of humanity, she may continue her sway until she has made them worthy to become a free and enlightened nation."

England has already arrested native customs of suttee, thuggee and infanticide. The enfranchisement of women is now an imperative need. Infant marriages and their consequent husband sovereignties over the young wives should be checked. Caste, too, rock-rooted as it is, is an incubus on all industries and all progress. New elements of hope are appearing. The courts seem likely to ameliorate marriage customs and the railroads to relax the bonds of caste.

In all this that is past and prospective, England has been helpful to the missionary. Through India's open door multitudes are entering rich fields to reap golden harvests. No part of this foreign aid is more promising or more needed than women's work for women and for the children, and this is the work for Miss Hillis. She is still connected with Rev. C. B. Ward's Self-Supporting Mission.

Mr. Ward is a very remarkable man, intensely pious and intensely practical. It is a common opinion that a man can neither be a philosopher and a man of affairs, nor as pious as Madame Guyon and as business-like as De Lesseps. Few come so near combining the two as Mr. Ward. His piety is Johannine, and his engineering ability is sufficient to drive the first tunnel through the Alps. He is training hundreds of orphans, not only into Christian living, but also in business habits, having had sometimes 1,700 under his direction in road building, and having placed some in charge of small jobs.

The printer had reached this point in the preparation of the Hillis "annual," when a letter from Mrs. Ward brought the startling intelligence that our Hester was attacked with heart disease August 9th, seemed much better on the 11th, and was glorified on the 16th.

We must turn now to the past rather than the future. During the last year she left Secunderabad for Singarenni. Her own words for her friends are best here. They are self-explanatory.

SINGARENNI JUNGLE, DECCAN, INDIA, May '87.

Dear Friends and Helpers:—

I never look over your names without an earnest wish to send a message to each of you. When I came to this wilderness, the first place in the new programme was for correspondence, but the jungle has had work even more pressing than the city and my pen has had little service.

There was so little reason to hope for a house in Secunderabad. I began nearly a year ago to feel the indications were that I should get out into the district. My Tamil school was crowding the room allotted it by the kindness of the Baptist missionary. I removed it to the bazaar, but the heat and impure air soon told on my health. I could not spend the time necessary in the low, native room, without risk. Native regiments to which some of the children belonged were ordered away, some of the largest boys left school for work, girls to be married, and as my knowledge of Telugu would now allow me to venture into work alone, I decided to leave the city as soon as I could close up and arrange for a

new work. The last four months I gave the time from ten till four to English teaching. The Catholics were drawing the children of the churches into the convent school, and the peril to Protestant interests seemed so imminent, I felt justified in turning aside for a while to English work, as there seemed no one else to take charge of the enterprise. A school must be in existence to be visited and reported upon by the Inspector, before government grant and private contributions could be secured.

As soon as this was accomplished, I left Secunderabad with a little company of the orphans for the wilderness of Singarenni. The first stage of the way was by train over the new road to Warungal, the ancient capital of the Dominions. At Hanamaconda, two miles distant, is the station opened and occupied by Mr. Loughridge till his return to America. We found no one in, the family were out in the tent, touring, as the winter months are spent in preaching and teaching from village to village. The Loughridges are greatly missed by their associates and people. We were two and a half days at the station before carts could be secured, and they with the bullocks so small, the owner would agree to take us only on condition of our walking. The luggage and two invalids quite filled the little boxes. At noon we left the station with some misgivings, not realized however. Four days later we reached the station, having walked sixty miles. The Deccan air was delightfully cool and the shaded jungle roads, and the way across the high, rolling plains with ranges of blue hills in the distance, or beautifully wooded ones nearer by, were a constant delight; the clear streams, bubbling over the stones in an un-India like way, were a surprise.

An exceedingly pleasant feature of this part of the Dominion is in the many lakes, artificial, the work of ancient days, and the groves of tamarind that mark the site of deserted villages. The tree is very like the elm in its large size, and spreading, graceful branches. The harvest was being gathered. It was quite impossible to realize that we were not in America. Just such golden fields, loaded wagons, and joyous shouts as I remembered in our own fair land.

