

# *Miss Pigot*

agnovitque per umbras  
obscuram

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*This monograph has benefited from a close and critical reading by Cathy Pickett, late of the India Office Library and Records, and from the recommendations that she made.*

Miss Pigot has been appearing in print, in a very modest way, since 1858. The following titles mention her in ways that aim to be factual: four of the first six are biographical, and from Kenneth Ballhatchet's *Race, Sex and Class* of 1980, they are writing history. The list is not exhaustive.

*India. Special appeal on behalf of the Calcutta Normal School*, London 1858

*The Pigot Case. Report of the case Pigot vs. Hastie as before the High Court Calcutta*, Calcutta 1884

Mary Pigot *A Brief Reminiscence of Keshub Chunder Sen*, Calcutta 1910

Sunity Devi *Autobiography of an Indian Princess*, London 1920

Donald Macmillan *The Life of Professor Hastie*, Paisley 1926

Sushama Sen *Memoirs of an Octogenarian*, Simla 1971

Kenneth Ballhatchet *Race, Sex and Class under the Raj. Imperial attitudes and their critics 1793-1905*, London & New York 1980

Meredith Borthwick *The Changing Role of Women in Bengal 1849-1905*, Princeton 1984

Mamie Magnusson *Out of Silence. The Women's Guild 1887-1987*, Edinburgh 1987

Mrinalini Sinha "The politics of Gender and Race in the Ilbert Bill Controversy, 1883-1884" in *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* ed. N. Chaudhuri and M. Strobel, Indiana University Press 1992

Deirdre David *Rule Britannia: women, empire and Victorian writing*, Cornell 1995

Benoy Bhusan Roy and Pranati Ray *Zenana Mission: the role of Christian Missionaries for the Education of Women in 19th century Bengal*, ISPCK, Delhi, 1998

Lesley Macdonald *A Unique and Glorious Mission. Women and Presbyterianism in Scotland 1830-1930*, Edinburgh 2000

Mrinalini Sinha "Reconfiguring Hierarchies: the Ilbert Bill Controversy, 1883-84" in *Feminist Postcolonial Theory. A Reader* ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, Edinburgh 2003

Eliza F. Kent *Converting women. Gender and Protestant Christianity in Colonial South India*, Oxford 2004

Esther Breitenbach *Empire and Scottish Society. The Impact of Foreign Missions at Home c.1790 to c.1914*, Edinburgh 2009

Rosemary Seton *Western Daughters in Eastern Lands*, Praeger 2013

And she appears twice in fiction. A play was published in June 1882, the *Nava Vrindavana*, in which she is mentioned, although her name is mispronounced and comes out as *Misti Biskit*, or something similar: and a novel, *Two Coins*, came out in 2018.<sup>1</sup> Both titles can be put aside as honest fiction, just as most of the 17 preceding titles are honest attempts to get at the facts. The concern here is with the sources. The aim is to write neither history nor biography, but to collate and examine what facts there are.

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1 *Nava Vrindavana*. The Moral Benefits derived by the Teaching of the Brahminist Doctrine of the "New Dispensation" by Chiranjiva Sarmā. Calcutta 1882. *Two Coins* by Sandra Wagner-Wright, 2018.

In her early 70s she wrote the *Brief Reminiscence of Keshub Chunder Sen*, and before that, in her 30s and 40s, wrote accounts of her work in Calcutta parts of which were printed and published in Edinburgh. She must have kept up a considerable correspondence during her working life. Yet there survive, as far as we know, only two manuscript letters, both in the National Library of Scotland, and one of which, addressed to Miss Pigot by Margaret Stevenson, brims over with the grief of a bereaved mother but tells us very little else. It follows that our audit is confined to the printed sources: some of which themselves have yet to surface.

She was born at Chandernagore in 1837 and died at Darjeeling in 1922. Almost nothing is known of her before 1854 and after 1884: between those dates her affairs can be pieced together from newspapers and missionary reports. In September 1883 she brought the action for defamation, known to the press as the Calcutta Mission Scandal, against William Hastie. He was the principal of the Church of Scotland General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta, and as such the head of the Church of Scotland mission in the capital city of India. From the start of the trial until the end of the decade he was the subject of press comment. She took up somewhat fewer column inches in 1883, but, her reputation ruined, she seems to have gone into purdah at the end of that year. At all events the press fell silent about her: Hastie was in public life, and was fair game, Pigot was now a private woman whose privacy was to be respected. Posterity, scratching around for facts, is the loser.

\* \* \*

Mary Henrietta Pigot was baptized on the 19<sup>th</sup> November 1837 at St John's Church, Calcutta, and her date of birth recorded as the 6<sup>th</sup> September at Chandernagore<sup>2</sup>. Her parents were Julius Pigot, an indigo planter, and his wife, called Dorothy on the certificate. Julius had married Désirée Casabon—who was 16 or 17 years old and therefore “under age”—in August 1832, and had had a boy, Edward Richard, at Chandernagore three years later. They moved to Calcutta in or before 1842, and in 1843 their third and last, Elizabeth Cecilia Wilhelmina, was born there.

Chandernagore, one of the Comptoirs de l'Inde, the birthplace of indigo production and in the mid-eighteenth century the principal European centre of commerce in Bengal, was French territory until the early 1950s. Twenty miles upstream from Calcutta, its population in the 1840s was that of a small European town and its trade had largely passed to Calcutta. Désirée Casabon was clearly of French extraction, Pigot is a surname common to French and English and Julius, born in 1804 or thereabouts, might or might not have been christened Jules. We do not know. A business partner of his was the hotelier John Bodry, whose name is surely the English spelling of Jean Baudry. At all events they married, and baptized their children, in the Anglican church, and Mary Pigot in later life described herself as Anglican.

For most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the general British view of the French was that they were morally contemptible, culturally enviable and formidable in war. A French connection was no recommendation to most of Calcutta society, and that may explain the “Dorothy” on Mary Pigot's baptismal certificate. There is however worse: Chandernagore laboured under the twin evils of being French and—in Calcutta opinion—harbouring a particularly mixed-race population.<sup>3</sup> Those born of mixed Indian and European blood were most commonly labelled *Eurasian*: Britishers living in India were *Anglo-Indian*. Eurasians were a good step down the

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2 India Office Library and Records *Bengal Ecclesiastical Returns* 1837 volume 47 folio 193.

3 Margaret A Majumdar, in her “Bengal: The French Connection” (*International Journal of Francophone Studies* volume 16 numbers 1 & 2, 2013) says that Chandernagore “retained a strong Bengali identity” throughout French rule.

social pecking order from the truly respectable. Mary Pigot was, and is, generally regarded as Eurasian, although nothing is known about either Julius's or Désirée's parentage. The strongest evidence that Mary Pigot was indeed of mixed race is that she is nowhere recorded as saying that she was not.

Julius sold up his interests in indigo – the boom years for its production were long over by 1840 – and bought part of the Clarendon Hotel in Ranemooddy Gully, Calcutta from James Mountain. His advertisement<sup>4</sup> ran

### **Pigot's**

*HOTEL, COFFEE ROOM, CHOP HOUSE and BILLIARDS*

No. 13 Ranemooddy Gully, Calcutta,

LATE MOUNTAIN'S HOTEL

J Pigot takes this opportunity of announcing to his Friends and the Public at large, that he has not spared any pains or expence to fit up the above Establishment in a most superior manner for the comfort of his Patrons. He has also paid very particular attention to provide the best articles procurable in Calcutta, a trial of which he hopes will ensure to him a share of the Public patronage which he begs most respectfully to solicit.

Having engaged Mr John Bodry, late Proprietor of the Chop House and Hotel, opposite the Scotch Kirk, Tank Square, to have the whole Establishment under his sole management, by which means the Proprietor trusts he will be able to give general satisfaction to his Patrons; further he adds '*Pro Bono Publico*' that he has fixed his Charges for the Slate Top Billiard Tables per day game 2 Annas, and night game 4 Annas, his other Charges for Hotel and Chop House see as per Circular.

N.B. The Hotel is separate from the Chop House and Billiards.

Ranemooddy Gully, later British India Street and now Abdul Hamid Street, was a stone's throw from Government House and just round the corner from the Aukland Hotel, later the Great Eastern,<sup>5</sup> a much grander competitor. The premises of number 13 (later number 12) extended through to Waterloo Street to the south, and from the autumn of 1844 advertisements bring in number 14 (later number 11)<sup>6</sup> Waterloo Street as part of the hotel. It may be that the Waterloo Street building started out as the Pigot family residence, and was later opened as a boarding house.

Julius seems to have run into financial difficulties. John Bodry, who managed the hotel in 1842, had come into partnership two years later. At the end of 1844 the partnership was dissolved, and "all dues and demands appertaining to the Firm of Pigot and Bodry, will be received and paid by John Bodry."<sup>7</sup> Thenceforward it was Bodry's Hotel that was advertised. Julius next died, of cholera, in May 1846, "at his residence, Waterloo Street" leaving unpaid

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4 *Englishman* June 20 1842 page 1

5 "or as Calcutta gharry-wallahs will persist in calling it, 'Wilson's Hotel'." *Pioneer Mail*, October 24<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 409.

6 Numbering of houses in the directories is not consistent. In different years numbers start from different ends of the street, so that Madame Bestel, "Parisian shirt depot, and canary seller" is at number 3 Ranemooddy Lane in 1856 and at number 12 in 1869. Locating buildings with any accuracy is uncertain without a Municipality (and Calcutta did not have one until 1863) and without a municipal Streets Committee to take house numbering in hand.

7 *Englishman* December 2<sup>nd</sup> 1844 page 1.

debts of almost Rs 6,500. The administration papers of his estate call him a “boarding house keeper.”<sup>8</sup>

John Bodry, late proprietor of the Albion Hotel in Tank Square, formed a partnership in 1847 with another hotelier, James Casabon, and a certain John Mole, the business to be called John Bodry & Co.<sup>9</sup> He continued to run the Raneemoody Gully establishment until the mid-1850s, and kept a substantial presence in Waterloo Street until his death in 1871: in the 1860s he is listed as also running a “boarding establishment” in Chowringhee Road. He is found advertising the Chandernagore Station Hotel (1852, 1855 and 1863, “most pleasantly situated on the Banks of the river”), and in 1864 defending its reputation.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ENGLISHMAN.

SIR,—I read in your columns of this morning that a French gentleman named E. Verpleugh had committed suicide in my hotel; allow me to inform the public through the same medium that there is not a word of truth in that statement, all my lodgers are alive and well, and will, I have every reason to believe, remain so, as long as they continue to imbibe under my auspices the refreshing and anti-suicidal breezes of Chandernagore.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedt. Servt.,

JOHN BODRY.

Station Hotel, June 1<sup>st</sup> 1864.<sup>10</sup>

Bodry ran another Station Hotel at Serampore (advertised from 1866 to 1871), and his widow Rose managed this last venture after his death. Serampore, a settlement of 13,000 people between Calcutta and Chandernagore, consisted in the 1860s of “209 two-storied houses, 481 one-storied houses and 2050 huts or houses of a meaner kind.”<sup>11</sup> One of the better houses fronting the river was the home of one William Wollen, a retired civil servant of the East India Company. In 1815 his wife Mary had given him a son: they then separated, and in 1847 Ann Elizabeth Phillott, a widow, bore him another, baptized John Bodry Edwin. The following year they had a daughter, also Ann Elizabeth (Lizzie to her father), around 1853 another, Mary Sophia (Polly), and five years later, Mary Wollen having died, they married in St John’s Church, Calcutta, one of the witnesses being John Bodry. It is a fair assumption that the Pigots, the Bodrys and the Wollens were close. Mrs Wollen was a friend of the adult Miss Pigot and visited her in Calcutta; Lizzie Wollen, in the persona of Mrs Tremearne, assisted Pigot in her work. In January 1883 Miss Pigot returned from Scotland and was living, certainly in March, at Serampore: her friend and colleague, James Wilson, visited her there several times. If two and two make four, she not only stayed at the Wollen residence in 1883 but had also been there many years earlier, as a little girl.<sup>12</sup>

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8 The rupee was valued at two shillings sterling, or ten to the pound. The rate was generally recognised for the whole of Pigot’s working life, despite some depreciation of the rupee. Julius’s estate is in *IOLR Bengal Wills and Administrations* volume 140 1847 third season pages 52-4.

9 *Englishman* January 4<sup>th</sup> 1847 page 1.

10 *Englishman* June 4<sup>th</sup> 1864 page 2, cf. *Friend of India* June 9<sup>th</sup> 1864 page 629. The *Englishman* was stung into offering a reward of Rs 200 for the discovery of the author of “this brutal hoax.”

11 *Friend of India* September 24<sup>th</sup> 1863 page 1086.

12 At the 1883 trial Pigot said of Mrs Wollen that “She has known me for many years. Saw me born.” *The Pigot Case* page 212. The last words, omitted by the newspapers, may have been meant literally.

In the directories for 1869-70 Raneemoody Lane (as it now was) was renamed British India Street, and Bodry opened the Mayo Hotel at number 19, next door to the British Indian Association at number 18. In 1871, the year of Bodry's death, number 19 was listed as vacant, and from 1872 it housed the *Indian Daily News* press. Eleven years later, in 1883, in the Calcutta High Court, Miss Pigot's friend Kalicharan Bannerjee was in the witness box.

—When you saw Mr Gillan had written to Miss Pigot ... didn't you think it better to stop your friendship? I did not know it then. I saw the letter afterwards.

—Where? In British Indian Street.

—You saw it in her house? Yes.

—Who else was there? Baboo Joygobind Shome.

—Why were you going through the letters? To see if there were any points favorable to her case.

—How often have you been to see Miss Pigot in British Indian Street? I believe almost every day. I mean since the hearing of this case.

—Well, since the hearing of this case, you have seen her almost every day? Yes.<sup>13</sup>

Now the directories at no time, in any year, show Miss Pigot occupying premises on British India Street. The unexpected reference to "her house" is disturbing. The puzzle is solved for us by the other source for the trial evidence, the 1884 book *The Pigot Case*, which has Bannerjee say that she was staying in a boarding house.<sup>14</sup> Which account is the more accurate is perhaps a less pressing matter than the reflection that neither is completely so. The fact is, for the moment, that for the duration of the trial hearings in 1883, Pigot was to be found at an address in the same street in which her father had owned a hotel.

To return to Mary Pigot the eight-year-old orphan of 1846: Desire (as she now wrote her name) re-married immediately, becoming on September 26<sup>th</sup> Mrs Charles Henry Field. She was 30 or thereabouts, he was 25 years old, a bachelor and a mariner, and on November 9<sup>th</sup> he died.<sup>15</sup> Julius and Charles were interred together in the New Burial Ground on Circular Road.

How Desire and the children now lived, and where, is not known. There was talk, however, and it is retailed to us, 37 years later, in the following terms.

Miss Pigot is the daughter of a Mrs Field, who, we understand, thirty years ago, held brevet rank in the establishment of a well known Solicitor of the then Supreme Court. This is in itself a trifle, but if we connect this Pigot family with that undersized Indo-Frenchman John Bodry of Waterloo Street fame, and enquire into the early training of the then surviving young Pigots, we shall be helped materially in arriving at a fairly respectable insight into probabilities. Nyss, and Pigot, Field and Bodry are names familiar to *qui hies* who knew Calcutta thirty years ago, while Cassabon, Courjon, Robert and a few others we could enumerate, would furnish a tie to many an old Indian who knows Chandernagore, wherewith to connect the past with the present.

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13 *Indian Daily News* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883.

14 *The Pigot Case* pages 189-190 reads as follows: "I did not, at the time Mr. Gillan made that request, know of it, but I have since then seen copies of correspondence. There was a book with copies of letters. I saw it in Calcutta at Miss Pigot's house in British Indian Street, where she is living in a boarding house. Baboo Joygobind Shome was present there, when I was looking at the letters. Q.—Looking to see what points could be made of the letters? A.—Yes, if any. Miss Pigot has been in British Indian Street almost every day since the case is going on."

15 IOLR *BER* 1846 volume 70 folio 253.

Knowing then what we do, a failure in any member of Miss Pigot's family to keep within the strictly prescribed limit of feminine purity and decorum defined by Mrs Grundy, would occasion us no surprise whatever; indeed, it would surprise us were matters otherwise.<sup>16</sup>

Desire Field, then, according to the gossip, was the kept woman of an unnamed solicitor in Calcutta, and the Pigot children passed their formative years hearing the loose talk of billiards rooms and witnessing at close hand the moral laxity of the bad old days. It is a tempting vision. But if we reject the rumour as unsubstantiated, and the logic of the *Bengal Times* as flawed, we are left empty-handed.

Young Mary Pigot's early schooling is entirely a matter of guesswork. There were no schools for girls at Serampore, and very few in Calcutta. The European Female Orphan Asylum, opened in 1815, catered originally for the orphans of private soldiers of the royal regiments, but soon began to take in addition the orphans of "lower-class settlers and mechanics" who were "of pure European parentage."<sup>17</sup> It could house up to 100 between the ages of one and 16: the girls did the cleaning, were taught housework and needlework and were drilled in elementary school subjects. Run by a committee of ladies, and like most similar establishments permanently short of funds, it had a good reputation. Loretto House at Chowringhee opened in 1842 and took girls regardless of denomination up to the age of 14. They were taught a good range of academic subjects, and the fees were high, but by 1845 the Sisters had opened free schools in Portuguese Street and Bow Bazar, attendance climbed steadily and the Sisters' reputation with it. The Calcutta Free School, established almost a century before, fed, clothed and educated maybe 300 Christian orphans and children of the poor, of whom a third were girls,<sup>18</sup> although children who "have friends who wish to place them in the School" were expected to find Rs 10 a month to cover expenses.<sup>19</sup> The London Missionary and the Church Missionary Societies ran orphan schools. Desire Field could have sent her girls to any of these five, and there were one or two others.

