

THE NEW CHURCH AT TRIVANDRUM

Photo by Rev. A. T. Foster

INDIAN MEMORIES

By the Rev.
WM. BOLTON

III. The New Church at Trivandrum

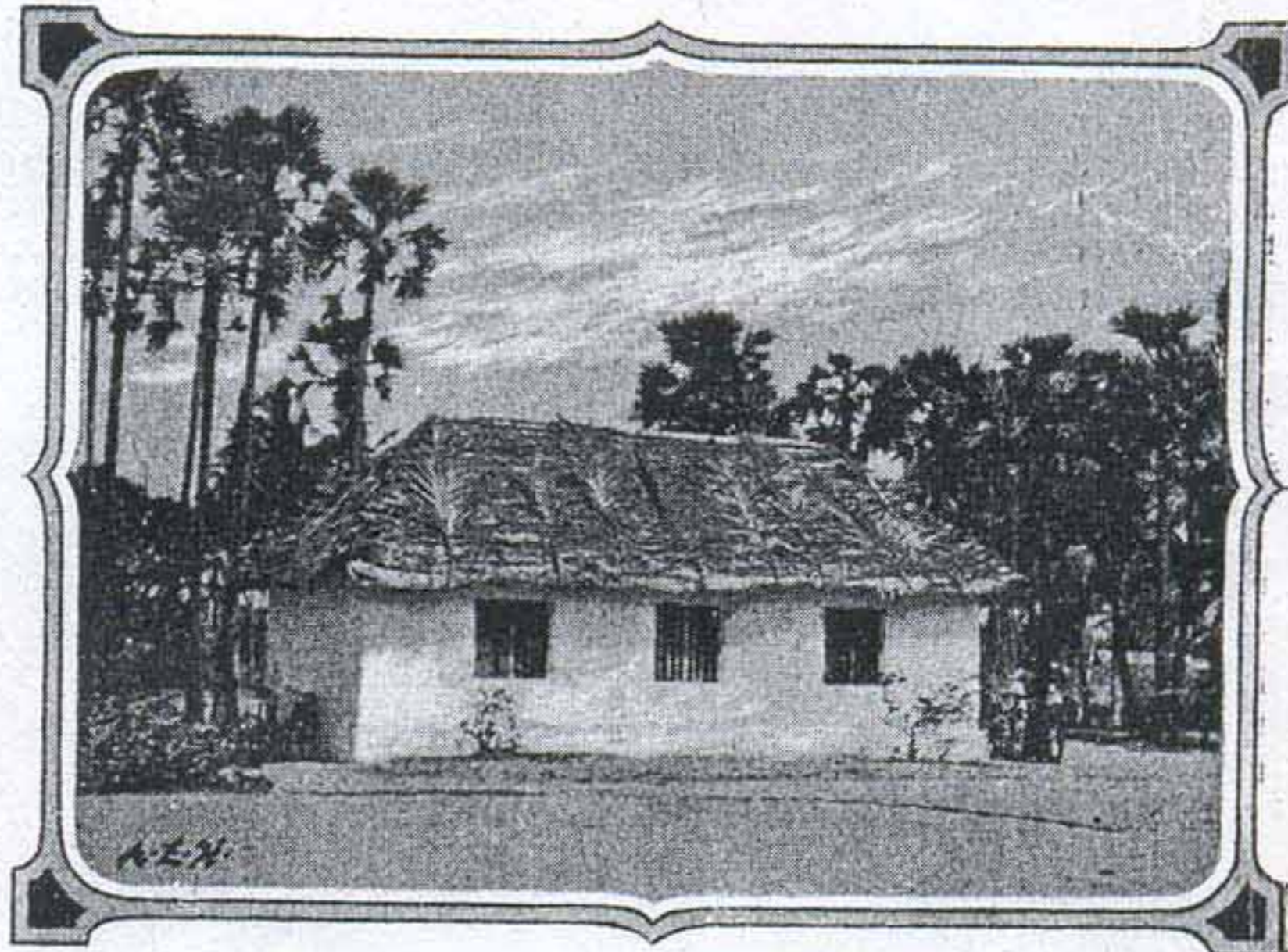
THE first of December was a great day in Trivandrum. There was the opening of a new church building associated with the name and memory of one of Travancore's leading missionaries, Mr. Mateer. There was also the celebration of the centenary of the commencement of Protestant missions in this State.