At night we slept on the ground by fires, it was very cold, as were the nights and early mornings for weeks afterward. I was thankful to find I could walk with no more fatigue than I felt after long walks over the Iowa hills when a school girl. The scattered villages will make much walking necessary. I had listened to Miss Wheeler's (of Dr. Cullis' Mission) account of her tours and of walking fifteen miles a day with little confidence I could do the same, but I found no difficulty, and almost regret the coming of the railroad that has followed steadily on and is to-day to a point but ten miles distant.

My first plan was to go on to a Tuluk town twenty miles away, but finding the children off the work, disabled by fever and ulcers, it seemed best to stop for a while, and for three months I have had them in school, eight Telugu girls, four Eurasian boys, beside a good number of the older boys and married girls whom I read with and teach at such hours, night or day, as I can find them at leisure. The weather is now too hot (95° to 105°) to allow of my going out except to the nearest villages, and I will probably stop here for some months. The June monsoon ends the heated term. From then till March of next year there is little risk in out-work. Bro. Ward's hope in regard to earning money for buildings, and orphanage for native children and another for East Indians, also stocking a farm, have been disappointed. Most favorable Providences attended the work for some months, but in December the Jungle Fever began to prevail. In a few weeks the force was reduced from 1,700 to 500. A native contractor secretly offered higher wages to the workmen of a company most relied on. It is now impossible to get workmen in force to do more than meet expenses and pay debts. If even so much is accomplished we will be deeply grateful.

We rejoice however in the hope that the government will soon open the way for land to be secured. If the necessary area can be obtained for a colony so the children can hold their homes, the great obstacle to self-support will be removed. A fine tract with the trees and tank of former times is a few miles from here, well situated as to access to heathen villages, giving mission work near at hand, and near the railroad and the new coal fields at Singarenni. The R. R. Co. is putting up very nice bungalows, really handsome stone cottages at the stations and Yellundalapud at the mines for European overseers and employees. It is believed the tide of native emigration into British territory will flow back under changes, that it has been anticipated will follow as results of the Vice-Roy's late visit to Hyderabad and efforts with the Nizam and Minister.

If the opening a new mission by a Board with many years of experience and with funds at its disposal is a work requiring much patience and wisdom, and liable to mistakes, none should be surprised if work undertaken by one man, without salary or counsellors, with his own family and about 80 natives and Eurasians to care for, should sometimes take a step not the best. There is much to try faith in carrying out mission work on Bishop Taylor's polity. Not many are called to such a mission as it seems to me. I should not advise new workers, or any one not led by most decided convictions to join such a work.

But for my experience and training under the very wise and tested methods of the Board, I could do little to help Bro. Ward in the solution of the problem. As it is I go forward with trembling. My consolation has been that if I fail in my part of the work, someone will take warning and escape one danger. If the societies could have the means to enter all the open doors, I should have less interest in the self-supporting work. But the needs that should be met at once cannot be met by the societies as yet. I have been sorry to see that some seem to suppose the Taylor missionaries to be actuated by a spirit of antagonism to Societies and Boards.

That there are very manifest advantages in work with the heathen who soon ask of the wages, I have long felt, but if a part of the force are not on a salary it helps those who are to a higher place in the confidence of the native, who has been led to believe money alone keeps the missionary and especially the native helper in the work.

From what I have written you will get some idea of the work, not a clear one, since it is all uncertain even to us. To do all I can for the heathen, all I can for fitting these orphans for missionary work, and self-support are the three distinct ends to be lived for, as far as my duty to others is concerned. To be so humble, obedient and free from plans of my own conceiving, that our Divine leader can use me is the need of my own heart.

That the bread you have cast on the waters of this India sea of death may come back to you even after many days is the promise. In my thoughts, applying it to one and another of you, I have wondered just how it would come, and if you would know it when again returned in the large measure Grace uses to measure by. Doubtless you will know sometime.