The bald assertion is made in 1882 that Pigot was "reported to have been brought up in a convent in India,"<sup>20</sup> which would point us towards the Loretto Sisters. If it were anything more than hearsay, we could look more closely at the Sisters' curriculum and find that Mary Pigot was well taught from an early age. A case of sorts can be made that she attended the European Female Orphan Asylum. In 1892 there appeared in *India's Women* an account of "The Early History of Zenana Missions in Bengal". Part III of the account deals with the Female Normal School in Calcutta, and tells us that

Three of the most promising pupils were girls from the European Orphan Asylum. The Eldest, I.M., was a true Christian, and exerted a very valuable influence over her companions ... she went in 1854 to assist Miss Neele in her schools at Burdwan. She was afterwards transferred to Calcutta, and was one of the first teachers in a Calcutta Zenana.<sup>21</sup>

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16 *Bengal Times* September 29<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 620. Hobson-Jobson defines a *qui-hi* as "the Bengal Anglo-Indian, from the usual manner of calling servants in that Presidency, viz. 'Koi hai?' 'Is anyone there?'"

17 *Friend of India* December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1870 pages 1457-8.

18 *Friend of India* February 18<sup>th</sup> 1864 page 179.

19 Bengal and Agra Directory and Annual Register 1845 page 473.

20 *IDN* September 10<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3, *The Pigot Case* page 310.

21 *India's Women* March 1892 pages 107-8. Compare the statement in the *Report of the Ladies' Society for Native Female Education* for 1852 (Calcutta, 1853) page 8: "The Assistant Teachers employed in it [the Central School on Cornwallis Square] are three girls who have been received from the European Female



This "I.M." is Isabella Marr, celebrated elsewhere<sup>22</sup> as the "firstfruits" of the Normal School, teaching in the zenanas of "some educated native gentlemen" in 1855. The other two "most promising pupils" of the Normal School remain anonymous. The 1892 account tells us that they "also passed excellent examinations; but one soon married and left the work. The third became assistant teacher in the Normal School for some time, and then went to Lucknow, where she did valuable service under Lady Muir."

Now Mary Pigot did train at the Indian Female Normal School, she was an assistant teacher there, and she then moved to Lucknow, so that, if we take the 1892 account to refer to her, we can ponder the accuracy of its assertion that she was from the Orphan Asylum. Any surviving records that might settle the question one way or the other are in Calcutta.

A compilation that draws on some of those records came out in 1998. Benoy Bhusan Roy and Pranati Ray's *Zenana Mission* examines, in a kindly light, the part played by missionaries in promoting female education. Citing the Report of the Committee of the Calcutta Female Normal School for 1857<sup>23</sup> they tell us that "In the examination, those who passed in the first division were Louisa Gomege, Elisa Kennedy, Mary Piggot, Barbara Hynse and Jane Skall; and those in the second division were Lidiya Wilson, Margaret Nisbelt and Elisa Piggot."<sup>24</sup> From this list we can identify Miss Gomez or Gomes, Miss Pigot, Miss Heynes, and quite likely Mary Pigot's younger sister Elizabeth Cecilia.

In 1859 Pigot's brother Edward, who worked for the East India Railway and had adopted the name Edmund, married an Elizabeth Kennedy, so that she might be the other "most promising pupil" who "soon married and left the work." Running any kind of female school was bedevilled by the constant poaching of staff by unmarried missionaries and others, from the Lady Superintendents down. The first of these at the Female Normal School, Katherine Suter, began her duties in 1852 and married a missionary in 1857: admittedly the second, Miss Cockle, sailed from England in 1857 and sailed back in 1859 with failing health, but between 1860 and 1865 the following three superintendents were married, two to Church Missionary Society suitors and one to a Free Church of Scotland pastor.<sup>25</sup>

The Suter sisters, Katherine and Sophia (who married a missionary in 1856) set up a rigorous curriculum. The plan was to admit 10 to 12-year-olds as boarders, at Rs 15 per month, and give them an entire education, embracing everything they might ever be called upon to teach and in an exclusively Church of England setting. The Normal School was closely associated with the Church Missionary Society Central School in Cornwallis Square, and in 1857 the two schools were merged. This was the Normal School that Mary Pigot attended. After her time there the curriculum was found to be too expensive, and the school resolved to take girls who already had the basics and only required teacher training,<sup>26</sup> but Pigot was a product of

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Orphan Asylum. One is already an excellent teacher, another is rapidly becoming so, and the third has made very satisfactory progress during the short time she has been with us."

22 15th *Annual Report* of the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society, 1867, page 9.

23 Not the fifth Report of the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society, but probably a report read out at the annual prize-giving, usually printed and distributed to interested parties. Roy and Ray may here however be translating from a Bengali-language account in a newspaper.

24 *Zenana Mission: the Role of Christian Missionaries for the Education of Women in 19th Century Bengal*. ISPCK, New Delhi, 1998 page 18.

25 *Report of the Calcutta Female Normal, Central and Branch Schools* 1864. Calcutta, Free School Press, 1865, page 7.

26 *Report of the Calcutta Female Normal, Central, and Branch Schools*. Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1859, pages 16-17. This report reprints documents describing the inception of the Female Normal School in 1851, and the Central School in 1824.

the Suter system. We know she was there in 1854, and we are free to speculate that she was there when it opened in 1852.

At the trial in 1883 Miss Pigot said “I was a pupil teacher in 1854. I did the duties of a teacher till October, 1856, in the Calcutta Normal School. I was there from August, 1854, till June, 1859.”<sup>27</sup> The statement runs together three answers to three questions posed by her counsel. At a guess the questions were What was your first employment? How long were you a pupil teacher? and How long did you work at the Normal School? In 1854 she was 17 years old, and she “did the duties of a teacher” for two years, after which she was appointed a junior teacher. In 1858 Miss Cockle described her school as housing five junior teachers, all of them former pupils, 10 Normal School pupils in training (doubtless the pupil teachers), 18 native Christian girls “under Preparatory Instruction” and boarding, with some 30 Church Missionary Society Orphan School girls and another 20 to 30 heathen girls coming by the day. The native Christian and the heathen girls constituted the “Bengali School,” and it was conducted on the ground floor. Miss Cockle writes

the Bengali School consists of eighteen boarders, orphans, and others; christian children (who live in the house, but are kept very much separated from the Normal School girls); also about twenty-five of the same class, boarding at the Church Mission Compound (near us), who come for daily instruction; and the remainder heathen children, about twenty-five to thirty-five, gathered in from the streets and lanes of the city, unwashed, uncombed, untaught, till they come in morning by morning.<sup>28</sup>

The 10 Normal School pupils are almost certainly being instructed in English, and the 18 boarders and 50 to 60 day girls are clearly being taught in Bengali. Miss Cockle goes on,

I have not yet alluded to the Zenana work. One of the young teachers, Mary Pigot, who has charge of the Bengali School, goes three times a week to a zenana, where several women and girls gather together, to learn and read and work. I hope next time to tell you more about this work.

The contrast between 60 or 70 lively young girls, in classes of we know not what size, but presumably large, and a handful of women in their own home must have been great: but both jobs required fluent Bengali. Young ladies coming out from Britain had to contend not only with the shock of the climate and the culture, and the importunities of suitors, they also needed time to acquire the elements of the vernacular. The need to train local-born teachers was recognised early, and their worth was freely acknowledged: thus Miss Nicholson, who sailed in 1863 to engage in zenana work, wrote to the London committee in 1867 that Normal School girls did the work better than English ladies, knew the language, and stood the climate better.<sup>29</sup> Miss Pigot, then, at the age of 21 had the “principal superintendence (under me) of the Bengali School” in Miss Cockle’s words, and was visiting a zenana (in 1859 four zenanas) three times a week. Running, or hiring, a gharry<sup>30</sup> to visit private houses cost the school Rs

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27 *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883. *The Pigot Case* page 195 elaborates, “I was a pupil teacher in 1854. I was not authorized to be reckoned as a teacher till 1857, but I did the full duties of a teacher from June 1856.”

28 *India. Special Appeal on behalf of the Calcutta Normal School*. London, 1858 page 11.

29 CMS Archive, Section II Part 5. Minutes of the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society, page 102.

30 Hobson-Jobson: a cart or carriage. “The word is used by Anglo-Indians, at least on the Bengal side, in both senses.”

267 in 1858,<sup>31</sup> against Rs 400 coming in from zenana fees: the shortage of trained and competent Eurasian teachers, then, thrust Misses Marr, Gomez, Pigot and Heynes and their fellows into early, and expensive, responsibility. How well they carried that responsibility is, from this distance, almost impossible to determine<sup>32</sup>.

The first houses to admit Christian zenana teachers were almost all Brahmo. “The success of zenana education during the 1850s and 1860s was largely due to the young Brahmos and the Brahmo-influenced Hindus. They took up the cause of women's education with almost religious zeal.”<sup>33</sup> The house or houses to which Miss Pigot was driven at such cost were not openly identified: her intrusion there was controversial and discretion was advisable. We cannot therefore trace the origins of her later Brahmo acquaintance back to this first experience: but the *bhadralok* grapevine would have known about these Normal School ventures. Pigot later harks back to her early zenana work on two occasions. In 1879 she relates how, 22 years ago during a zenana visit, she gave a little girl a scrap of ribbon, which the grown woman still has and can show<sup>34</sup>; in 1881 she is quoted as remembering “the cold way in which I was treated, and the insults I received when I first tried to visit zenanas in this city...”<sup>35</sup>

If Pigot was working at the Normal School until June 1859, she must have started at Lucknow later that summer. We know of only two incidents from her years at Lucknow, both elicited during the trial of 1883. The first is that she stayed up all night to nurse boys who had fallen ill. The second is that she visited her brother Edmund, when he also was ill, at a house in Royd Street in Calcutta,<sup>36</sup> possibly in 1860. Apart from the fact that she was at Lucknow, we have nothing else.

A school for girls operated at Lucknow before 1857.<sup>37</sup> The *Delhi Gazette* correspondent in 1859 tells us that

Previous to the deluge a school existed at Lucknow supported partly from Funds accruing from Government Securities made over by one of the Kings to the Resident, and partly from small payments taken from the parents and guardians of the children sent to the school. It was conducted under the management of a committee, and Mrs Sago, a worthy old lady had long superintended its internal economy, with much benefit to the young girls entrusted to her care. With the general downfall in 1857,

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31 Report of the Calcutta Female Normal, Central and Branch Schools 1859 page 53.

32 The London committee became in 1861 the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society and thenceforth took the lead from Calcutta. The minutes surviving in the CMS Archive (Section II Part 5) do not antedate 1865, and details such as the performance of individual teachers are in any case extremely rare.

33 G. Murshid *Reluctant Debutante: Response of Bengali Women to Modernisation 1849-1905* Rajshahi, 1989 page 17. His first chapter succinctly sets out the problems facing Bengali women at that time. Brahmo insistence on female emancipation, including education, started with Rammohun Roy.

34 *NFM* January 1880 page 8.

35 *NFM* October 1881 page 192, reprinted from the June number of *Women's Work in the Great Harvest Field*.

36 Probably number 17. Thacker's directory for 1863 lists J. Kennedy and C.W. Stansbury as living at the address. Edmund Pigot's father in law was a John Kennedy and Elizabeth Cecilia Wilhelmina Pigot married Charles Montagu Stansbury.

37 Lucknow Girls' Charitable School. “The object of this Institution is the protection and rearing up of Female orphans of European and Eurasian Parentage, of the City of Lucknow, giving them a plain and useful Christian Education. The Institution is kept by public subscription under charge of the Rev. H. Kirwan. Lady Patroness – Mrs. Outram. Head Mistress, Mrs. Sago, Assistant, Miss Arno.” *New Calcutta Directory* 1856 Part X Mofussil Directory page 68. The school took 27 girls and 18 little boys in 1857.

this useful institution also saw its day, and Mrs Sago, who was among the few who escaped the horrors of the Siege went to England to her friends from whom she had long long been separated. The Institution was revived in last cold season through the kind exertions of Mrs Colonel Abbott and some other ladies of Lucknow, who saw with regret the number of little girls growing up without any education. A very able mistress has arrived from Calcutta and the young children by all accounts are fast reaping the benefits intended for them. The committee of this new school is composed of ladies and right well do they manage their charge.<sup>38</sup>

The school was functioning already by January, under the second mistress, Miss Arnaud or Arno, and a school mistress, one Mrs Goodwyn, arrived early in March. She was “an English lady, of good capacity and accomplished.”<sup>39</sup> She may or may not be the very able mistress referred to above, but what became of her is wholly dark. A possible line of enquiry is that a Susan Alexander Goodwyn gave birth to a son at Lucknow on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1859, and buried her husband, a Lieutenant of Engineers aged 24, on the 1st June.<sup>40</sup> At all events Pigot got the post. The head of the girls’ school worked to the head of the boys’ school (the Martiniere, which resumed operations in April 1859), and both answered to the Commissioner of Lucknow, Colonel S. A. Abbott, who was the secretary of the boys’ school. The *New Calcutta Directory* for 1863 tells us<sup>41</sup> that the “Lucknow Academy” consisted of the Boys' School, Director, W.D. Hogan, and the Girls' School, Head Mistress, Miss M. Pigott. The reference in the 1892 account to the “third most promising pupil” doing “valuable work under Lady Muir” is a blind alley. Sir William Muir, at the time Secretary to the Government, North West Provinces, took an active interest in the affairs of the Calcutta Normal School, and Lady Muir was in the second half of the 1860s President of the Benares Local Committee of the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society.<sup>42</sup> Lucknow may well have fallen under the aegis of the Benares Local Committee, but Miss Pigot was answerable to the Commissioner.

According to Wikipedia<sup>43</sup> the Girls' School was opened in the Moti Mahal. This is perfectly possible — the Commissariat Department had taken control of the building.<sup>44</sup> Energetic building and roadworks were in progress at Lucknow throughout 1859, as the city was turned into a formidable military base. How long the school remained at the Moti Mahal is a question still to be answered. In 1869 the Lucknow Girls' School became the Martiniere Girls’, and by then Miss Pigot had been back in Calcutta for five years. Uncertainty about her time in Lucknow might be much reduced if the *Lucknow Herald* or the *Oudh Gazette* for those years were available.

Pigot said at the trial, “I then took charge of the Lucknow Girls’ School as Superintendent or Head Mistress till December, 1864. I came back to Calcutta and took charge of the Bethune Female School in March or April, 1865. I was there for three years and three months.” The Bethune had been directed by Miss Goulding for five years, and she resigned at the end of the school year in 1865 to plaudits for her “lively interest” in the school and “valuable service.” Pigot inherited 108 girls on the roll, organized into seven classes: their average age was seven

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38 *Delhi Gazette* 23 July 1859 page 705.

39 *Delhi Gazette* 9 April 1859 page 342.

40 Bengal Ecclesiastical Returns volume 95 folio 189, folio 294.

41 Part 10 Mofussil Directory page 202.

42 CMS Archive, Section II Part 5. Minutes of the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society page 123.

43 Wikipedia. La Martiniere Lucknow — 5. History of the Girls' School.

44 *Friend of India* March 17 1859 page 248.

and a half years, and there had been 45 admissions during the year and 37 girls had left, mostly to get married: and as a result of government's refusal to put up more money, the head's salary was reduced from Rs 200 a month to Rs 150.<sup>45</sup> The school was costing government a great deal of money for poor results. Henry Woodrow,<sup>46</sup> the inspector of schools for the Education Department's Central Division, had inspected it the previous June (after finding it closed three times in April and May for minor poojahs and then for the hot weather) and found that roughly three-quarters of the pupils could not read and understand "a simple tale." He calculated that girls in Bengal attending schools in receipt of grants were costing government eight annas and seven pice each a month, and that girls at the Bethune were each costing Rs 10. Parents were not bringing their children to school in their own carriages, but using the three maintained by the school, and the wealthy Hindus of Calcutta had subscribed not a penny during the year.<sup>47</sup>

The school was managed by a committee of distinguished gentlemen, the president being the Honourable Walter Scott Seton-Karr (who was proficient in Bengali) and the secretary being Iswarchandra Vidyasagar. Besides reading, writing and arithmetic the school offered geography, the history of India and of Bengal, needlework and sewing, and a gallery had been installed to accommodate classes requiring a demonstration by the teacher of "common objects and things".<sup>48</sup> There were two assistant teachers and two pundits, and the curriculum was strictly secular. So much can be simply stated, but what went on behind the walls of the school is not so easily arrived at. An exasperated Woodrow was to write, of girls' schools in general,

When I visit a girls' School, I generally find two girls in the first class, and three or four in the second, who can read and understand easy lessons. The rest never attempt to understand the meaning of words and sentences. ... The lower classes in girls' Schools seldom keep any appearance of discipline, the little ones lie at length on the floor admiring one another's rings and bracelets ... It would be well if all teachers of girls' Schools were paid according to work done; and that they were called upon to shew monthly to the Deputy Inspector a progress report for each girl.<sup>49</sup>

Woodrow again remarked, in 1868, that girls' schools in general were intent on cultivating "prize gooseberries,"<sup>50</sup> i.e. the one or two girls who showed promise, to the wholesale neglect of all the others. In the same connection it is worth retaining that Miss Cockle wrote, of the heathen children, that they "come in morning by morning," and stopped short of saying that they learned anything. The character of the Bethune School in Miss Pigot's time was somewhere on a sliding scale between the studious silence of public imagination and little girls lying on the floor. We cannot be more precise than that.

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45 IOLR *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department* August 1865 pages 35-6.

46 "... who as usual does the thinking for the Director's office." *Friend of India* February 4<sup>th</sup> 1869 page 128.

His praises are sung by WHB Laurie in *Distinguished Anglo-Indians*, second series 1888. His wife Elizabeth sat on the ladies' committee of the Female Normal School from 1859 until at least 1867, and at his suggestion she inspected their zenana work (Indian Female Normal School Annual Report 1867 page 12).

Woodrow saw the need for a Lady Inspector at an early date. Mrs Woodrow is found visiting zenanas again in 1872 or 1873, according to the *Friend of India* for October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1873 page 1100.

47 *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department* July 1864 pages 19-20.

48 *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department* August 1865 pages 35-36.

49 *Report of the Department of Public Instruction for Lower Bengal* for 1868-9. Calcutta 1869, appendix A page 33.

50 *Report of the Department of Public Instruction for Lower Bengal* for 1867-8. Calcutta 1868, appendix A page 199.

There was a house for the Lady Superintendent attached to the Bethune.<sup>51</sup> Living with her for the three years<sup>52</sup> she was there was Dr William Robson, a medical missionary with the Free Church of Scotland, and his wife. Robson was of much the same age as Pigot and had come out in 1863, throwing himself into educational as well as medical work, and the study of Bengali. The Robsons took charge of the Free Church School for High-Caste Girls in 1864 or 1865, showed early interest in zenana work, and he was said to have treated women in the zenana,<sup>53</sup> an unheard-of intrusion for a male of the species. Why the Robsons stayed with Miss Pigot is a matter of conjecture, but clearly the rooms were available, the rent if any was not high, and she spoke Bengali.

