

**AN EVANGELIST'S TOUR ROUND
INDIA; WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN AND THE
MODERN HINDU REFORMERS**

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An Evangelist's Tour Round India; With an Account of Keshub Chunder Sen and the Modern Hindu Reformers by J. F. B. Tinling

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INTRODUCTION.

Twenty years ago Lord Macaulay complained of the want of English interest in India, and declared that in spite of the closeness of our connexion with that country, and the claims of its Oriental civilisation and varied riches, it was a subject not only uninviting but positively distasteful to most readers. Since his day India has grown and changed with amazing rapidity, and a variety of events—political, natural, educational, and religious,—have called aloud to England for the manifestation of that interest which a mother country should have in her adopted daughter. The massacre of the great Rebellion burnt the name of India upon all hearts, and made it for a time the expression of our indignation and our fears; but the famine and pestilence which followed them, destroying nearly a million of Hindus, purified while they strengthened the memory—stirring the hearts and drawing out the helping hands of English Christians. Missions and other instruments of philanthropy during the last twelve years have received a mighty impulse, being alternately the effect and the cause of a daily increasing zeal and love; while the breaking up of old monopoly, and the call to the intellect and energy of all British subjects in the army and civil and merchant services, have drawn a member or a friend of nearly every English family into the wide new field as a means of communication between Britain and her Eastern Colonies. The practical distance, too, between Europe and Asia has been so shortened that all difficulties of the traveller, except those of expense, are well-nigh removed, for the fifteen thousand miles and weary months at sea have given place to eight thousand miles, accomplished in six weeks, with the luxuries of a coasting voyage, and the comfort and punctuality of first-class steamers. And it is probable that within the next twelve months, when

the railway from Mirzapore to Nagpore is complete, and the British Postoffice has established the mail route by Brindisi and Alexandria, the six weeks' journey to Calcutta will be reduced to three.

But notwithstanding all these things done and being done, there is yet too much ground for the old complaint. From some cause or another the great part of educated English Christians do not care about, and do not know the present condition of India. Especially they do not know the great intellectual upper class of native society which is breaking down the mainstay of Hinduism, and substituting for the caste of Brahminism the more reasonable European caste of personal parts and merit.

The object of this present narrative is to bring this class before that part of the Christian public at home which it may be able to reach, in the hope that a greater interest in the modern Deists of India may express itself in the personal evangelistic labours of some men among them who are specially fitted for the task.

To speak justly of present India without a word about the India of the past, the writer feels to be impossible. But the alternative seems to be to speak imperfectly or not to speak at all, and he has chosen the former. The history of India was indeed studied, with the political events and private enterprise which have principally produced the present phase of native society; but becoming aware that a historical introduction, however important and however concisely written, would be very likely to prove a millstone about this little book's neck, the writer has determined to sacrifice the millstone rather than the narrative, and so the introduction, already written, has been abandoned.

To the few readers who appreciate our subject this explanation must apologise for the defects of which no one is more conscious than the writer.

A few words then must suffice to introduce the following narrative:—There are at the present day scattered over the whole of India tens of thousands of pure Hindus who speak the English language, read English literature, and affect English customs so thoroughly that, although they have never left the shores of their own country,

they would be almost as much at home in London as in Calcutta. They live as private gentlemen, or fill Government offices, or compete with Western merchants, with courtesy and ability and success which would satisfy us in our own countrymen. As to religion, they are for the most part Deists, having cast aside the frivolities and manifested lies of Brahminism, but retaining the dialike of the natural heart to the spiritual religion of Jesus.

The means which have produced this class have been partly our politics, partly our Gospel preaching, but chiefly education.