A description of our jungle home and life would do for a chapter in the Romance of Missions. A beautiful lake a few rods from the long, low, brush-walled, floorless house is as lovely as any Swiss or Scottish lake I fancy. Just beyond is the dense forest the range of most magnificent tigers, bears, panthers, deer, etc., etc. Tigers whose roar is so awful that hunters, if not lashed to the tree from which they shoot, "fall like ripe apples" as they express it. One poor fellow lost his life thus a year or two ago. My school is in a tent, not of purple and gold nor with the curtains of Solomon, but yet a cause for earnest gratitude. Can I live without bread was the question that awaked most anxious care,

and to my great joy I never was in such perfect health and "fulness of strength." I can live without bread and many other things once deemed necessities. Yonrs in the love of Jesus,

HESTER HILLIS.

These are her last words written for her large group of sympathizing friends in America. Such, substantially, were her latest hopes and plans. "Never in such perfect health," yet when these words (delayed a time to learn her new P. O. address) shall reach those in her thought, she will have been for weeks at *home*, in her *eternal home*.

No details of her closing hours have reached us.

Mrs. Ward writes: I could not express my own sense of bereavement. Next to my husband, I shall miss Miss Hillis most. She was one of the most zealous workers and the most unselfish person I ever met. *She was a model missionary.* In eight or nine months of great difficulties and trials, financially and otherwise, she was our stay and helper. She had many inconveniences to put up with but I never knew her to complain. She seemed *glad* to get a *chance to be like the Master*. Her loss to the work seems irreparable. The native girls miss her sadly. We shall all be better men and women for having had dear Miss Hillis with us.

The earliest home of Miss Hillis was at Parkersburg, Indiana, then she resided at Anamosa, on Bowen's Prairie, and at Magnolia, Iowa. In Iowa College from 1861 to 1865, (when she graduated), her struggles as a self-supporting student overtaxed her strength and won her warm friends. It was immediately to aid her that the Ladies' Education Society was organized in the college.

Eager for the most self-denying service, she was introduced in 1864 to Secretary Treat, of the American Board, by the lady principal of the college, the present Secretary of the Iowa branch of the W. B. M. I. She was told that only Holyoke students were sent unmarried. A similar introduction to Secretary Clsrk in 1868 eventuated in her work in Ceylon from 1870 to 1880. For five years there the teaching she had expected was not ready for her, and pleasant as her homes with the De Riemer's the Smith's and the Howland's were, she longed for more definite and visible results of labor. Her school at Panditeripo fully met these desires. She was glad to make all the unavoidable sacrifices in her missionary isolation. She found enough to do in superintending seven schools, and in large service as a kind of physician and nurse in addition to all her work in the teaching and practice of domestic economy.

Her call to that field was obvious, if eminent fitness for that niche could make it obvious. Even an educated Brahmin wrote to this country, "We thank you for sending us such a woman as Miss Hillis. Why, she is equal to any man." That conviction was reached only by a desperate struggle with mighty prejudices and because of resistless proof.

Four years were spent in America at sanitariums to regain her own health, at the bedside of others, and flying on the cars to stimulate zeal for missions in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas, and she was ready to return. No Tamil field under the Board was then open to her, and she joined Bishop Taylor's self-support-

ing mission at Secunderabad in 1884. Her work in the regions beyond has been told. She has reported better health and greater happiness in her missionary life than ever before, and family friends have followed her with aid; during the last two years some hundreds of dollars more than she has personally needed have poured in.

Her energy was remarkable. She had mastered the Tamil in Ceylon, and was already able to use the Telugu with fair facility in conversation and teaching. Some have spent 40 years among the heathen, communicating with them only in English or through an interpreter. In less than five years she used the Tamil, and after eight years more in the field she was using the Telugu.

Her heroism was more than knightly. Self-sacrifice had almost a fascination for her. She courted every peril that had a promise in it as Marshal Ney loved the field where his clothes were riddled and horses shot under him.