The alphabetical list of residents in the *New Calcutta Directory* places Robson between 1865 and 1868 at number 31 Cornwallis Square: the street listings for the same years give us the Female Normal School (Church of England) at number 30, “information refused” at number 31 and the General Assembly’s Institution (Church of Scotland) at number 32. The Bethune was across Cornwallis Street to the west. Until 1863 number 31 was the address of Alexander Duff, which makes perfect sense in that until the Disruption of 1843 he was the head of the Church of Scotland Mission and therefore lived next door to its principal school in Calcutta. After Duff’s departure the premises may have been shared between the two churches.<sup>54</sup> Are we to infer that Robson’s ostensible or official address was number 31, and that discretion prevailed as to his real whereabouts? Pigot did not mention the Robsons’ having stayed with her until two years after his death, when the revelation could do no harm. He was one of the most highly paid agents of the Free Church in Calcutta, and the Scots were the highest European caste in all India.<sup>55</sup> That he chose to live with a Eurasian Anglican in a secular government school might if noised abroad in Edinburgh and Glasgow have given rise to uninformed comment.

Robson’s address would be no concern of ours, but that during the year 1865-6 he staged a demonstration of air pumps “at his house” for a number of high-caste women.<sup>56</sup> Keshub Chunder Sen was present, so that once again Brahma ladies are indicated: and if “his house”

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51 *The General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal* for 1878-9: Female Education page 81ff tells us that the Banga Mahila Vidyalaya has now moved into the house “at the Bethune, formerly the Lady Superintendent’s dwelling.”

52 *NFM* 1879 page 6. Kalicharan Bannerjee testified, at the 1883 trial, that “I first became acquainted with her in a house in Cornwallis Square when Dr Robson was living with her in the same house. I was introduced to her by Dr Robson. The house I speak of is the Bethune School.” Pigot testified that she met Bannerjee “When Doctor and Mrs Robson and I lived together in the house of the Superintendent of the Bethune School.” *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* pages 176 and 200-201.

53 Free Church of Scotland Report on Foreign Missions, to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, Edinburgh May 1865, pages 60 and 67.

54 Thus Thacker’s directory for 1870 has the General Assembly’s Institution at number 18, James Ogilvie, its principal, at number 19, the Rev WC Fyffe of the Free Church at number 20 and the Female Normal School at 21. The compound between the schools here becomes two addresses. The Free Church came into being in May 1843 with the signing of the Act of Separation and Deed of Demission at Tanfield, Edinburgh. Duff, and all the other Scottish missionaries in India, joined the Free Church: Ogilvie and Herdman sailed in 1844 to re-establish a Church of Scotland presence.

55 The London *Daily Telegraph* reminded its readers on May 5 1869 page 5 that “India is an empire discovered by Alexander the Great for the benefit of the Scotch.”

56 Free Church of Scotland Report on Foreign Missions, Edinburgh May 1866, pages 61-62. Seventeen Brahma and an unspecified number of European ladies, with the Christian wives of “leading Native converts” were present. Music and general conversation followed the lecture.

was in fact the Bethune Superintendent's house, Miss Pigot may well have attended too. At some point, certainly, she and Sen met, and became firm allies.<sup>57</sup> and her time at the Bethune is the latest period in which to locate the meeting of minds. The attraction of the Brahmo Samaj to Christian missionaries was their openness to intercourse with westerners, their high caste—education, according to a widely held view, should start with the upper classes and in due course trickle down<sup>58</sup> to the lower orders—and their acceptance of some Christian doctrinal claims. Robson was evidently eager to extend Free Church operations among Brahmo women, and it is possible that he stayed with Pigot because she was already known to have contacts.

Early in 1865 Robson introduced to Miss Pigot a rising young star of the Free Church, a high-caste Brahmin who had been baptized in February 1864 and was quickly made a teacher—a “professor”—at the Free Church Institution. This was Kalicharan Bannerjee, and he came several times to the Bethune. He later studied law, and by 1883 was a *vakeel*<sup>59</sup> of the High Court, as well as an intimate friend of Miss Pigot. Until the mid-1870s, however, they were not in touch.

Robson must have known Woodrow. They had common educational interests, and were for instance both members of the Bethune Society, which met monthly. Pigot's formal line of communication with Woodrow was via the committee of gentlemen who governed the school, and she and he would certainly not have run into each other in a normal working week. There is no direct evidence, but events suggest that Woodrow was hearing, one way and another, what she had to say. Another branch of the same grapevine was George Smith, editor of the *Friend of India*, a Scot and a staunch Free Church man.

At some point during 1866 Pigot proposed to the committee of gentlemen, presumably in written form, that a female normal school be set up at the Bethune. There was space enough in the school building, and her experiences at the Female Normal School were recent: the training of teachers, preferably Christian, was to be an ambition of hers throughout her working life. We have no details of her proposal: we do know that the gentlemen turned it down. Refused extra funding by government, meanwhile, they introduced a modest monthly fee for pupils.

In mid-October Mary Carpenter disembarked at Bombay, her mission exclusively educational and secular. By late November she had reached Calcutta and before the end of the month the newly-formed Brahmika Samaj had arranged a reception for her.<sup>60</sup> Brahmo men were present on the occasion, and she in turn invited them all “to her place” on December 25.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile the *Friend of India* reported of her that “She has visited most of the female schools in the city

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57 That she loved and admired him is repeated in more than one memoir: for instance the Autobiography of Shibnath Shastri (Calcutta 1918) page 178 (in Bengali). Meredith Borthwick, in *The Changing Role of Women* page 273, says that Pigot attended meetings of the Brahmika Samaj “in order to get to know Bengali women. She also invited them to her home.” Borthwick cites *Bamabodhini Patrika* volume 2 number 28, dated to September 1865, of which it has not yet proved possible to see a copy. At a guess the lost article describes the lecture by Robson.

58 The “filtration theory” of education. Some eminent educators considered it disproved long before the 1860s.

59 “An attorney; an authorized representative. Arab. *wakil*.” Hobson-Jobson.

60 *Reluctant Debutante* page 36, page 42, citing *Bamabodhini Patrika* for Oct-Nov 1866 page 376 and Nov-Dec page 390. Murshid calls the Brahmika Samaj “the first women's association of Bengal.”

61 She was reported (*Friend of India* November 29<sup>th</sup> 1866 page 1390) to be staying with Dr SG Chuckerbutty of the Medical Service, whose address was 94 Dhurumtollah Street.

and has shown especial interest ... in the female and male branches of the Brahmo Somaj.” The same issue tells us, on the same page, that

Miss Carpenter has adopted the suggestion of Miss Pigot, the valuable head-mistress of the Bethune School, for establishing Female Normal Schools. She lately addressed a meeting of native gentlemen on the subject in the Brahmo Somaj rooms. She thought the female schools of Bengal inferior to those she had seen in Bombay and Madras—as indeed, we may add, all *vernacular* education is,—but spoke highly of Missionary schools. Her plan, as given in the *Indian Daily News*, is that Government should establish a boarding institution, with two distinct departments for Europeans and Natives who should be allowed to adopt their peculiar national or caste customs. An accomplished English lady must superintend the general working of the institution. The education and training should be conducted by a trained female teacher, thoroughly conversant with all the new educational methods of instruction. No interference must be allowed with the religious sentiments of either teachers or scholars; both must be protected, and the religious feelings of Europeans must be regarded as well as those of the Hindoos. Both English and the Vernacular should be learnt by all the inmates of the institution, and a portion of each day should be spent in the actual teaching of children in some of the neighbouring schools. The meeting approved of the plan and appointed a committee of 5 native gentlemen to carry it out. We should like to see full details of the practical working of the scheme. Meanwhile Miss Carpenter has hit *the blot* on Indian education as it is at present. If she can succeed in creating a permanent supply of female teachers she will do much for the regeneration of Native society.<sup>62</sup>

Miss Carpenter’s demands are doubtless accurately listed here: the report nonetheless calls for a certain gloss. She was an English reformer. London might flatter itself that it was the imperial metropolis, but it was folly to attempt to govern India via telegraph wires from the India Office: only the people on the ground, the Anglo-Indians, had the experience and the knowledge to run the country. Miss Carpenter the reforming new broom was to an extent an outsider, and Miss Pigot to the same extent was one of ours. The appearance of her name in this column suggests first of all that Miss Carpenter’s ideas are good, as far as they go, but we had them first. The modicum of praise doled out, “the valuable head-mistress,” can in that light be read as merely reinforcing the point. We cannot take it at face value, and suppose that George Smith had insight into Pigot’s work and thought well of it. More likely he had heard of her from Robson or Woodrow.

A few days later the newspaper reported that “We regret to see that the learned and orthodox reformer Pundit Issurchunder Vidyasagar has declined to assist Miss Carpenter in the establishment of a Female Normal School, ...”<sup>63</sup> The reference is doubtless to correspondence or comment in other newspapers, and it is unclear whether Vidyasagar’s stance related to his position as secretary of the Bethune School committee or as a prominent advocate of female education. Miss Carpenter however, on the first day of January the following year, wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal<sup>64</sup> formally proposing that a government normal school be set up, and suggesting the Bethune building for the purpose.<sup>65</sup> Government policy held that where communities were minded to open schools for girls, public funds would match private

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62 *Friend of India* December 6<sup>th</sup> 1866 page 1423.

63 *Friend of India* December 13<sup>th</sup> 1866 page 1452.

64 Sir Cecil Beadon. He left India on June 23<sup>rd</sup> 1867. Sir William Grey replaced him.

65 Supplement to the *Calcutta Gazette* Number 5, Wednesday February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1869 page 41.



finance rupee for rupee. Any suggestion, however, that a government of foreigners intended to force feed the people with female education might be too great a provocation for orthodox Hindu and Muslim opinion. The danger perceived was the internal damage to the family, and therefore to society as a whole. Nevertheless the Department of Education was asked to look into the possibility of “engrafting” a normal school onto the existing Bethune School, “without any increase of expense.” The committee of gentlemen were duly approached.

Seton-Karr himself replied in February, rejecting the suggestion as unworkable, since there was as yet no class of Indian women from which trainee teachers could be successfully recruited. He added that “This is not the first time the committee have considered the feasibility of this subject. Last year they had occasion to negative a somewhat similar proposal made by the Head Mistress, as it was not one which could be attempted without endangering the stability and welfare of the Bethune Institution itself.”<sup>66</sup>

The Lieutenant-Governor was unwilling to act in the teeth of the Bethune Committee: for that matter the Governor-General himself was insistent that educational initiatives should come from the people, not the government.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless plans were called for and studies done. The Bethune Committee, meanwhile, alarmed by a fall in the number of pupils, appointed during the summer of 1867 a sub-committee of three, including Vidyasagar, to look into the management of the school. In September it submitted a damning report on Miss Pigot’s superintendence. A letter to the department of education dated 15 February 1868 summarized its findings that “gallery teaching had been neglected, the children were not well taught, the promotions were not properly made, and that the distribution of the teaching agency had not been very judicious. The Bethune School Committee maintained that the school would not flourish as long as Miss Pigott was at its head.”<sup>68</sup>

The charges were grave, and Pigot replied to them in writing, although that document has not survived. We should remember the charges that promotions were “not properly made” and that the “distribution of the teaching agency” was at fault, since they were to come back later. There were other faults found of which we only catch hints: at the trial in 1883 Miss Pigot mentioned the singing of Christian songs—the teaching was supposed to be strictly secular—and a quarrel over the teaching of sewing. She also asserted that she had “pressed for a certain school,” the normal school presumably, and consulted not the Director of Public Instruction Mr Atkinson, but his subordinate, i.e. Woodrow, and thereby offended Atkinson.<sup>69</sup> We have only her word for this last titbit, but if we accept it she was in direct communication with the Divisional Inspector, possibly via Robson.

The sub-committee made its report in September, and the following January George Smith, who clearly had wind of all these proceedings, reacted furiously and in print.<sup>70</sup> The school, always inordinately expensive, had now failed completely, and the mismanagement of the governors was the cause. Faced with the consequences of their folly, they were making a scapegoat of the superintending mistress, who was blameless. The article repeats the assertion that Pigot was pressing for a normal school: “The real originator of this movement is Miss

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66 Ibid. pages 41 and 47. Cf the editorial in the *IDN* for February 11<sup>th</sup> 1869 page 2.

67 “Surely if we are to wait for the natives to *initiate* reforms we may as well leave India.” *Friend of India* August 6<sup>th</sup> 1868 page 905.

68 *Bethune School and College Centenary Volume 1849-1949*, Calcutta 1949 page 28. The volume gives no references, but the writer is here citing the letter itself from the education department files. The sub-committee’s original report has presumably not survived.

69 *The Pigot Case* page 205 adds “I had offended Vidyasager at the same time.” The *IDN* supplement of September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883 omits that sentence.

70 Appendix number 2, “Native Female Education and the Bethune School,” page 140 below.

Pigot, who is understood to have incurred the displeasure of the Committee for having submitted a proposal to Government for the establishment of such an institution in connection with the Bethune School nearly two years ago.” Here again Pigot “is understood” to have approached the education department as well as the Bethune committee, although whose word Smith is taking for this claim we do not learn. We are reduced to remarking that, if Pigot did indeed circumvent her own committee of governors, she lacked either the political skill, or the good luck, to get away with it.

The Bethune governors sent their report on the condition of the school, quoting the sub-committee’s report, to Atkinson in February 1868, and in March the Government of Bengal replied. They agreed that Miss Pigot should not continue, but added that the lieutenant-governor was “disposed to think” that the school should be reduced in size, that a normal school should be opened alongside it, and that the committee of gentlemen should become a “consultative committee” acting under the Divisional Inspector of Schools, Henry Woodrow. In June the committee declined to do any such thing, in July Pigot was dismissed and in January 1869 the government decided to dissolve the committee and run the Bethune directly.<sup>71</sup> At the request of the parents the original superintendent, now twice widowed, Mrs Brietzche, was asked to come back; despite her distaste for the idea of secular teaching, she agreed to a three-year contract; she resigned in April 1871, urging that normal school girls should be given a Christian education, and the school went from crisis to crisis for several years more.

Pigot meanwhile had lost the confidence of officialdom. The education department and the government had accepted the judgement of the Bethune committee, and endorsed its dismissing her. Her mismanagement of the school was now an official fact, or an official fiction: one way or the other, the box had been ticked. Her younger sister Elizabeth escaped that shadow. She had married, in 1862, one Charles Montagu Stansbury, who was working at the time for the Calcutta Auction Company. In 1870 she was appointed superintendent of a female normal school at Rajshahye, which closed in 1887-8, whereupon the Stansburys moved to Dacca and she became head mistress of the new Eden Female School, four fifths of the income of which was government grant. At some point the Pigot girls’ mother, Desire, moved to Dacca, presumably to live with her daughter.

Other people known to Miss Pigot had married. In June 1867 Polly Wollen, aged 14, had eloped from her father’s house at Serampore with her singing teacher, Clodomir Charles Alphonse Julien Joseph Desterbecq, and the ayah. The lovers went to Chandernagore and approached a priest, who very properly refused to marry them. One of her brothers pursued Polly, found the couple at the hotel, and brought her back home: Desterbecq was charged with abducting a minor and despite attempting to defend the case served ten months in the Presidency Gaol. In December 1868, after his release, the couple were married at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Calcutta, by special licence of the Archbishop.<sup>72</sup>

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71 Supplement to the Calcutta Gazette Number 5, February 3<sup>rd</sup> 1869 letters 1171, 2521 and 308, pages 44, 45, 49. The section of number 1171 referring to Miss Pigot is not published in the *Gazette*. The *Bethune Centenary Volume* on page 28 says that the government concurred that she should not stay, and quotes a sentence of the letter omitted by the *Gazette*: “I am to request at the same time that the Committee will be so good as not to proceed to the engagement of another Mistress without communicating with the Lieutenant-Governor. His Honor is disposed to think” etc.

72 For the abduction case, the *Englishman* July 23<sup>rd</sup> and the *IDN* July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1867, with editorial comment on the three following days. The wedding is announced in the *Friend of India* for December 10<sup>th</sup> 1868, page 1451.

The reports of the trial in the newspapers reveal that Polly attended the Loretto school, at Calcutta presumably, but what indications there are suggest that the Wollens were casual as to denomination and belonged to no church in particular.

It was said in court that Lizzie, Polly's older sister, had connived at the elopement. She herself married Charles Edward Tremearne by licence at Serampore on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1867. She was 18, and W. Wollen, either her father or her oldest brother, witnessed the marriage.<sup>73</sup> The Tremearnes of Serampore seem to have been of independent means. CE Tremearne sued the East India Railway in 1868 for damages. He had got on a train and placed his top hat on the seat beside him. A second passenger, entering the compartment after him, had in the dark sat on the hat and done it irreparable damage. Tremearne won in the lower court, but the railway appealed successfully, pleading that its contract with a traveller was to move him from one place to another, not move him in comfort.<sup>74</sup> The name Tremearne appears in newspaper reports of shareholders' meetings in Calcutta.

The East India Railway had designs on bigger things than Charles Tremearne's hat. Before her departure from the Bethune, Pigot attended the annual prize-giving at a school in the village of Rishrah, about a mile south of Serampore. The company had recently proposed a railway station so ambitious that the entire hamlet was threatened with demolition, and at the same time Vidyasagar, who had funded the school since its inception, had been obliged to draw in his horns. Parents naturally withdrew their boys and girls and the school faced closure. By December 1867 the residents were pondering an appeal to London. The threat to the village fizzled out, subscriptions were found and the school survived. What Pigot's interest in the school was we do not know. She may have been invited simply because of her status as the head of the Bethune. She examined the girls in Bengali, and declared herself satisfied: WH Ryland, Collector of Calcutta, examined the boys and

was then desired by the Secretary of the Female School to put a few questions to the girls, as this was the first time he had paid a visit to the school, and as he was not present when the girls were examined by Miss Pigot; and accordingly Mr. Ryland examined them in Bengali History. He was much pleased with the answers they made, but seemed rather surprised at the acuteness and intelligence with which one of the girls of the first class answered his questions.<sup>75</sup>

At schools the distribution of prizes was the principal event of the year, and on this occasion 300 men "from the adjoining villages" were in attendance to see books, silver flowers, ribbons, glass cups and coloured plates, dolls, hair combs, instruments for needle-work, and toys given to the girls, and to the boys books, pens, pen-knives, and pencils. Reports of prize-givings such as this were usually written not by the newspaper's journalists, but by the school, and the editor usually cut them down drastically to fit into his columns. If we try to interpret the little trap laid here for Mr Ryland, we must take into account who was writing. The school was perhaps announcing that it too had its prize gooseberry.