The history of the Sepoy army and Lord Dalhousie's laws of Settlement and Resumption, would tell us a good deal about them in a negative sort of way; for it was the closing of honourable employment to native gentlemen, the ruin of the hereditary Talookhdars or rent collectors of the soil, and the sudden expulsion of all from their paternal estates who could not produce their title deeds, that destroyed the native aristocracy, and presented to all who were conscious of power or ambition the alternative of discovering some new way to distinction or remaining on the dead level to which the policy of England had reduced their countrymen. From the shame and misfortune of the latter condition the intellectually upper class of India has escaped into the field of honourable enterprise opened by liberal education. Through the agony of a history of successive tyrannies and deepening degradation; through the crimes and mistakes of the nation last entrusted with her fate; through the hindrances of her enemies, and the help and hindrance of her wise and foolish friends, India has struggled on, under the guiding hand of God, to a state of mental light and culture, and so of earthly happiness, superior to any that she had attained before.

Whether in this state she is more ready to receive the Gospel, and so nearer to the happiness which is not of this world, or whether she has only increased her light to increase her condemnation, is one of the most perplexing questions of the day to those who study the national providences of God and the working of truth on the human soul.

Since Bengal, as it is concentrated in the capital, presents the results of the modern national movement in a way which no other part of India does, its history, society, and leading men claiming, by their salient points and marked features, a very special notice, we shall reserve our principal details until the course of our narrative brings us to Calcutta. There is the Brahma-Somāj, and there the few men who, deservedly or undeservedly, have obtained an attentive hearing and drawn an interest around their thoughts and actions not only in India but in England too.

It was the privilege of the writer to meet some of these men, and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ among them and their followers, giving them every opportunity of replying to his statements and arguments. But for the first seven weeks of his evangelistic tour the work lay among the humbler natives of Madras, and the account of its direction and results amongst them will occupy the whole of the first part of the narrative.

While English has greatly spread amongst the Hindus of all the Presidencies, and has become the principal means to wealth and respectability, the style of English, and the class by which we find it principally spoken, are by no means the same throughout the country. In Bengal, as we have remarked, the English-speaking men are practically the highest class, a philosophical turn of mind, as well as their mercantile or literary occupations, requiring and developing a knowledge of the master language such as the high schools and colleges alone can give. Throughout the whole of the north and northwest the Government offices and other responsible situations are held for the most part by Bengalees, and even in the country villages and stations in the jungle, the writer has more than once been startled by the hearty English salutation and unembarrassed flow of language of an educated Hindu.

In Madras the case is different. At first one would think it the largest field for an English evangelist. One hears English spoken on all sides. There is no necessity to learn a word of Tamil, for your servant can talk in your language much better than six months' study will

enable you to talk in his. In Calcutta you cannot take a step without Hindustani. Men who have been for years in the service of an English master will not betray acquaintance with a word from Europe: they fear to be taken for "Madrassies," which is something like being taken for rogues. Thus, while English in Calcutta is spoken by the highest class, in Madras it is spoken by the lowest as well, and this lowest class makes up the principal part of the audience which will attend to an English lecturer. From this circumstance, remembering that the knowledge of servants is picked up from any quarter by the ear, with a help from schools much inferior to the select institutions of the capital, our readers will perceive that while the most varied audiences may be obtained in Madras, for a generally appreciative audience they must look to Calcutta. Bombay seems to occupy a middle place between these extremes. It conveyed to the writer the impression of being the great practical middle class town of India; and while it is not characterised by the taste for theological speculation and acquaintance with abstruse English authors which we find among the leaders of the Brahma-Somāj, perhaps its general command of our language, and the intelligent hearing which it will give to one who is able to attract a Hindu audience at all, are fully equal to the corresponding features of the more famous reformers of Calcutta.

The perfect command of English which many of the natives of India have acquired has excited the astonishment of those who have never, by years of study, been able to speak fluently in French or German; and consequently, among those who know the latest facts in India's social history without knowing fully the causes which produced them, there is an inclination to over estimate the accomplishments and the talents of the Hindu. Perhaps the estimate may be corrected by the statement of a single fact—Many of the educated men of India have been trained by the medium of English from their childhood, and have acquired its use *at the expense of their mother tongue.*

While the writer of this narrative was in Calcutta a distinguished man was selected on a special occasion