In the afternoon in the old church the people assembled for the last time, and held a brief service of prayer, led by the pastor, the Rev. John Kesari, B.A. We then proceeded about half a mile along a broad road to the new building. It stands well, facing down the long main road which leads through the cantonment to the Fort. The members of the mission party stood upon the steps outside the entrance, and the spacious courtyard was speedily packed with people. After a brief time of worship, Mrs. Thompson pushed open the door, and we entered a plain, but good-looking, commodious and attractive building. Externally it is of granite, with a square tower. The roof is supported by Gothic arches which spring from round columns, and is open woodwork. The building is simple in style, and the columns of granite, covered with fine shell plaster, have the appearance of polished white marble. It can accommodate a thousand people, and ordinarily will have a congregation of more than seven hundred. The win-

dows at both ends are filled with tinted glass; at the sides they are open, with venetian frames to be used in stormy weather. The building as it stands is paid for, but about a thousand rupees are still required for furniture, etc.*

The predominant note of our service was one of praise to God. On the steps, before the doors were opened, a verse had been sung equivalent to "Glory, honour, praise and blessing." As the missionary party gathered on the dais, the congregation filled the building. A few minutes

* From a report of the proceedings kindly sent by the Rev. Arthur Parker, we learn that up to the year 1838 no European missionary was allowed to reside in the city. A little church, however, had been erected at Valiathora, some two miles away, which is still standing, and an illustration of which is given below. In 1860 an old building, vacated by the Episcopalians, was secured, and has been used up to the present.



THE OLD CHAPEL AT VALIATHORA

passed while the natural excitement quieted, then a hymn of praise was sung, the Malayalam version of "We praise, we worship Thee, O God." Psalm 48 was read, and prayer was offered in both languages. On the desk were lying three Bibles, all of which will be used—English, Malayalam, and Tamil.

A welcome to the deputation was associated with the opening service, and was expressed in a way which indicated some of the extended work of the district, some of the blessing which has been realised

very large number, about half of whom were gathered from the District, took part. It has been a time of great joy, and I think also a time of real consecration, and bodes well for the future.

As I sat in the filled building with its crowd of earnest worshippers, representing churches which are at least beginning to understand the responsibilities as well as the joys of church life, I seemed to see the crowds which have gathered during the past week: rough, wild-looking hill-people, the timid folks who dared not



THE DEPUTATION AT TRIPATUR, WITH UPPER CLASSES OF GIRLS' SCHOOL

Rev. W. Bolton, Miss Wills, Rev. R. W. Thompson, Mrs. Thompson, Mr. Whitley, Rev. R. C. Porter.

since seventy years ago a commencement was made in the city. The first speaker represented the pastors, the second spoke on behalf of the district, the third was the pastor of the Trivandrum Church, and the fourth is engaged in the city work. They all spoke in English, and again and again there was earnestly expressed the deep sense of gratitude to the Mother Society, "whom we do not see, but see in you," as one of them said.

This morning the building has been again filled with people for the Dedication Service. Mr. Thompson preached, then followed the Lord's Supper, at which a

come within a limited number of paces of the caste people near to us, the many just entering into the way of Christian life, feeling in some real fashion the healing touch of the Saviour. Another gleam of hope beamed forth. I do not forget the difference between the city dweller and those who are little better than serfs upon the land. But the vision widened. The bonds of serfdom are being broken; the struggle is severe and will be; the condition is at present very elementary; but the beginning has been made, and the living seed will grow.

December 2nd, 1906.