Pigot now took the post of head of the Calcutta Girls' School, at 32 Lower Circular Road. From her evidence at the trial we know that she was there for twenty-five months. She started in September 1868, two or three months after leaving the Bethune, and wrote her

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73 *Bengal Ecclesiastical Returns* 1867 volume 123, folio 100.

74 *IDN* May 7<sup>th</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup> 1868.

75 *IDN* April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1868 page 2.

letter of resignation—which the secretary of the school committee did not open for a month—in August 1870. That delay caused her to remain for the twenty-fifth month.<sup>76</sup>

The secretary in question was Chater Gregory, and one of the committee members was the Rev John Macalister Thomson. Gregory, a well respected pleader in the High Court, was a member of the Corresponding Board of the Church of Scotland Mission, and Thomson was the senior chaplain of St Andrew's Church, so that Pigot's subsequent transition to the Scottish Ladies' Association is readily explained. The senior chaplain was *ex officio* "general secretary" of the Scottish Female Mission, and the Corresponding Board supervised its accounts, its premises and its superintendent.

The Calcutta Girls' School had opened in 1855 or 1856 for the daughters of the poorer European, Eurasian and Armenian communities, and offered non-sectarian schooling under the governance of a committee of clergymen and gentlemen drawn from various denominations, and a Ladies' Committee of maybe three, one of whom for a time was Mrs Seton-Karr. So that families could avoid the stigma of accepting charity, the school charged nominal fees, and raised funding from public subscriptions.<sup>77</sup> In the early years schoolmistresses had been brought out from Britain,<sup>78</sup> but this proved too expensive, and by 1868 all or most of the six assistant teachers were locally born. One of these was a Miss Leslie, doubtless the Helen Leslie who was to give evidence in 1883. The "Second Mistress" was Miss Bowler and the Matron, in the year 1870, was Mrs Balthazar. The outgoing superintendent was Miss Cowan. The annual prize-days, held in December, yield the odd crumb of information.

At the end of 1868 Pigot had had charge of the school for four months. At the distribution of prizes Richard Temple, recently made a minister in the Government of India, presided, and the prizes were distributed by the Hon. Mrs Grey, wife of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. The gathering was completed by Bishop Milman, Henry Woodrow, and a "very large attendance of friends and supporters" of the school, and in his speech Temple "commended the superintendent for having, in a short time, done so much for its efficiency." The praise for the superintending mistress after so short a time in her post can be discounted as polite noise. Both the bishop and Woodrow spoke, and at intervals there was singing by the girls,

and some who profess to be judges declare that the best school-singing is always to be had at the Calcutta Girls' School. Miss Bowler showed the capabilities of the school, and of herself as teacher, to great advantage, and it is only fair to mention to the credit of the school that Miss Goddard, who has distinguished herself at the Normal School, was one of the pupils of this institution.<sup>79</sup>

The trial of 1883 gives us a further crumb of insight, but not into singing. Just as an attempt had been made, when the Wollens were in court, to discredit the evidence of neglectful and amoral parents, so an equally unsuccessful attempt was to be made to portray Pigot as an abusive headmistress.

Did you remember Mrs Balthazar? Yes.

Is not she a perfectly respectable woman? I can't pledge myself to say anything. She was matron in my school. She behaved respectably in the school.

In your judgment was she a respectable woman? Respectable as a matron.

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76 *The Pigot Case* page 195. The report in the *IDN* is less particular as to the months.

77 *Englishman* April 5<sup>th</sup> 1872 page 2.

78 *Friend of India* February 9<sup>th</sup> 1860 page 126.

79 *IDN* December 24<sup>th</sup> 1868 page 3.

(Question repeated.) I had nothing to say against her.  
 Do you remember a girl at that school where she was matron of the name of Regina Shircore? Yes.  
 Do you remember her being punished? No.  
 Not in any way whatever? No, I don't.  
 Do you remember tying Regina Shircore one hand that way, and the other that? I don't remember.  
 Would you consider that cruel? I don't consider it was.  
 Would you not consider tying a girl in that position for two hours cruel? No, I would not consider it cruel. I never remember such a punishment.  
 Do you remember two ladies of the committee coming and seeing this performance? No, I have not the slightest recollection of it.  
 Do you remember why you resigned your office at the Calcutta Girls' School? Because I had a better offer elsewhere.  
 Did you not resign because you were told that if you did not resign you would be dismissed? No, it is a great untruth.  
 Do you remember a girl of the name of Julia Twiddle? Very slightly.  
 And a girl of the name of Emily Funnel? Yes.  
 Do you remember locking them up in a bath-room? I don't remember. I may very likely have done it because Emily Funnel was a very naughty girl.  
 Do you remember why this was done? No. I remember that there were certain circumstances that I shall ask to be excused explaining here.  
 Do you remember Mrs Balthazar informing you that one of those girls, Julia Twiddle, was quite innocent? I don't remember the circumstance. I don't remember Julia Twiddle, except as being a girl at the school.  
 Was it not that a mug of water or a basin of water was thrown on Mrs Balthazar's bed by Emily Funnel, that she and Julia Twiddle were beaten and locked up, although Mrs Balthazar told you that Julia Twiddle was quite innocent? I don't remember.  
 Do you remember two girls being locked up all night in a bath-room, simply because they went into the teacher's room when they were dressing before going out to a party? It is a gross exaggeration – I never kept a girl out of her bed. I may in the day sometimes have locked up girls; but to say that I did so in the night is untrue.  
 When did you resign from the Calcutta Girls' School? Some time before I left it. I can't tell. Mr Gregory kept my resignation for a whole month before he opened my letter.<sup>80</sup>

Counsel insinuates here that Pigot jumped because she was about to be pushed, she replies that he has been misinformed, and we are none the wiser. Nor are we allowed to learn what precisely Emily Furnell did to Mrs Balthazar's bed. Returning to the prize-giving, we know that one Julia Twidale won an Arithmetic prize, and that Regina Shircore won a prize for general proficiency.<sup>81</sup>

The following December Bishop Milman took the chair in his own right. The *Englishman* put out the following account<sup>82</sup>.

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80 Supplement, *IDN* 13 September 1883. *The Pigot Case* pages 204-5 correctly spells the names of Julia Twidale and Emily Furnell.

81 *Englishman* 24 December 1868 page 3. A Regina Shircore was married at the Armenian Church, Calcutta in 1874, *IDN* 15 June 1874 page 3.

82 *Englishman* 13 December 1869 page 3.

Calcutta Girls' School. The annual examination and distribution of Prizes to the young ladies of the above Institution took place last Saturday morning at the School premises in Circular Road. A good muster of parents, friends, and guardians were present, and the Hall was tastefully decorated with Flowers and Banners. The Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Calcutta presided, and Her Excellency, the Countess of Mayo kindly volunteered to distribute the Prizes to the fortunate competitors. Among the visitors were several clergymen attached to the various missions in the city. The proceedings of the day were commenced by an extempore prayer by the Bishop, after which an anthem chosen for the occasion, was sung by the girls in chorus. The rather dry details of the examinations of the different classes were agreeably interspersed by several choice songs sung with great taste, so much so indeed, as to call forth repeated applause, and not a little favorable comment from several distinguished visitors present. The Secretary of the Institution, Mr. C. Gregory, then read out the reports of the different Examiners, and in the course of his observations explained that the Committee had experienced great difficulty in securing the services of an efficient Head mistress<sup>83</sup> for the school during the last session, but that means would be soon adopted to meet the deficiency. He also stated that it had been found necessary, in consequence of the dearness of almost every article of food during the past year, to increase the rates of subscription for Boarders from Rs. 12 to Rs. 14 per month, and day scholars from Rs. 5 to Rs. 6 per month. An addition had also been made to the regular curriculum of studies, by the addition of Bengalee, which will in future be taught (rather an unusual accomplishment for young ladies of the present day.) He also noticed in very favorable terms the joint exertions of Miss Pigot, the Superintendent, and Miss Bowler, for the able manner in which they had conducted the educational and other departments of the School during the session. He also conveyed to Dr. Partridge, the hearty thanks of the Committee for his gratuitous attendance on the girls of the School, on several occasions of severe illness. He did not enter into any further details, and stated that these would appear in a Report which would be shortly published. The reports of the several Examiners who had been asked to test the knowledge of the girls in the several branches of study taught in the School, were then read out, from which it appeared that on the whole they had acquitted themselves very satisfactorily, especially the girls of the first and second classes.

The President then addressed a few words to the girls, in which he exhorted them to remember that they would not always remain girls, and that the present was the only opportunity during which they could acquire the necessary accomplishments which would enable them to fulfil properly in after life the duties they would have to perform. He was then thanked for his attendance on the occasion, after which Lady Mayo, and several other ladies examined the specimens of needle and fancy work executed by the girls, Mrs. Chapman<sup>84</sup> having reported very satisfactorily on the

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83 Strictly speaking "first mistress." Miss Pigot was the Superintending Mistress and Miss Bowler the second mistress. Miss Longhurst, the first mistress, had been superseded by Mrs Chew or Chow, who had however left at the beginning of January 1869 (*IDN* December 13<sup>th</sup> 1869 page 3). The directories show Longhurst in post from 1868 to 1870, but their reliability is not above suspicion, since they have Pigot in post at both the Bethune and Calcutta Girls during the same years.

84 Perhaps Louisa Chapman, wife of Robert Barclay Chapman. When Jatendramohun Tagore invited General and Mrs U.S. Grant to his country house in March 1879, the other guests were the Ashley Edens, the Rivers Thompsons, the Richard Garths and the Robert Barclay Chapmans. Chapman was made a CSI in December 1875.

progress made by them in this branch. The National anthem was then intoned and the proceedings terminated.

The following is the Prize List.

The list follows, and the report concludes with

[We may add, that in regard to decorum and comfort for the convenience of visitors generally, neatness of dress, and order and regularity, so much dependant upon feminine handiwork, nothing was left undone.

By the end of the following year Miss Pigot had ended her connection with Calcutta Girls for maybe two months, and her out-of-school activity was brought into sudden focus. The Indian Reform Association, under the presidency of Keshub Chunder Sen, was formed on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1870, and

Pursuant to notice, a large and influential meeting was held at the premises of Baboo Mooraly Dhur Sen on Monday, the 28th November, at 8 p.m., to celebrate the opening of the Industrial School and the Working Men's Institution. There were upwards of four hundred persons present, representing all sections of the community. Amongst others, we saw the Hon'ble J. B. Phear, (in the chair,) Mrs Phear, Rev Dr. Murray Mitchell, Rev J. Long, Rev Mr Dall, Rev C. M. Grant, Mr Gray, Mr Davies, Father Lafont, Miss Pigot, Mr W. C. Bonnerjea, Mr Manickjee Rustomjee, Moulavie Abdoul Luteef Khan Bahadoor, Baboos Digumber Mitter, Kissory Chand Mitter, Rajendra Lall Mitra, Gobin Lall Seal, Ram Chunder Mitter, Kally Mohun Doss, and Dr Mohendra Lall Sircar.<sup>85</sup>

In this list of very distinguished men there are two women honoured with a mention. Emily Phear is of course placed at her husband's side; Miss Pigot, having no husband, is nicely placed after the European and before the Indian men. The Indian Reform Association listed its goals as female improvement, general and technical education, cheap literature for the poor, temperance and charity, the most controversial of which, female improvement, came first. A female normal school, and in connection with the proposed school a proposed women's society, the Bamahitaishini Sabha,<sup>86</sup> were planned and Mrs Phear, Miss Pigot and Hemangini Debi—Mrs W. C. Bonnerjee—were to join the Sabha.

The newspaper report cited here appears, word for word, in both the *Indian Daily News* and the *Englishman*: it is a clear instance, then, of the Reform Association preparing a press release and distributing it. Pigot's name gets into the newspaper on this occasion, let us assume, for much the same reason that the *Friend of India* first mentioned her: she is "one of ours." The men selected for notice represent the legal establishment (John Phear, Womesh Chandra Bonnerjee, Abdul Lateef), the Free Church of Scotland (John Murray Mitchell), the Church of England (James Long), the Unitarians (Charles HA Dall), the Church of Scotland (Charles Grant), the Catholic Church (Eugène Lafont), the Muslims (Abdul Lateef) and the Parsees (Manickjee Rustomjee). We have broad support, the report seems to say, including Miss Pigot. It is tempting to assume that her status among the Brahmos was rising, or had already risen, to the level it was to hold for at least the next decade. Brahma support in one shape or another was available to her for the rest of her life.

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85 *IDN* 1<sup>st</sup> December 1870 page 2, *Englishman* same date, page 3.

86 *Bamabodhini Patrika* for Boishakh 1278 (April-May 1871) pages 392-3 (in Bengali). See Appendix 4.

As for Calcutta Girls' School, in December 1870 Sir Richard Temple again presided at the prize-giving and again managed not to mention Pigot in his speech.

Just two years have passed since I last presided here. Within this interval I learn that the School has had its troubles and vicissitudes. The numbers have fallen off, slightly, and are somewhat below the figure of 100, where they were standing when I was last here. However, I am glad to learn from enquiry I have just made that the numbers now show signs of vitality, and that for some little time past the services of a lady have been secured (Miss Wilson), who came here with all the prestige of successful management at the young ladies' branch of the Doveton College. ... It is well that on these occasions we should recall the names of those who, by their care and attention, have promoted the interests of this school; of such ladies as Miss Longhurst, Miss Cowan, Mrs. Cumberland, who did so much in the capacity of Superintending Mistress; of such gentlemen as Dr. Partridge (whose departure for England will prove a great loss to this School) Mr. Sime, and Mr. Gregory, who, as Honorary Secretary, has bestowed unremitting care and benevolent thoughtfulness on the institution. It is also well to remember the names of the Lady Patronesses who have, amidst many avocations, been good enough to attend on these occasions to distribute the prizes—Lady Lawrence, Lady Mayo, Lady Grey, to whose kindness the institution is so much indebted.<sup>87</sup>

Miss Longhurst was the first, not the superintending, mistress, and we can trace no Mrs Cumberland in Calcutta for the year 1870, let alone in connection with Calcutta Girls: Temple here confuses, or pretends to confuse, the ladies, and if the latter, a deliberate snub to Pigot is the intention. His praise for Miss Wilson's "successful management" of the Doveton Young Ladies' College is also suggestive. Thus as the Brahmos on one side boast of Pigot's adherence to their project, the government for its part repudiates her as having failed to save the Bethune School. On the other hand this report is not a press release by the school, since it would not have confused the names of its own teachers. Illegible shorthand or some other journalistic failing could be the root of our puzzlement.

On the first day of November 1870 Miss Pigot commenced her duties with the Church of Scotland Ladies' Association, and the first thing we learn concerns her Brahmo friends: "The husbands in almost all the houses we visited belong to the Brahmo Somaj, one of the leaders of which is Keshub Chunder Sen ..." <sup>88</sup> Pigot's relations with the Brahmos and the Sen family were an occasion for optimism in Scotland, where zenana work was the current preoccupation and Brahmo toleration of zenana visitors offered a ready market. To other eyes Brahmo initiatives in female education appeared in a different light. The Bethune normal school had opened, on paper, in February 1869, and admitted no trainee teachers for two years. Seven young ladies began to attend in February 1871, three of whom left in April, the four remaining pupils being two Brahmo wives and two Brahmo widows. The Indian Reform Association's Native Ladies' Normal School opened on the first day of February 1871 and was immediately perceived as competing with the Bethune. The missionary schools of whatever denomination competed with each other and with government schools. The contrasting aims of proselytizing missions and secular government ensured that the tension between them was general. The various Christian missions spoke with one voice in deploring government parsimony in the matter of grants in aid, and denouncing government "hostility" to Christian evangelism. The Department of Education countered by pointing out that

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87 *IDN* 21 December 1870 page 3.

88 *NFM* January 1871 page 8. The letter, from Frances Macalister Thomson, is dated to 2 November 1870.



government policy forbade the promotion of one religion at the expense of others, that the missions got more than their fair share of grants in aid already, and that their notion of keeping accounts was little short of slapdash. The Brahma Somaj, in opening a girls' school here and a female normal school there, was launching itself into an already contested marketplace.

The failure of the Bethune normal school—it closed in January 1872—could readily be attributed to the Brahma competition, although according to Henry Woodrow, the inspector of schools, Mrs Brietzche's Christian scruples deserved at least as much blame. Seton-Karr had asserted that there was no pool of families in Bengal eager to have their daughters trained as teachers. Only the Brahmans broke the mould, and if the Bethune was to find candidates it must be among Brahma families. To Woodrow and Atkinson, therefore, the Indian Reform Association normal school was a stab in the back. The Brahma Somaj was as proselytizing as any Christian denomination. If their girls could attend a Brahma normal school, why go to a secular government school?

Sen while in England had explained his ambitions to Carpenter, and she had promised support, in particular funding for two competent European teachers for a girls' school. According to her he had made no mention of normal schools, but had claimed that "Miss Pigot would join him." This was in 1870 when Pigot was at Calcutta Girls, so that it is wholly credible that she might have said this, or something like it, or that Sen supposed that she had. At all events Carpenter "at once" sent off £40 sterling to fund, as she thought, Miss Pigot at the Indian Reform Association girls' school. Sen used the money, according to Woodrow, to open his ladies' normal school. The details of the allegations and recriminations need not detain us, since they tell us nothing about Miss Pigot: the only fact here is that Carpenter said that Sen said that Pigot said that she "would join him."<sup>89</sup> The assertion reinforces the suggestion that Sen and Pigot were well acquainted, and discussed at length the problems associated with setting up schools for girls, and with training female teachers to teach them. The immediate outcome for Pigot of such Brahma connections was that the Calcutta Scots offered her a job.