She saved money like a miser and gave it away like a prince. She chose to ride in second-class cars, to buy no regular meals while traveling at home, and to wear insufficient clothing that she might lessen expense for her friends, or be able to expend more for her wards. During her first year at Secunderabad, while all about her supposed she had enough to eat, she tottered fainting along the streets, when five cents more a day would have satisfied all her hunger. (That confession was made only in fulfilment of a promise and with an injunction of secrecy.) Even after those days of famishing when she received her first remittance from Congregationalists, she declined to retain it lest she should thereby diminish the funds of the American Board, which she had promised not to do. She was never quite willing to use that money, indeed, till she read Secretary Judson Smith's letter advising it. Secretary Clark's expressions of pleasure that her Congregational friends had not forgotten her gave her peculiar joy.

Her piety was most sincere and most devout, and was filled with all heroisms of philanthropy. There was no work too humble, no service too trifling for her to render. "Love thy neighbors *as* thyself" often seemed in her life to mean, "Love thy neighbor *better* than thyself." A friend who knew her well once said, "It is not worth while to send her money, for she will give it to the first starving pariah she meets." And there was force in it, for her liberality *was* excessive. Her generosity was noble yet perhaps objectionable, for it was a precedent sometimes which other missionaries could not follow.

No simple sentence can express the spiritual life of Miss Hillis more beautifully or more completely than Mrs. Ward's, "*She seemed GLAD to get a CHANCE to be like the Master.*" It was ever thus during college days, in Ceylon, during her magnetic missionary tours through the states, and in the Indian jungle. Christian living was to her a *privilege* more than a *duty*. She shrank from the thought of personal, Christian perfection, but her life often seemed wonderfully like it. Within the golden gates now. The privilege of self-sacrifice forever gone? It will be a strange thought to her.

Contributions have been sent to Miss Hillis during the last year *via* Iowa City as follows:

IOWA.

From <i>Belle Plaine</i> —Mrs. C. H. Bissell.....	\$ 4.00
From <i>Council Bluffs</i> —Miss Hope D. Buell.....	10.00
From <i>Davenport</i> —Rev. J. A. Reed.....	5.00
From <i>Glenwood</i> —Mrs. O. W. Cooley.....	10.00
From <i>Grinnell</i> —Mrs. E. S. Bartlett.....	1.50
“ G. H. Crosby.....	9.00
“ Emerson.....	1.00
“ Howe.....	1.00
“ M. M. Kelsey.....	1.50
“ L. C. Phelps.....	5.00
“ H. B. Scott.....	5.00
“ A. Steele, Esq.....	10.00
“ Frances Stevens.....	1.00
“ ‘E. B. W.’.....	5.00
“ W. O. Willard.....	1.00
From <i>Iowa City</i> —‘A Friend’.....	12.00
From <i>Tabor</i> —Mrs. Elvira G. Platt.....	2.00
From <i>Woodbine</i> —L. D. Willett, and others.....	83.52

NEBRASKA.

From <i>Burchard</i> —Miss Hattie Arnold.....	\$ 5.00
“ Miss Mary Bruch.....	1.00
“ Mrs. Ida Hillis.....	5.00
“ Mamie, Percy and Harry Hillis.....	.60
“ Mrs. S. E. Hillis.....	7.00
From <i>Pawnee City</i> —Rev. Geo. R. Milton.....	5.00
“ Mrs. Geo. R. Milton.....	5.00
Total.....	\$196.12

The memory of aid to Miss Hillis will be a perpetual pleasure to the contributors; the thought that the opportunity has ceased will be a perpetual regret.

Next to her family friends we (my wife no less than myself), bow our heads and hearts in voiceless grief. We join that family, too, in gratitude to her missionary associates and to her American friends for all kindness shown to her. Many a good word which the writers supposed would reach Iowa City only, have been read and enjoyed in her Indian Patmos,

L. F. PARKER.

Iowa City, Iowa, Sept. 30th, 1887.