In joining the Scottish Ladies' Association, Pigot was confronting those problems with Scottish funding, her own abilities, and perhaps a fixed belief in miracles. At Calcutta the ladies had for thirty years run an orphanage,<sup>90</sup> and one or two schools, the only successful one being at Kidderpore.<sup>91</sup> Suitable older girls from the orphanage were, when possible, placed as teachers at the school. In 1870 the teacher was herself a model of the scheme. This was Dil Jan, formally identified as Mrs Eliza Mukherjee. Questioned in 1883 she declared that "I do not know what I am by birth. I have no idea. My name is Dil Jan. That is a Mahomedan name. I go by my Christian name since I got married and left school."<sup>92</sup> The school she left we know nothing about, but she had been one of the ladies' orphans<sup>93</sup>, and the man she married was a Church of England convert. They were entrusted with the school at Kidderpore in or

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89 For Carpenter's correspondence with Woodrow and Atkinson concerning the misunderstandings over the Indian Reform Association normal school see *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal. Education Department* October 1871 numbers 3 to 6 pages 2-7.

90 Located at 111 Boitakhana until 1862, moved on health grounds to 55 Upper Circular Road, at that date a rural or semi-rural location. Suniti Devi in her *Autobiography* page 75 locates it "right out of the city".

91 A settlement variously described as bearing the same relationship to Calcutta as Hampstead to London, or Partick to Glasgow: *NFM* April 1878 page 41, April 1879 page 36.

92 *Englishman* supplement September 11 1883. Identical text printed in the *Times of India* for September 15. Cf *The Pigot Case* page 141.

93 *NFM* Oct 1862 page 162.

around 1854: a thatched building, attracting perhaps 60 lower-caste girls aged between four and twelve years, from poor families who were induced to send their girls by the prospect of “tiffin money” and periodic distributions of *sarees*.<sup>94</sup> Dil Jan did the bulk of the teaching, the husband performing essential but unspecified tasks. During 1863 she started visiting the zenana quarters in a wealthy house, but had to desist to nurse her dying husband, and in 1864 she sent her oldest surviving daughter, Soudamini, to be taught at the orphanage<sup>95</sup>. Soudamini was five years old in 1864: in 1870 or 1871 her little sister Kadumbini joined her.

Ideally the superintendent of the orphanage should have been a Scot, fluent in Bengali, and a missionary wife familiar with Calcutta, the model being the revered Hannah Mullens.<sup>96</sup> The job was done by one Frances Hebron at the start of the 1860s, and when in 1864 she went on furlough to Scotland the Corresponding Board was glad to accept an offer from Miss Brittan, of the new and very successful American Mission<sup>97</sup>, to run the orphanage in her absence. The desire to catch up with zenana visiting—the Church of Scotland was the last to come into the field—was intensified by this contact with its most energetic exponent in Calcutta. April 1864 saw two articles on zenana work in the *News of Female Missions* and October the following year saw a third written by Miss Brittan herself<sup>98</sup>. She meanwhile reported that she was employing girls from the Scottish orphanage to assist her American zenana visitors. In 1868 James Herdman supplied the *News of Female Missions* with a letter<sup>99</sup> from an unnamed friend in Calcutta describing how Miss Brittan was paying two “ex-wards of the Scottish Orphanage” Rs 40 a month as zenana visitors, Rs 24 being their salary and the rest covering travelling expenses. Furthermore she had her eye on a third: “the girl seems to possess special qualifications, Miss Brittan thinks.” The girl in question wrote a letter herself—“I am glad to say I’m out of school, and is assisting Miss Brittain with her Zenana work”—which was printed alongside a letter from Macalister Thomson, the senior chaplain in Calcutta, heartily concurring “in the suggestion made by Dr Herdman, that you should seriously think of taking up *Zenana Work*.”<sup>100</sup> The show of reverend gentlemen urging the ladies was of course to prepare readers to come up with more money. Miss Brittan’s two helpers were between them costing Rs 960 a year, and they were two among many<sup>101</sup>.

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94 For Dil Jan at Kidderpore see *NFM* April 1862 page 34, October 1862 page 162, April 1863 page 36, October 1863 page 107, January 1864 page 202, January 1865 page 327, October 1868 page 167, April 1869 page 39 and July 1869 page 89.

95 Not as an orphan, Dil Jan having married again, this time a Church of England catechist, Kedarnath Mukherjee.

96 “At Bhowanipore, Calcutta, at the age of thirty-five, from a rupture in the intestines, after brief but most acute suffering, Hannah Catherine, the beloved wife of the Rev. Dr. Mullens, of the London Missionary Society; herself a most devoted, useful and honored Missionary.” *Friend of India* 28 November 1861 page 1327. She is mourned in the same issue on pages 1317-18 as “the Apostle of the Zenana Mission.” Mary Carpenter insisted that the superintendent of a normal school should be European, and Woodrow agreed with her: “A Eurasian, I fear, will not command much respect.” *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department* April 1872 page 41.

97 Harriette G Brittan of the Woman’s Union Missionary Society. She started the American Mission at Calcutta in 1864.

98 *NFM* October 1865 pages 419 to 429. She gives a brief sketch of her start in Calcutta in a letter to Murray Mitchell reproduced in the *Record* for April 1874 page 14.

99 *NFM* 1868 page 176. Herdman was Macalister Thomson’s predecessor as senior chaplain and “general secretary” of the Female Mission. By 1864 he had already served 20 years in India. Macalister Thomson was appointed senior chaplain in his place in January 1868.

100 *NFM* April 1869 page 41.

101 By 1876 she was fielding 40 “Native Christian and Hindu widows” according to the *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal* for 1876-7, Calcutta 1877 paragraph 261 page 76.

Miss Hebron meanwhile had quarrelled with the Ladies' Committee and did not return to the orphanage, while Miss Brittan was obliged to get back to her proper work. A married couple working for the London Missionary Society agreed to step in, but resigned in 1866. The Corresponding Board now turned its attention to the General Assembly's Institution. A Glasgow-born teacher of English, James Wilson, had started there in 1863, and his wife Katharine had joined him the following year. They were now asked to take over—Wilson's salary from the General Assembly's Institution obviating any question of remuneration—she as Lady Superintendent and he to handle such manly aspects as the accounts, maintenance of the premises and buying horses. They were there from October 1866 until the beginning of 1870, when Wilson took furlough. Mrs Wilson gave birth to two daughters at the orphanage, in July 1867 and January 1869, and on leaving told the *News of Female Missions* that "It was here that my children were born, and the girls have been their playmates..."<sup>102</sup>.

For the first nine months of 1870 Macalister Thomson recruited a Mrs Ewart, a Baptist from Serampore and a Bengali speaker, and it was she who launched the zenana mission, accompanied at times by Thomson's wife, Frances<sup>103</sup>. Subscribers in Scotland began to read first-hand accounts of their very own zenana mission from both ladies. Those accounts, it goes without saying, were worded with a view to stirring compassion, generating enthusiasm and raising money. Discouraging truths were certainly allowed through the sieve, in moderation, but the reader in Scotland needed an eagle eye and a cynic's mind to interpret the picture held up to them. Frances Thomson wrote in May 1870 that

The girls are getting on very nicely with tatting. I have some anti-macassors and d'oyleys made by them, which I am trying to get sold. I have already got some of their work disposed of. They are very fond of fancy-work, and it will be of great value to them as zenana teachers<sup>104</sup>.

Mrs Ewart added in July that she had begun the zenana work: "as yet I have only two houses, with three pupils. I am endeavouring to get some more houses, but there is a hindrance just now, —the Hindoos are very much excited since the baptism of one of their inmates, a young widow, which took place in May last. They have refused admittance to teachers at several houses."<sup>105</sup>

Mrs Ewart's letter as we find it in *News of Female Missions* is an "extract" from a longer communication, the missing parts perhaps being insufficiently optimistic: and Mrs Thomson's letter is printed on the following page, although it was written two months earlier. This ordering is likely adopted because Thomson's account is the more encouraging: she goes on to mention that "In one house the lady asked for the Bible to be taught her." The sceptical reader will not have been deceived. Needlework was an essential skill, and it was a worthy ambition to teach it to "our sisters" in India, but the Bible stories that went with it were finding no market to speak of. The sceptic might well have concluded that the *News of*

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102 *NFM* January 1870 page 7.

103 Who drew his attention to Miss Pigot. The Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh heard in 1878 that "He remembered well how, when he first went to Calcutta, and when his wife used to visit some of the zenanas under the charge of the American Mission, with which ... we were then connected, some of her friends used to say, 'Oh, these houses are nothing; you should see some of those into which Miss Pigot could take you.'" *NFM* July 1878 page 120.

104 *NFM* October 1870 page 172.

105 *NFM* October 1870 page 171.

*Female Missions* was telling her stories somewhat less credible than those on offer in the zenanas.<sup>106</sup>

Pigot inherited the aims and the means of her predecessors. She expanded and perhaps refined, but she did not change them. She knew how to dress up her reports for the subscribers in Scotland, and she could dress the dolls for her zenana customers.<sup>107</sup> Along with the ambitions, she inherited the problems of the undertaking too: where to find staff, how to manage the children, both the “prize gooseberries” and the rest, how to massage the mission’s public image in Calcutta, if only to get more money in, and how to handle those members of the Corresponding Board, starting with the “general secretary,” who took an active interest in the Female Mission. The problem that bedevilled the Calcutta Female Normal School during her own training, the marauding males in want of a wife, was the only difficulty she did not herself face. At 33 years she seems to have been a confirmed spinster. But the assistant teachers that she recruited or trained were a different matter.

Of the score or so of assistants that we find mentioned in the sources, Mary Macnamara<sup>108</sup> was the first, and had “prepared herself for zenana teaching some little time” before, but then “left the country.” She spoke Bengali, and started with the Ladies’ Association, at the age of 25, in October 1870. There is no surviving record of staff. The yearly manuscript reports would have noted their names, but the reports themselves have disappeared. In consequence we only find names dropped here and there in the *News*, some of them once only. Macnamara’s first and principal function was to visit zenanas, although as time went by Pigot, juggling timetables, had to put school teachers into zenanas and zenana teachers into schools. Eventually, when Pigot visited Scotland for 19 months in 1875 and 1876, Miss Macnamara endeavoured, with no little success, to stand in for her. Immediately after Pigot’s return to Calcutta, however, she got married. The strain of running Pigot’s operation single-handed may have influenced her in taking that step.

A Mrs Emma Palmer helped as a zenana visitor from 1871 until 1873, and again from 1874 to 1876. Very little indeed would be known about her service with the Scottish Ladies’ Association but for her appearance as a witness in 1883:<sup>109</sup> when she left Pigot neglected to write her a reference, and when prompted sent a reply that can only have angered her.

72, Upper Circular Road, *Calcutta*, 5th March 1877.

My Dear Mrs. Palmer,

I am so sorry in the press of work, that I should have overlooked your letter. I trust it is not too late for my testimony to be of any service to you. I am not certain how long you worked in the Church of Scotland Mission. Your pupils in the zenanas were all much attached to you, and we parted with you because it was inconvenient to arrange for you to work along with our other teachers residing in the Mission House. I shall be glad to hear that you have obtained suitable work.

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106 Missionary magazines were condemned wholesale as the “utterly nauseous, made-to-order journals which constitute the staple of our missionary periodicals” by Henry Alford, Dean of Westminster, in his “Romanism and Protestantism,” *Good Words* volume 10 August 1869 page 566.

107 Mrs Thomson produced dolls for distributions of prizes until 1877: in that year Pigot claimed that she had dressed 100 dolls “all by myself,” *NFM* July 1877 pages 89 and 90. It is to be hoped that “by myself” implies the help of more or less willing orphan girls.

108 Mary Annie Macnamara was born at Barrackpore, the daughter of an army officer, *BER* volume 66 folio 179.

109 She is mentioned as among the staff in the *NFM* for July 1873 page 64 and July 1874 page 268.

Believe me,  
Yours sincerely,  
M. Pigot.<sup>110</sup>

Lavinia Frost<sup>111</sup> assisted Pigot from 1871 until 1879. She was recruited to teach at the orphanage, began to learn Bengali, and reluctantly, since she enjoyed the school work, offered for zenana work in August 1873. A little Bengali is a dangerous thing, and she still needed an orphan to translate for her in 1879 when she left. It was as a zenana visitor that Miss Frost was teaching Vidyasagar's daughters in 1877<sup>112</sup>. The great man did not want the Bible in his house: he simply accepted that the preaching came with the teaching. We can only suppose that, to be trusted with the children of so prominent a figure, Frost was a competent teacher and had Pigot's confidence.

Helen Leslie had attended Calcutta Girls for six years until 1869 or 1870, some or all of that time as a pupil teacher, and encountered Pigot there. She was brought in as Matron at the orphanage from the beginning of 1873, left two years later and returned from the end of 1878 until perhaps the summer of 1881. She was eager to teach, but was obliged to persuade Miss Pigot to let her take an infant class. There is evidence that she gave satisfaction as Matron: she achieved the rare distinction of a mention by the Secretary of the Ladies' Association in far-off Edinburgh. "We know the difficulty of getting a suitable Matron and in former days Miss Leslie a Eurasian young lady took charge of the Orphanage and the place answered very well. She took her meals with the other teachers and was quite on the same footing but just had special charge of the Orphans."<sup>113</sup> One of her darker moments was watching a child die on Christmas Day 1878.<sup>114</sup>

Another early recruit was Susan Dorkin<sup>115</sup>. She stayed until her marriage in 1878, and succeeded in drawing almost no attention to herself in the meantime. Brought in to teach at the orphanage, she moved over to zenana work at the same time as Miss Frost, in August 1873. At first she was funded by the Glasgow branch of the Ladies' Association, in particular with the money of a shipowner, Mr John Steel: only after some years was she put onto the Association's payroll. There seems to have been ill feeling between her and Mrs Palmer: in 1883 Pigot alleged that Palmer "ran down" Dorkin to the other staff, adding "These were the two rivals."<sup>116</sup>

In November 1876 Mrs C E Tremearne, whom we first met as Lizzie Wollen and was now 27 years old, joined the zenana teaching staff. She seems to have had particular musical skills. She was in charge of music by 1878, and was teaching Suniti Devi, almost certainly including the piano. Otherwise she was engaged in "general zenana work" by 1881. Whereas most of Pigot's assistants adhered to the Church of England, she had eclectic religious tendencies, developed doubtless during her upbringing. We are told that she kept a picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in her room, and had contact from time to time with Catholic priests:

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110 *The Pigot Case* page 323.

111 Lavinia Clara Frost married Thomas Alexander Blake of the Public Works Department at St John's Calcutta on 24<sup>th</sup> March 1879 *BER* vol 167 folio 104.

112 *NFM* January 1878 page 10.

113 National Library of Scotland, Papers of the Women's Association for Foreign Missions 1888 to 1920, MS 7629 Secretary's Letter Book: Calcutta 1888-1920 folio 8. Williamson to M<sup>c</sup>Gillewie, dated March, perhaps in 1888.

114 *NFM* April 1879 pages 34-5.

115 Susan Dorkin married George Joseph Roseboom, assistant at the Great Eastern Hotel, on 31<sup>st</sup> July 1878 *BER* vol 165 folios 171 and 198. Identified at the trial as "Miss Dawkins."

116 *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 207.

in later life she seems to have grown attached to the Salvationists, and in her will, written in 1900, her banjo was a particular bequest. She suffered an attack of the water-pox in 1879, and we hear of her suffering with a “sore leg” in 1882.<sup>117</sup> Health and emotional upheavals interfered with the smooth operation of the timetable in her case, as in others.

In or about April 1878 Mrs Mary Sophia Ellis<sup>118</sup>, the widow of the Baptist missionary at Entally, and the superintendent of a boarding school for girls that had been obliged to close, joined the orphanage staff to teach the most advanced girls. She, like others before her, was drawn into zenana visiting in early 1880 and a year later ran 25 houses. Like Dil Jan<sup>119</sup>, she followed the practice of calling at the homes of the schoolgirls in an effort to draw the parents in, to interest them in the life of the school. Pigot entrusted her with the evangelistic side of zenana work, leaving the “general work” to Mrs Tremearne. She had three children, and a sunny disposition: the word “happy” is more than once used of her, an observer in 1881 noting that she was “as happy as the day is long.”<sup>120</sup>

Far from happy, and with none of the reticence of Mrs Ellis, Lucinda May Oliver came in the summer of 1879 and remained about two years. Her husband had been a clerk with the Lucknow branch of the London and Delhi Bank, and for reasons that need not concern us his assets found their way into the hands of the Administrator General. Mrs Oliver, with three children to feed, found herself looking for work and only able to draw funds by making an official application in person or in writing. She appears to have worked at the Calcutta Normal School, and that would certainly have recommended her to Pigot: but there was no immediate vacancy, and Pigot gave or lent her cash and clothing to travel to Bankipore where she worked as a governess for maybe a year. On her return to Calcutta Pigot first took her in and then took her on, at Rs 20 a month, initially as an employee without portfolio, to plug gaps in the timetable as they arose. A child of hers died, of bronchitis and croup, in July 1879, and we are told that Pigot advanced her Rs 100 to pay for the burial.<sup>121</sup> For the next 20-odd months Oliver was sometimes teaching at the orphanage, sometimes in the zenanas: for the last few weeks of her employment she took over as Matron at the orphanage. Her two surviving girls came to the orphanage as day pupils.

Lucinda Oliver’s value to us is her ready tongue in court. It is she who tells us that Miss Pigot was “very distant” with all her staff, and close to none of them; that she allowed them at dinner only a single piece of chicken each, so that if one took two pieces, another went without; and that she “was not kind either to the girls, or her teachers, or the workers under her.” And Oliver gives us a valuable vignette of orphanage life in its unvarnished reality.

You have said that the orphans were not properly fed, – what did you mean by that? I meant that the food was deficient in quality.

In what way? I never tasted it, but it was described to me.

Mr. Jackson here objected.<sup>122</sup>

Mr. Gasper. – Can you say whether this matter was at any time brought to the notice

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117 Lizzie Tremearne is first mentioned in *NFM* for July 1877 page 86. For the Sacred Heart see Appendix 7.

Her will is in *IOLR Bengal Wills and Administrations* volume 145 1900 second season pages 91-2.

118 *BER* Registrar Marriages vol 2 folio 343 Rev. Robert John Ellis, widower, married Mary Sophia Gordon at Allahabad, February 14 1865. He died in 1877.

119 Or rather, Dil Jan’s first husband: see *NFM* July 1864 page 258.

120 *NFM* October 1881 page 192.

121 *BER* 1879 vol 169 folio 207. For Mrs Oliver, *IDN* supplements September 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, *The Pigot Case* pages 117 to 129.

122 Because hearsay cannot be taken in evidence. Pigot was represented by Jackson, Trevelyan and O’Kinealy, Hastie by Gasper and Pearson.

of Miss Pigot? Yes; it was.  
By whom? By the girls themselves.  
How do you know? The complaint against it was taken in my presence on one occasion.  
What happened on that occasion? Miss Pigot ate it. (Laughter.)  
On the principle I suppose that the proof of the pudding was in the eating?  
His Lordship. – We don't want the principle; Mr. Gasper, be good enough to go on with [your] examination.  
Did she say anything before eating? She said it was very nice. (Laughter.)<sup>123</sup>

Mrs Oliver inspires additional confidence with her ready acknowledgement that she had a bad temper. There are faint hints that she also had a sense of humour. At some point during 1879, knowing that the orphanage was in want of a Matron to replace Miss Leslie, she mentioned an acquaintance, a Mrs Pigott,<sup>124</sup> who was duly taken on. A day or two later Miss Pigot accosted her with “Mrs. Oliver, how came you to recommend this woman when you knew she was a Roman Catholic?” To which she replied, “I did not know she was a Roman Catholic, but you can easily send her away now.”<sup>125</sup> However we interpret that response, there is humour at work in it.

Pigot must have thought long and hard about the new Catholic Matron. There were Baptists, Anglicans and Hindus—the durwans, malees and cooks—working at the orphanage, but Catholics were beyond the pale for many. The upshot at all events was that Mrs Pigott stayed.

Oliver left the orphanage because she went beyond a second, but related pale.

When was it that your connection with the Orphanage terminated? When I left.  
What year? As far as I remember, in July, 1881.  
Do you recollect whether your leaving it was somewhat abrupt? Yes.  
You got a month's salary in lieu of a month's notice? Yes.  
Did Miss Pigot tell you why she desired you to go? Yes; she said in my presence to the teachers that I had no business to ask a certain question regarding her family.  
What was the question you asked about her family? I said – “Is Mr. Bodry Miss Pigot's uncle or a half-brother?” As far as I remember that was all.<sup>126</sup>  
How many hours elapsed between your asking that question and your being out of the premises? The next day.  
Had she complained to you about anything before this? Three days before that, she said that my manner of speaking to her was too abrupt. I asked her if she meant that I was unladylike, and she said no, but you speak abruptly to me as your Lady Superintendent. I told her that the remedy lay in her hands and that I could resign. I considered that I virtually resigned from then.  
Then why did you take a month's salary? Miss Pigot would not accept that as my

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123 *IDN Supplement* September 10<sup>th</sup> 1883. *The Pigot Case* page 120 gives us “I don't say the food of the orphans was insufficient. I meant to say it was deficient in quality. I never tasted it, but it was described to me as being (stopped). This matter was brought to Miss Pigot's notice by the girls themselves. I mean to say, a plate of it was taken to Miss Pigot in my presence. Miss Pigot ate it. She said it was very nice. I thought the clothes the orphans wore...” etc.

124 There was a Mrs Pigott on the committee of management of the European Female Orphan Asylum in 1880, but the name was not particularly rare.

125 *ibid.* *The Pigot Case* page 120.

126 *The Pigot Case* page 123 gives us Bodry, the *IDN* makes the name Gaudin. We prefer Bodry only because it means something to us, whereas Gaudin is untraced. John Bodry, however, had been dead three years in 1881. A son might be implied.

resignation. She said – “I dismiss you,” and she gave me a month’s salary which I took.<sup>127</sup>

The exchange shows Pigot to be sensitive about her Chandernagore connections. The image of a Scottish mission run by “English” or at least “European” women was to be maintained not only in Edinburgh, through the pages of the *News of Female Missions*, but on the ground in Calcutta as well.

To the Baptist, Anglican and Hindu workers at the orphanage were added, early in 1879, two Church of Scotland women. The daughters of an employee of Thacker the publisher, Ann and Jessica Barham, belonged to the congregation of St Andrew’s, Calcutta, Ann being nearly 18 years old and Jessica 20. Ann died at the orphanage a month short of her 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. She had formed a close friendship with Mrs Tremearne, who was so shaken by the death that she was unable to work for a time. Jessica remained with the Ladies’ Association until her death in 1913. The Annual Report for that year tells us

We have had one sad loss in the death of Miss Barham, who had been for more than thirty years a faithful and devoted teacher on our staff at Bow Bazar, and in these later years at Cossipore.

She was one of the young teachers trained by Miss Pigot, and she has given these long years of devoted service: ‘invaluable to the Mission,’ her services have been termed by various Missionaries.<sup>128</sup>

Invaluable she may have been, but in what ways remains a closed book. Like many other agents of the mission, her name is practically all that we have. As for the numerous servants at the orphanage and in the schools, the cooks, grooms and cleaners, for the most part we do not have even that. An exception is Degambari Kyburtini, who was working in 1879 at the Ladies’ Association school at Shobha Bazar. She is described as a maid-servant, and walked to the school at 8 or 8:30 every morning, returning “in the evening.” For ten or more years she had lived with a glass-blower in Jhamapookur, and was also acquainted with a seller of sweetmeats, Troyluckhonauth Dey. A girl from the school was to be married in February at Bhawanipur, and Degambari set out in the middle of the afternoon to attend the wedding. Her body was found in a secluded spot the following day, her throat cut and her jewellery missing. Troyluckhonauth was convicted of the murder and hanged. The newspapers labelled the affair the Chitpore Murder.<sup>129</sup> The case was heard by the highly respected Mulvi Abdul Luteef, Khan Bahadur, at the Sealdah Police Court, and the school inevitably was identified in evidence as “Miss Pigot’s school at Shobha Bazar.” Disease, marriage and personal animosity are the obstacles we have so far identified to any semblance of a businesslike operation, but crime, presumably suppressed most of the time as bad publicity, must have been another.

Of the four threats so far identified, contagious disease was the scourge of which 19<sup>th</sup>-century orphanages were most afraid. In 1862 ten of the Scottish Ladies’ 50 orphans had died of an unidentified illness, and every summer brought “fever” and led to anxious days and nights. Each orphan was sponsored by a parish or an individual in Scotland, and for that reason the girls are listed, with the name of their sponsor, in the July number of *News of Female Missions*. In the 1860s most of the orphans are re-named for sponsorship purposes, gilding

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127 Supplement to the *IDN* September 10 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 123.

128 *Reports on the Schemes of the Church of Scotland* 1913 page 228.

129 *Statesman* 25 February, 1, 4, 7, 12 March 1879; *Englishman* 25, 26 February, 6, 8 March; *IDN* 25, 28 February, 4 March. *Report of the Police Administration of the Town of Calcutta and its suburbs, for the year 1879*, Calcutta 1880, page 9.



them so to speak with true anonymity: so that “Ellen Isabella” is supported by the Sabbath School at Ayr, “Louisa” by Mrs Stevenson of 17 Heriot Row, Edinburgh, and so on. One or two girls retain something approaching their own name: “Bedu (Grace Fleming)” is sponsored by Miss Maxton, Edinburgh, “Aladee” by the Sabbath School at Kirkcaldy and a “Sondaminee” (not Dil Jan’s daughter of the same name) by the Sabbath School at Kilmaurs.<sup>130</sup> By the second half of the 1880s the “christening” of girls with foreign names was somewhat less frequent. The orphans were not the only girls on the premises: Dil Jan’s younger daughter, Kadumbini, came to the house, probably in 1870 when she was nine, but not as an orphan,<sup>131</sup> and her name is never listed as such. There were others, and the names of some of them we never learn.

What became of Dil Jan’s daughters is unclear. Both were educated, perhaps intermittently, at the orphanage. Soudamini was caned during 1871 for singing an improper song, and Dil Jan complained that the girl did not know any bad songs. In 1883 she testified that “the one who was caned is dead now, but I am living in her house.” Under cross-examination she said that “my daughter has supported me all the time. She is wife of a driver on the East Indian Railway.” It would appear, then, that Soudamini was dead in 1883 but that Kadumbini was alive and married. An entirely different Shoudamini, the widow of a catechist, came to the orphanage early in 1877 and began working in the zenanas, despite her own education having been “very defective.”<sup>132</sup> Both names recur in 1885, when we hear of “those teachers who were trained by Miss Pigot during a course of years without passing through the Orphanage, such as Kadumbini, Ongo, Rajeshuri, Biraj, and Shodominee.”<sup>133</sup> Whether or not the Kadumbini of 1885 was Dil Jan’s daughter we simply do not know, but it seems unlikely.

Rajeshuri’s story comes down to us in two versions. In the Church of Scotland *Record* for December 1878<sup>134</sup> the Rev Biprocharan Chuckerbutty, in whose house the tiny Native Church met, and whose flock included Pigot’s orphans, relates how he had baptized a Ragessuy Roy the previous May. She had abandoned a husband worth Rs 40,000 at Howrah and approached W.C. Banerjea, a catechist of the Scottish Kirk, wanting baptism. Banerjea had passed her on to Bipro, who had approached Pigot, with whom “she was under Christian instruction for about 11 months.” Pigot’s version was printed in the *News* for July 1878.<sup>135</sup> Rajeshory, an only child, had come the year before, and was related to “our catechist Woma Churn Bounirga.”<sup>136</sup> Her husband was rich, she had given birth to two children neither of whom lived, she had embraced Christianity and sought the house of a Christian family: “these people at once informed her parents, who said she could not return to them. Woma Churn was not able to keep her with him, as his wife had just died; so that when she was brought to me, I made fresh endeavours to restore her to her father and husband.” These failed, but the father begged Pigot to keep her safe, the mother sent frequent large quantities of delicacies with enquiries as to her daughter’s health, a concerned relative called. “Rajeshory comes from no common home, and yet she has lived here in the greatest content, eating the coarse food of the orphans, with the bare floor for her bed.” Pigot describes a high-

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130 There is a mention in 1883 that the orphan “Soudamini has left.” She is not listed in 1882.

131 Pigot moved Dil Jan from Kidderpore to the orphanage before March 1871, to be Matron, and the younger girl seems to have come with her (*NFM* July 1871 page 82). Dil Jan was dismissed later that year for absenting herself from the orphanage without permission, but her daughters stayed.

132 *NFM* October 1877 pages 198-9.

133 *NFM* October 1885 page 158.

134 pages 218-9. Chuckerbutty was the minister of the Church of Scotland’s Native Church in Calcutta.

135 pages 98-99. Note that Pigot’s report was written before May, when Rajeshory was baptized.

136 Presumably the compositor’s reading of Pigot’s scrawled *Bonnergea*.

spirited 20-year-old, too impulsive to be baptized yet. In 1885 she was living, and teaching, in the Mission House, having been, as we have seen, “trained by Miss Pigot.”

Of the orphans who showed aptitude there is some account, if sketchy, in the *News of Female Missions*. A “Geree (Isabella)” was already on the list in the middle 1860s, before Pigot’s time, and in 1873 she was teaching at one of the suburban schools. In the autumn of 1878, however, she was married. A Scripture Reader at the General Assembly’s Institution, Purno, had had his eye on her for some years, and asked Pigot for her, the Lady Superintendent being naturally *in loco parentis*. Clearly the girl was useful, and it was with great reluctance that Pigot gave way. She tried telling Purno that in Christian lands it was common practice to wait a year between proposing and wedding, and he could only concede the point.<sup>137</sup> Back at the General Assembly’s premises, however, he canvassed support, and after representations from a member of the Corresponding Board, Pigot “had to submit and give Isabel up.”<sup>138</sup> It is in connection with the loss of Isabella that Pigot remarks that “At fourteen every girl can be disposed of, whatever may be the objections to her.”

Another orphan whom Pigot found already in place in 1870, and who was still teaching when Pigot left, was Aladee. She started as a zenana visitor, presumably in 1874, and in the January 1875 number of *News of Female Missions* gave a sketch of the orphans’ day.

I am sure you will be glad to learn that I have been made a Zenana assistant, and that I receive two rupees monthly for my labour...

I shall give you a short account as to how our school is conducted. First of all, the bell rings at five o’clock for us to get up; we say our prayers, after which we bathe and dress, and then look over our lessons: the bell is again rung at a quarter to seven for prayers, after which we pass on to our classes to repeat our lessons. We have a short interval from half-past nine to ten, during which time we elder girls take our breakfast: at eight o’clock the junior classes take their breakfast, as their lessons do not commence till ten o’clock, and whilst they are having their lessons, the first class girls set to their work. The junior classes work from two till four, and from four till five all the girls have their Bengali lessons; at a quarter past five we have our dinner; after dinner we play and run about, and then at seven p.m. we assemble for prayers. After prayers are over the younger girls retire, and we first class girls study our lessons for next day for an hour.<sup>139</sup>

Aladee does not make clear what the work is that “the first class girls set to” at ten o’clock. It might well be acting as pupil teachers. It is clear from hints elsewhere in the *News of Female Missions* that the older girls were assigned younger girls to supervise in such matters as washing, dressing and attending prayers: girls also took it in turns to work a week in the kitchen, and this could lead to friction and sometimes raised voices. Their “bathing arrangements” were in the godowns attached to the house.<sup>140</sup>

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137 Asked at the 1883 trial if she had answered a certain query in a faltering voice, Pigot replied, “I never spoke in a faltering voice to anybody.” We might infer that she could at need communicate her wishes forcefully. *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *the Pigot Case* page 202.

138 *NFM* January 1879 pages 5-6. Pigot sketches Purno’s career, which started with the Robsons in the mid-1860s. He had first seen Isabella when working for Pigot in some capacity or other in the early 1870s. An Isabella is teaching at Sonai school in 1885 (*NFM* July 1885 page 102) but is no longer listed in 1887 (*NFM* July 1887 Tabular Statement after page 144).

139 *NFM* January 1875 pages 7-8.

140 Mrs Oliver in court: “Two or three girls had quarrelled about serving the food.” *Indian Daily News* supplement September 8<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 117. The godowns in *NFM* July 1885 pages 133-5.

Aladee was later moved to teaching in a suburban school at Dhobaparrah, as a competent teacher capable of acting unsupervised bar a fortnightly visit by Pigot. She is described at different times as a good teacher, “our best pupil,” with whom “Miss Pigot is much pleased.” She was baptized in May 1875. Girls judged unsuitable for training as teachers hardly come to our attention, and the less talented orphans, of little or no use in schools or zenanas, are no better served. There is for instance a “Hester,” sponsored by the Misses Fergusson of New Hailes, listed in the mid-1860s, later sponsored by The Institution (which is to say, by no one in Scotland) about whom we only hear because Pigot disciplined her and her case was brought up at the 1883 trial. At some point Hester threw herself into a tank in Circular Road, and after she had been fished out Pigot caned her. At another point, for taking and eating gram<sup>141</sup> from the stables and “making herself ill,” she was either caned again or castigated verbally by Pigot: “if you do these things, you will be treated like a horse. How can I keep you with the children here? I will have to keep you with the horses.” She was then tied with a halter to a horse trough, although by whom and on whose orders is not clear.

Another orphan whose only fame is a thrashing from Pigot was Bedu, re-named “Grace Fleming” in the 1860s. We know from *News of Female Missions* that she was assisting in zenana visiting in 1880. We know from the trial that during the first half of 1881 a gold ring, stolen from a guest at the orphanage, was sold to her and that she pawned it. Her punishment was the more severe because the guest was a person of consequence. Of all the orphans, Bedu was the only one to give evidence in 1883, when she was 20 or 21 years old. She testified that she was first of all caned, leaving “some slight marks on my back. I was beaten in Miss Pigot’s own room, and Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Tremearne were present. After I was beaten I was locked up in a room above Miss Pigot’s room. I got up to the room by a ladder. I went up the ladder.” She was there for two days, after which she spent 15 days in Miss Pigot’s room, then in a “room downstairs” with brick walls and an earthen floor where she remained two or three months, denied attendance at prayers and church and much of the time confined. This last place was not the orphanage dungeon: two teachers and a servant with a daughter<sup>142</sup> had to vacate it for the duration. Where in the orphanage they were evicted to we are not told, but it was presumably at best another single room, the private quarters of three women and a little girl.

Reports of juvenile crime (if the word is not too harsh) at the orphanage were no more welcome to supporters in Scotland than reports of murder, and care was taken to see that they did not get any. Other predictable mishaps were just as thoroughly suppressed. A name found only in the lists of orphans is Chunea, sponsored by the Sabbath School of St George’s Church in Glasgow. She is nowhere reported teaching or shining academically. In the early hours of April 16<sup>th</sup> 1873 she shinned over the orphanage wall and made off down the street, accompanied at a discreet distance by a man. At least two other girls saw her go, and how all three came not to be in their beds is a weighty but unanswered question. Chunea, who was about 12 years old, did not get far. A couple of chowkidars intercepted her, the man shadowing her melted into the sidestreets and the next day Miss Pigot, going to the *thannah* to report the girl missing, found her there. Chunea now revealed that it was her intention to marry a certain Shaik Loku, a Muslim according to one newspaper and a Hindu according to

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141 Portuguese for “chick pea.” OED “Any kind of pulse used as food for horses.” The incident is raised in the trial of 1883: supplements to the *Englishman* September 11<sup>th</sup> and *IDN* September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* pages 150 and 204.

142 Bedu calls the teachers Mary and Hungoo (the Ongo mentioned above), and the servant woman, whom she describes as the Matron, Horo or Hurroo. Cf. *The Pigot Case* pages 114-116 and the *IDN* supplement for September 8<sup>th</sup> 1883.

another. He had apparently been passing in the street every day for a couple of weeks, playing a flute and sometimes exchanging words with her. Pigot immediately charged him with abduction.<sup>143</sup> The case went to the Sessions at the beginning of May, when the identification of the suspect did not satisfy the jury and he was found not guilty.

Pigot's case was fatally weak in that her witnesses were minors, and it was very nearly laughed out of the Magistrate's court.<sup>144</sup> That a case had to be brought was of course a result of the need to protect the reputation of the orphanage. Like any other institution for females, it attracted unwelcome attention, and could very readily get a bad name in the drawing rooms of Calcutta. What measures were afterwards taken to strengthen its defences we do not know, but presumably there were some. Whether there were later cases of girls absconding in pursuit of romance, and whether Pigot drew the lesson of Chunea's adventures and turned a blind eye to them, are a matter for supposition.

Of the promising girls who aroused high expectations most losses were to marriage, but some simply died. A Rhoda is first listed in 1871, who made rapid progress in her lessons—"much greater, perhaps, than that of any of her fellows"—took fever at the beginning of August and died, aged about 14. "The same evening she was buried in the Scotch burial ground, the native minister, the Rev B.C. Chuckerbutty, conducting the service. The Rev Mr. Thomson, Mr. Steel, Dr. Jardine, and Mr. Wilson kindly attended. All our teachers, and ten of the elder orphans, followed the coffin."<sup>145</sup> A Nelly Anne is listed among the orphans from the mid-1860s until 1871, after which she disappears from the list of orphans but continues at the orphanage as a paid teacher. In that capacity she has a letter printed in the *News of Female Missions*.<sup>146</sup> Early in October 1874 she fell ill of the endemic "fever," and then developed consumption. She was sent to the Medical College Hospital and survived there less than 21 days.<sup>147</sup>

As we have already seen, girls who were not orphans were educated at the orphanage without leaving much if indeed any trace. An undated note from Pigot to Kalicharan Bannerjee seems to mention one such.

Friday.

My Dear Mr Banerji,

I drove in the moment after you left. I was so vexed not to have caught you in time. Prio said you would not come, or I should have hurried.

Keshub Baboo asks you to bring your wife to-morrow. Will you be too tired to go yourself. I hope you may get away early.

We hope to have our Music Evening of the School children before we go.

Yours affectionately,

M. Pigot.<sup>148</sup>

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143 *IDN* April 18<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1873 page 3, *Englishman* April 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 1873.

144 Magistrates had an enviable freedom of action in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There is a newspaper report during Pigot's time of a man charged with having fired every chamber of his revolver in the tea rooms of the Great Eastern Hotel. On learning that no one had been hit, and that he was suffering from *delirium tremens* at the time, the magistrates let him off.

145 *NFM* January 1874 pages 212-3.

146 *NFM* July 1872 page 97.

147 *NFM* July 1875 pages 64-65.

148 *The Pigot Case* page 319.

“Prio” is neither an orphan nor a teacher, and her identity would be beyond us but for reports in the *News of Female Missions* for 1902. A Mrs Bose, who had joined the mission in 1894, visited Scotland that year, and readers were told that, 20 years before, she had been Priyatama Dutt, one of the cleverest girls at school in the orphanage. This ties her to Abhaycharan Dutt, a friend of Kalicharan Bannerjee who had died, and whose daughter Bannerjee brought to Pigot to be schooled in 1880. She was his “niece” as far as idle enquirers were concerned, lived at his house and would therefore have known that he would not come, as the note tells us. As Mrs Bose she worked for the Ladies’ Association from 1894 until 1923, a year after Pigot’s death. The impression on her of Pigot’s teaching can be judged from the report in the *News* of her farewell speech in October 1902, in which she pleaded the case for higher standards all round in the education of girls. “Your Upper Christian School at Calcutta was the first Mission school to prepare girls for the University,” she told them, yet they had closed it.<sup>149</sup>

Of the girls trained to teach at the orphanage, then, Aladee started teaching in or about 1874 and continued for eight years. Of the adult teachers, Jessica Barham started in 1879 and served for 30 years. These are exceptions to a general rule of more or less rapid change in the staff. There was no reserve of trained teachers, European or Indian, to be drawn on, and when staff could be found, or youngsters trained to some unspecified standard, they were ever and again snapped up by the marriage market. In consequence the female schools that could be organized were all too often short-lived, precarious in their finances, and uncertain in what they taught. It was generally agreed that children in a schoolroom were likely to achieve more than family groups visited at home for an hour or so in the afternoon once or twice a week: and it was clear that there was a market, still small but growing, for female education. The Ladies’ Association had already tried to open more day schools<sup>150</sup> before Pigot was hired, and James Herdman, the “General Secretary” of the Calcutta branch, closed one such in 1865 on grounds of cost.<sup>151</sup> One of the obstacles to running schools was the cost of transport, since respectable girls, wearing gold and silver trinkets, could not walk the streets safely. The experiment was tried at the Kidderpore school, some time in 1870, of having the children collected from their homes by a woman employed for the purpose, and walking to the schoolhouse under her supervision. The parents soon found that their girls survived the journey, and the hope was that the crocodile of girls going to and from school would feature at the Associations’ putative new schools. The other, and weightier, obstacles were securing finance, and attracting the adherence of parents, this last all the more problematic since Christianity loomed large in the syllabus.

Pigot’s first efforts outside the orphanage were among her Brahmo contacts: Protap Chunder Mozoomdar and some friends had got an adult zenana class together in November 1871, and asked Pigot to take it on: Keshub Chunder Sen ran a “little girls’ school” in his house at Colootollah, and Pigot supplied a teacher, accompanied by an orphanage girl to translate, to that effort.<sup>152</sup> The thrust of her energy, however, was initially directed at teaching in the orphanage itself. The Ladies’ Association was an educational enterprise and orphanages had, in the early days, been the only access there was to the children of India. Pigot’s remit was to

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149 *NFM* December 1902 pages 89-90. See also *Life and Work* December 1902 page 287, “Mrs. Priyatama Bose, M.A.” Bannerjee’s information is in *The Pigot Case* pages 183-5, *IDN* supplement for September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883.

150 *NFM* October 1885 page 158 names Kidderpore as the Association’s only day school in Calcutta in 1869.

151 *NFM* July 1865 page 372f.

152 *NFM* July 1871 page 67, October 1871 pages 165-6 (letter from Nelly), January 1872 pages 9-11. See Appendix 4.

make the orphanage into a pupil teachers' centre, insofar as that was possible. By 1874 she was reporting on the "Upper or Normal Orphanage" and the "Lower or Normal Orphanage" classes, and it is to these that outside girls such as Dil Jan's children and Kalicharan Bannerjee's niece came.

Annette Akroyd arrived in Calcutta in December 1872, to begin the work which led to the opening eleven months later of the *Hindu Mahila Vidyalya*, the Hindu Girls' School with which the Bethune was in due course to be merged. Her diary for Thursday 9 January 1873 tells us that she "Called on Mrs Phear & had with her a long conversation de omnibus rebus. After tiffin to the Scotch Church School to see Miss Pigott, a nervous, sensitive capable woman."<sup>153</sup> It is fair to assume that Emily Phear took Annette Akroyd to see Mary Pigot. The three women might have met again in March, for the annual distribution of prizes at the Chorebagan<sup>154</sup> girl's school, except that Mrs Phear was unable to attend. This school had been opened in 1870 by Dr. Pearycharan Sircar in his own house, and by March 1873 negotiations with Pigot to supply a teacher were in progress. At the prize-giving Justice Phear<sup>155</sup> presided, James and Katharine Wilson, Keshub Chunder Sen, Protap Chunder Mozoomdar and half a dozen other reformers assisted, and Pigot gave out "dolls and toys of various sorts" as prizes. Phear opened his address by explaining, and apologizing fulsomely for, his wife's absence, before discussing the problems confronting female education. It is worth retaining one of his observations. "They could not conceal from themselves," he said, "that the classes to which the prizes have just been distributed were, even in the highest, little better than infant classes, and that consequently the instruction conveyed, even with the utmost perfection of means and zeal, could be nothing beyond infant instruction."<sup>156</sup> The majority of European and Indian reformers, including Pigot, wanted to see women get beyond elementary school. Whether they should be taught skills proper to a housewife and mother, or exactly the same academic subjects as men, was a matter for debate.

Pigot was able shortly afterwards to take over the school at Chorebagan, but the arrangement lasted only a little over one year. She insisted on the Christian content of her teaching, and although some parents felt that little or no threat was thereby presented, others objected, so that there were months of negotiations before she could start, and by July 1874 she had withdrawn her support from the school.<sup>157</sup> Wealthy Brahmos usually paid well for her services, and her finances can only have been disrupted by the interlude.

A school at Sonai, six miles south of the orphanage and outside Calcutta, had started by the winter of 1872. During repairs to the premises at Upper Circular Road the entire establishment was moved to Sonai, and Pigot visited some of the families in the neighbourhood. She was asked to open a school, and "I promised at first to give a poor woman 5 rupees a-month to undertake a little school, whilst I assisted her to other private

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153 IOLR, Beveridge Papers volume 104, Diary and Note Book in India. Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> [January 1873]. The diary records vividly enough the shock to Akroyd's sensibilities that Calcutta delivered, and the delays and frustrations incident upon opening a school with reliable finances behind it.

154 The directories list Chore Bagan as Mooktaram Baboo's Street.

155 Phear chaired the new Bethune School Committee, and the committee for the projected Hindu Mahila Vidyalya. After his return to England he was a Vice President (as was Miss Nightingale) of Carpenter's Bristol-based Indian Association.

156 *IDN* March 27 1873 page 3. The newspaper makes this the school's fifth annual prize day, not the third as we would expect.

157 Chore Bagan School is mentioned in *NFM* July 1873 page 63, October 1873 page 185 and July 1874 pages 266-7.

teaching to eke out a living.”<sup>158</sup> Attendance soon grew, and it was found necessary to rent “a little mat enclosure, and far too small for the 35 children,”<sup>159</sup> at Rs 1.5 a week. By 1878 the school was housed in the “upper storey of a pukka house,”<sup>160</sup> rented at Rs 9 per month. Village schools had different, and challenging, problems compared with those in town, and although the school at Sonai survived, it never met expectations.<sup>161</sup>

Dhoba Parah school was opened in or around October 1873. Funds had come from Ontario, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1873 Pigot wrote to the donors that

Your kind favour, bringing us such good help, has been some time to hand. I have delayed to express all our very deep thankfulness for it, so as to be able to give you some account of your work, which we arranged for at once. Your school has been fixed at Dhoba Parah, which means Washerman village—in no way significant of its present occupation. The site is crowded with large houses, that show such substantial circumstances as are to be found only in certain parts of the town, and the majority of the community are Brahmins—the highest caste. Your school is now held in one of these houses. The arrangements for it are not in the strict notions of European ideas, but very little suffices to effect our purpose, from the simple habits to which they are accustomed. We have spared them two small benches from the Orphanage, which are assigned to the elder set; while the smaller children all sit on mats. We had a room given to us; but as it was too small and close, we have settled ourselves in what is called the dallan, a verandah enclosure that surrounds the central courtyard. The rooms of these Indian dwellings are arranged in single order round an open square, and this dallan forms a passage for all these rooms. Such passages on the upper floors are used as a sort of parlour, where the women collect at certain hours and do their small gossip. The dallan on the lower flat is often used for dining. In our schoolhouse a distinct side has been reserved for this, and the larger portion of it has been appropriated by us. We have several Zenanas in this locality; and for a long time it had been my one desire to get a school here, and be permitted to work for the little ones.<sup>162</sup>

The house in question was near the General Assembly’s Institution, 46 girls were soon enrolled (the odd six described as belonging to the upper class and the rest to the middle) and one of the older orphans, Leah, was charged with the teaching. When Leah married in 1879 Aladee took over, and it is she who tells us the timetable. School was from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., and again from 2 to 3.30 p.m. or later. Pigot, the *burra mem*, came every fortnight, & sometimes, says Aladee, other ladies & even gentlemen came too.<sup>163</sup> At this school all the teaching was in Bengali, whereas at Kidderpore a handful of the girls were taught in English.

In early February 1875 Frances Thomson wrote home to describe, and give the programme for, a grand fête held on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1874 at which 250 girls from five high-caste schools were all brought together at the orphanage, in eight omnibuses hired for the occasion, to

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158 *NFM* July 1873 page 62.

159 Frances Macalister Thomson in *NFM* July 1874 page 305. On the following page she gives us a date for the opening of the Dhobapara school.

160 *NFM* April 1878 page 41 ff.

161 *NFM* October 1877 page 197, July 1885 page 102, and elsewhere.

162 *NFM* 1874 pages 239-240.

163 *NFM* January 1879 page 10.

receive their “prizes,” i.e. their dolls.<sup>164</sup> The programme tells us that Lady Muir presented the prizes to the orphanage girls, the daughter of Dr. Charles, chairman of the Corresponding Board, gave out the Kidderpore prizes, Mrs Cochrane obliged for Sonai, and Mrs Jardine for Dhobaparah.<sup>165</sup> Mrs Hannah,<sup>166</sup> who ran a highly-regarded school for Jewish girls that the Ladies’ Association would have liked to adopt but could not afford, presented prizes to girls at Badurbagan school, and Mrs. Barclay Chapman presented the prizes to the girls of Shobabazar school. These last two schools seem to have come into existence between July and December 1874 without readers of the *News of Female Missions* learning anything about it. Like the earlier schools they accommodated each about 50 high-caste girls, bringing the number enrolled to over 300. A Brahmin widow, Mothi, who had attached herself to the orphanage and who knew no English, taught at Shoba Bazar, and two of the pupil teachers from the orphanage were given Badurbagan.<sup>167</sup>

In 1876 a group of the local residents at Mutteabruz, in Garden Reach, south of Fort William, decided to open a school for their daughters, and immediately approached Pigot for a teacher. She lacked the resources to comply, and played for time, telling them that her teachers would bring the Bible with them, and that Garden Reach was too far. They persisted, and hired a local woman to begin classes: Pigot complained that the building was too small, and they undertook to build a bigger, at their own expense, and charge no rent. She relented in January 1878 and supplied a teacher.<sup>168</sup> Limited resources were clearly a major obstacle to her ambitions. As fast as she could train girls to teach, and however much money the Ladies’ Association could raise, demand exceeded supply.

The accounts published in *News of Female Missions* show rising spending on Calcutta, from about £530 in 1870 to £1460 in 1882. Other sources of finance were the congregation of St Andrew’s Church in Calcutta, in particular a St Andrew’s Ladies’ Association, which on occasion could provide substantial sums; individual donations from local supporters,<sup>169</sup> and government grants. Zenana fees were as a rule nugatory, although one or two very wealthy families paid well over the odds, so that Pigot’s zenana income was not negligible. The basic funding came, however, from the home society, and the Church of Scotland simply could not compete with Miss Brittan’s American Mission or the Church Missionary Society. The Free Church of Scotland, indeed, was raising more funds than the established church. In the denominational race, Pigot was starting from behind, and she would of course be judged by how close to the lead she came.

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164 *NFM* April 1875 page 43. Mrs Thomson writes “As you are aware, the high-caste schools have increased from three to five this year, with an attendance of nearly 300 girls.” Readers of the journal were aware of no such thing. There may have been an occasional news sheet circulated of which we do not know.

165 Sir William Muir, Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Provinces, retired early in 1874 and was now en route for Scotland; T.E. Charles, M.D., was a professor at the Medical College in Calcutta and an elder of the church; Mrs Cochrane’s husband was the manager of a bank and a member of the Corresponding Board. In 1874 he, Macalister Thomson and Octavius Steel had invested in the Panicherra Tea Garden in Cachar, see *IDN* 5 June 1879 page 3; the Rev. Dr. Robert Jardine, of New Brunswick, was Superintendent of the Church of Scotland Mission in Calcutta from 1872 until 1877.

166 K.S. Macdonald, of the Free Church Mission in Calcutta, was married to her daughter Jane. Herdman had married them at St Andrew’s Church, Calcutta. *BER* 1863 volume 104 folio 161.

167 Quite where in Shoba Bazar the school was is unclear. Badur Bagan is today the name of a street near Vidyasagar Park, just inside the Upper Circular Road.

168 *NFM* July 1878 page 97, and April 1878 page 41 ff. The latter account, probably by John Steel, does not name the school.

169 Not all of them Scots: for instance Preonath Mookerjee of Uterparah: *Friend of India* 9 March 1877 page 285. The Uterparah Hitakari Sabha was well regarded, running schools for both boys and girls.



Money apart, an important contributor to her resources was voluntary assistance. We have already seen Frances Thomson conjuring up dolls by the score. Working parties in Scotland, including doubtless groups of more or less willing Busy Bees, produced and dressed them by the hundred, and John Steel of Glasgow could have them packaged and shipped at no expense to the Ladies. Boy dolls were little sought after, but a shipment dressed in kilts and plaids led Pigot to predict that “the Scotch dress will make quite a sensation.”<sup>170</sup> Whether she was right or not is not recorded. Apart from dolls, pictures, books, trinkets, *châtelaines*, skirts and dresses, good-conduct medals, needles and thread, and sometimes books were unloaded at the docks at no cost to the orphanage. We also hear of Frances Thomson sending money to one of the teachers, Nelly Anne, every month, supplementing meagre wages. Nor are her letters to the *News of Female Missions* to be overlooked. Often enough, Pigot herself was too busy to write. The chaplain’s wife for much of the time was an all-purpose assistant to the lady superintendent.

Certain members of the Corresponding Board were invaluable to the female mission. In July 1871 Pigot warned readers in Scotland, “Do not over-rate me. I am not physically strong,”<sup>171</sup> and the following year Chater Gregory arranged a two-week break for her at Penang. She sailed on February 20 on board the steamer *China*, along with the captain’s wife Mrs Gardner, five gentlemen who are named, three Parsee gentlemen who are not, and 250 Chinese, along with a cargo of “opium and general” consigned to Sassoon and Sons in Hong Kong. The voyage to Penang took six or seven days, so that Pigot’s fortnight was intended to be sea air there followed immediately by sea air back: but the assassination of the Viceroy earlier in the month caused delay, there was no berth free bound for Calcutta, and Pigot found that her only course was to stay on board the steamer to Singapore and Hong Kong. Disembarking on 10 March, she was shown round the island by Captain Gardner, who had “most kindly procured a steam launch,” and taken to see a boys’ school and two German girls’ schools by Mrs Grant of Kidderpore House, who had been in Hong Kong for three months.<sup>172</sup> Pigot was back in Calcutta on 3 April, more than three weeks late. Gregory may well have paid her passage out of his own pocket, or other members of the Corresponding Board might have contributed. Such liberality was not uncommon in missions everywhere, and was of great if indeterminate value.

The secretary of the Corresponding Board for the second half of 1872 was the Rev James Williamson, a chaplain on the Bengal establishment who was drafted in to cover for Macalister Thomson during a six-month furlough. He appears to have shared Thomson’s enthusiasm for the zenana mission, and the financing of it, telling readers of the *Record*<sup>173</sup> that Pigot was bringing in more than Rs 100 in fees every month. In later years, after his return to Edinburgh, he showed a better acquaintance with Pigot’s finances than others, and must have got it by corresponding with either her or the Ladies’ Acting Committee.

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170 *NFM* April 1879 page 35.

171 *NFM* October 1871 page 165. The *Record* opines in May 1876 page 30 that “She is still far from strong in bodily health; but God ... is accomplishing a great work by the means of a very feeble instrument.”

172 *NFM* October 1872 page 178ff. Shipping lists *Penang Argus and Mercantile Advertiser* 29 February 1872 page 4, *Hong Kong Daily Press* 11 March 1872 page 1, *IDN* 4 April 1872 page 4.

173 *Record* for December 1872 page 218.

Jane Eliza Grant of Kidderpore House<sup>174</sup> was a staunch supporter. She paid for the upkeep of two of the orphans during the 1870s, and later, when Pigot was in Scotland, she stood in as superintending mistress, or “honorary manager,” of the Kidderpore and Sonai schools. When a distribution of prizes was planned for the two schools, it was in the capacious grounds of Kidderpore House that the venue was fixed.<sup>175</sup> Mrs Grant was rewarded with glowing thanks in the *News of Female Missions*.

James and Katharine Wilson we have already met. In 1870 they were in Scotland on furlough, and did not meet Pigot when she was appointed: but James Ogilvie, who had headed the General Assembly’s Institution since 1845, died suddenly in December, and Wilson was called back urgently in January 1871 to stand in for him. He knew the orphanage intimately, of course, and was able to offer Pigot “the help and advice she needed.”<sup>176</sup> This included applying for a Government grant to help finance the zenana work. Macalister Thomson was the principal mover in this, but Wilson and one or two others on the Corresponding Board were not far behind him. The Government of Bengal was prepared to accept, in principle, that elementary teaching begun in schools, which came to an end with marriage at the age of ten or thereabouts, was to be continued and extended in the zenana by the missionary societies: and on that basis would hand over a modest grant, counting each zenana as a separate and miniature school. In return of course a good deal of paperwork was required, names, numbers and assessments of the standard aimed at and the results achieved. Pigot could not be expected to take on all the resultant form-filling, and Wilson, and others, had to set aside time to help her with it. Katharine Wilson joined her husband in Calcutta early in 1873, and promptly struck up a firm friendship with Pigot. She had happy memories of the orphanage, and

We lived about a quarter of an hour’s drive from it, and were expected there at least twice a week. I myself have gone to Zenanas, and have visited the Hindoo schools with Miss Pigot, spending at times whole days in this way; and on occasions when visitors came to see these schools, and Miss Pigot was unable to accompany them, I myself went with them. Mrs. Macalister Thomson, at present residing in Edinburgh, will be able to testify that on occasions of examinations, Christmas-trees, and picnics, my husband and myself, along with others, gave our best assistance. This close friendship continued until my leaving India ...<sup>177</sup>

The Wilsons, then, as a husband and wife team, were assisting at the orphanage “at least twice a week.” Mrs Wilson’s value to Miss Pigot’s efforts, as her predecessor in the job, was surely high. When she was obliged to leave India during 1876 her loss must have been felt.

Another invaluable asset was John Steel’s brother Octavius, of 34 Old Broad Street, London and 14 Old Court House Street, Calcutta. An energetic and enterprising merchant, he was treasurer of the Corresponding Board (and therefore overseeing Pigot’s accounts) and at one time or another produced his own employees, sums of money, printed labels to sew onto dolls,

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174 Daughter of John Williams, the Archdeacon of Cardigan, and widow of Walter Colquhoun Grant of the Dragoon Guards. She married him in March 1861, and buried him in August. *BER* volume 99 folio 77, volume 100 folio 159. See inter alia *NFM* January 1876 page 10, July 1876 pages 72-3 and July 1877 page 92. She superintended the Military Orphan School at Kidderpore.

175 *NFM* July 1878 pages 85-86 and 97-98. The children from Mutteabruz school also attended.

176 Katharine Wilson’s letter to the Foreign Mission Committee, published in the *Statesman* 5 December 1883 page 3.

177 *ead ib* The annual Christmas Tree was, like the prize-giving, an occasion for distributing presents to the girls: Barrackpore Park was made available by the Viceroy to schools and orphanages for their annual outings or “picnics.”

and his own time and effort not to mention his house for the use of the orphanage. In April 1876 one of the orphanage girls reports that she and Miss Macnamara (at that point the acting superintendent of the orphanage, Pigot being in Scotland) saw the Prince of Wales and his retinue from Mr Steel's terrace in Old Court House Street.<sup>178</sup> The prince looked up, what is more, and raised his hat.

Kalicharan Bannerjee came back into Pigot's orbit at some time during 1878 or 1879.<sup>179</sup> She wanted to borrow some benches – the basic furniture of female education, along with mats, the little girls sitting on the latter and the older girls on the former – from either the General Assembly's Institution or the Free Church orphanage, and ran into him on collecting them. There was a meeting of minds between the two of them about which almost nothing is known except that it was deep. When she was in Scotland during June 1882 he wrote her a note to say, "Can a mother forget her son?" Irrespective of the connotations in Bengal of the word *son*, the fact that he wrote, clearly complaining that she had not written to him, indicates more than a formal or a business friendship. A witness at the trial of 1883 paints a fetching picture of Pigot and Bannerjee gazing in silence out of the window into the street below with their arms round each other's waist.<sup>180</sup> Friendship apart, his use to her matched that of her supporters on the Corresponding Board, in such matters as drawing up returns for government and conducting and marking examinations, and in addition he knew the finer points of Bengali etiquette when she had occasion to write to highly placed and well heeled Bengali gentlemen.

Pigot's alignment with Keshub Chunder Sen has already been noted. That she had a wide acquaintance among the Calcutta *bhadralok* is more than probable, but names are harder to find because of the limitations of the English-language sources. Joygobind Shome, like Bannerjee an elder of the Free Church and the editor of the *Indian Christian Herald*,<sup>181</sup> may have been a friend. Favourable publicity in Sen's *Indian Mirror* was certainly matched in the *Herald*. She herself insisted that she once knew Dr Chunder Coomar Dey of Amherst Street very well. Her business relations with a number of other Indians can be indicated, but how many of them were friends, or contributed materially to the running of the orphanage, is uncertain. Thus with Biprocharan Chuckerbutty she had a close working relationship, but to what extent they were friendly is elusive. We hear from Pigot herself that she was visited often by "native gentlemen" and that they would spend the evening in social intercourse: occasionally by "native ladies" too who "stole in to see me."<sup>182</sup> Her standing with the Brahmos, and other reform-minded residents of Calcutta, looks at times like that of an equal. Frances Thomson writes in 1873 that during a zenana visit "The judge was ill, and sent a message that he would like to see Miss Pigot. She is quite a friend of the family. I remained in the Zenana with the women while she went to see the husband."<sup>183</sup> Pigot herself, writing in 1910, leaves us in no doubt as to where she stood.

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178 *NFM* October 1876 page 180.

179 These dates are Bannerjee's, given at the 1883 trial. Pigot testified that they met occasionally in earlier years. *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* pages 176 and 201.

180 Grace Gordon, *The Pigot Case* pages 130-131, *IDN* Supplement 10 September 1883.

181 The weekly newspaper of the Bengali Native Christian Church, copies of which have not so far come to light. Shome is called a friend of Pigot's in the *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, a friend of Bannerjee's in *The Pigot Case* page 183.

182 *NFM* July 1874 pages 274-5. In receiving such visits Pigot was following the lead of Jardine and Wilson, see the *Record* for January 1873 page 244.

183 *NFM* October 1873 page 187. The visit is dated to 17 July of that year.

St. Andrew's Kirk was giving its annual Sunday School picnic at the Botanical Gardens by steamer, in which parents and workers joined. A lady friend requested Keshub Chunder Sen to bring Brahma ladies to it. He did so, and they passed the time happily in this company, but as food was as yet unacceptable to them, they went for it to the house of an employee friend of the garden. When the time for returning home arrived and the steamer was ready to start, the Indian ladies grouped themselves in great consternation endeavouring to hide among thick trees. Keshub Chunder Sen had in vain been urging them to proceed, and when the lady friend approached, he pointed to a small party of Bengalis who had offensively stood in their way. The lady immediately confronted them and bade them know that these ladies had come in the company of two hundred British people who had rendered them all due honour. She told them that they must have recognised Keshub Chunder Sen and should have understood the respectability of the Indian ladies, but they had insulted honourable women instead of being the protectors of their countrywomen. Upon this the men stood with lowered heads until she turned away and then they quickly disappeared.<sup>184</sup>

Pigot, then, here chats with a judge in his private rooms, and there puts a flea in the ear of a group of men in the Botanical Gardens. Among these people she has the standing of a *mem sahib*.<sup>185</sup> The suggestion is that she was better placed than any other agent of the Church of Scotland to move through the target population, the better-off Bengali residents of Calcutta, and promote the aims of her employer. But as to how wide was her network of contacts, or how real was her influence, we are not well informed.

She rose at 5 o'clock, and repaired to some unspecified part of the building to be alone for a while. Others, the occasional orphan and one or two of the teachers, would usually be sharing her bedroom, so that there was no privacy there. She wrote in 1878, when the orphanage was particularly crowded with guests, that "I have not a corner, as I once had, where I could lock myself in for a little time." Where, or whether, she regularly broke her fast is nowhere mentioned. Every morning the orphans attended the Native Church, held at first in Biprocharan's house because the flock was tiny,<sup>186</sup> and Pigot accompanied them. The "Normal" classes began at 6 o'clock and ran until 9, although it is hard to imagine Pigot herself committing to a regular class: preparation for zenana teaching resumed in the evenings, when a pundit came in to assist. Twice a week she took the orphans for singing, mostly English songs and hymns. She describes a series of interruptions, when in 1874 she was "engaged in giving a lesson to the orphanage as a whole" just after 10 in the morning: a lesson to all the girls of all ages might well have been singing. On Wednesdays all the Indian zenana assistants were given a bible lesson by Miss Pigot, and then prepared their week's work under her guidance. She helped them at the same time with fancy-work and "a little English." At the end of each month she tested their progress. The other four weekdays, from about midday, were given over to visiting schools and zenanas: "Monday, one set of zenanas taught by one teacher; Tuesday, a school to which I give the whole day," although no rigid timetable was possible, and a few months later we find her inspecting schools on the Monday

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184 Pigot's *Brief Reminiscence* page 7. The "lady friend" here is Pigot. She nowhere names herself in the text, even though much of it describes her own doings, not Keshub Chunder's.

185 A woman of standing could stop a hectoring Commissioner sahib in his tracks. See the editorial note in the *IDN* of December 20<sup>th</sup> 1867 page 2.

186 A church building was opened in February 1875, and an adjacent garden was provided by Octavius Steel, *Record* June 1881 page 454. The congregation, 47 in 1872, had by 1881 risen to 140.

and zenanas on the Tuesday.<sup>187</sup> At one of the schools on this latter occasion “I had then to examine each class on one subject—a heavy, laborious task. Pupils and teachers are much encouraged by it, and without it neither would do their duty.” Pigot here has no illusions that the girls she has trained and put in charge of this particular school have passed any kind of probation. With five schools to oversee, each on average perhaps visited once a fortnight, she is at best a peripatetic headmistress, and at worst, an occasional headmistress.

If running five schools remotely was inefficient, zenana visits—to 80 houses in 1877—was far more so. The hours were from shortly after midday until about 6 o'clock. Miss Macnamara in 1872 was visiting three houses a day. Mrs Macalister Thomson tells us in 1873 that an hour was necessary at each house, which suggests that five or six visits were the most that could be managed in ideal conditions. In the same letter she describes visits a few days later to four zenanas. At the first the wife was ill, and they came away, at the second the wife was away from home, the third was the wife of the unnamed judge mentioned above, and the fourth was the wife of a rajah. After that visit torrential rain began to fall and they hurried back home, having succeeded in two home visits. At any and every house social niceties and gossip took up time, husbands, or the senior women, could lose patience with the proselytizing and take away the pupil's books, whole families moved on holiday to country houses, there were the regular *pujas* when work stopped generally and finally in the hot season the whole of Calcutta slowed to a crawl. And the quality of the tuition given was of course variable. To service the 80 households claimed in 1877 Pigot could call on Frost, Dorkin and Tremearne, each accompanied by a trusted orphan assistant, and ten Bengali teachers two of whom were orphans, others orphans who had married but returned to the work, and others recruited from outside. Including herself Pigot had a staff of 14 to cover the 80 zenanas. That year she had been joined by a Miss Hoff, who “is also helpful, and is at present engaged in visiting the zenanas taught by the native teachers. Such inspection is necessary to keep up the teachers.”<sup>188</sup> As in the schools, the teachers, except for the best among them, needed a managerial eye.

The aleatory prospects of zenana visiting were generally understood from the outset. The *Friend of India* in 1876 could say that

The success of Zenana missions is entirely problematic. The public can only deal with the matter thus:—Given a certain number of accomplished and pious ladies expending much of their time, strength, and other fine qualities behind an opaque curtain: What will be the result? The published narratives of these results are (and this is said with the greatest respect for the writers,) of little assistance in working out a conclusion. They are redolent of pure devotion, alive with fine feeling, and are sometimes set with pleasant bits of narrative, but try to grasp the solid result and it passes away into the very thinnest air. It is unsubstantial all, and when you lay aside the letters and reports, you have gained a deep admiration for the noble Christian

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187 The monthly test is mentioned in *NFM* for January 1879 page 10, The Mondays and Tuesdays April 1877 page 50 and October 1877 pages 195-6 (August 6<sup>th</sup> 1877 was a Monday).

188 *NFM* July 1877 page 86. Pigot goes on to mention the difficulty lower-class teachers have in getting respect from upper-class pupils. A Miss A Hoff was teaching music and drawing at the Native Ladies' Normal School in 1871, and an Alice Hoff was married in July 1879 at Calcutta (*BER* volume 169 folio 140): Pigot's Miss Hoff is last mentioned at the distribution of prizes in February that year (*NFM* July 1879 page 92).

workers, and a kindly interest in *them*, but of the amount of work done you are left in utter ignorance.<sup>189</sup>

The paper went on to add, “Viewed from a religious stand-point, the results may be infinitely valuable. That is a point on which we may indulge abundant hope, but are unqualified to express a judgment.” Pigot’s remit was to promote the religion via the education. In her own mind, the two aims may have been of equal weight, or indeed may have been almost indistinguishable. But the yardsticks recognisable to the public—passes at examinations, and baptisms—were both well out of reach. Pigot explained on more than one occasion to readers of the *News* why the baptizing of Bengali women was a perilous step.<sup>190</sup> Just as male missionaries were ever and again accused of kidnapping young men with a view to perverting their ancestral faith, so the baptism, rare enough, of a Bengali woman invariably caused a hostile sensation all over town.

Zenana visiting, besides being problematic, was physically demanding. As the newspaper observed, the accounts of zenana work in the *News* are studded with pure devotion, fine feeling and colourful “bits of narrative,” but readers are also left in no doubt that Pigot was “worn out” at the end of the day,<sup>191</sup> “had a most fatiguing day,”<sup>192</sup> seemed tireless and “was out nearly eight hours that day,”<sup>193</sup> indeed was “much disheartened at times”<sup>194</sup> at the slow progress achieved. The sea voyage to Penang and Hong Kong in 1872 was “for sea change” in formal language, but was rephrased by one of the orphans as “our superintendent was ill.”<sup>195</sup> Again, “Our next house was that of a wealthy Babu. His wife had expected us last Friday, but as Miss Pigot was ill we were not able to go.”<sup>196</sup> How hard Pigot drove herself is not possible to determine, because no statement on that head is ever disinterested. The most ambitious and expensive project of the Ladies’ Association must of course be headed by an indefatigable woman who drives herself harder than she drives anyone else, and that is how Pigot is presented in the *News*. Any doubts and criticisms that were communicated to Edinburgh are kept out of sight. We are left, as the newspaper says, with a deep admiration for Miss Pigot, and appeals for more funding.

The fact that she sometimes had leisure is in fact blazoned in the pages of the *News*. She revealed in 1882<sup>197</sup> that November was her “hardest” month: since the hot season, which drove the government to Simla, put a considerable brake on all activity in Calcutta, the summer months were presumably her least hard. We know already that she received Hindu gentlemen who passed the evening conversing with her, and in 1874 she let slip that she had been studying the Hindu sacred books. A generous supporter and “a very true friend” had died that year.

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189 *Friend of India* 19 February 1876 page 152. The article is a comment on the education report for the previous year. George Smith had moved to Edinburgh in 1874, and these words were written by his successor W. Riach. The problem of unqualified and under-performing zenana teachers was well enough understood. GC Dutt suggested in 1874 that the British missionary societies should send out inspectors to assess performance. *IDN* 23 May 1874 page 2, letter to editor.

190 For instance *NFM* January 1872 page 11, July 1873 page 66, July 1874 page 271.

191 Frances Macalister Thomson, October 1873 page 186.

192 *eadem*, July 1874 page 307.

193 Emily Bernard, April 1879 page 37.

194 Mary Macnamara, January 1873 page 6.

195 “Sea change” *NFM* July 1872 page 70: “ill” according to one of the orphans, letter translated from the Bengali, *ibid* page 98. “She has returned quite well, and has given us two days’ holidays and a treat of sweetmeats. We are very happy...”

196 Frances Macalister Thomson, *NFM* October 1873 page 188.

197 *NFM* January 1882 page 4.

It was chiefly to the instruction of his young wife of fifteen that we devoted ourselves, but the son and daughter of a former marriage also took some share in our lessons. Our deceased friend was a man of high attainments, of much culture, and by his great and acknowledged merits had raised himself to the eminent position which he filled. Like many of the educated classes in this country, he was unfortunately a follower of Comte, whose tendencies a Hindu gentleman (at one of the social gatherings which I have) characterised as being Roman Catholicism without Christ; in the same way, suggested another, as Brahmoism is Protestantism without Christ. Yet in some respects one could not help feeling that he had more of the true spirit of Christianity than many who are Christians by profession.<sup>198</sup>

A sceptical reader in Scotland will have raised her eyebrows at the words *social gatherings*. Converting the heathen was one thing, consorting with them was quite another. If missionaries must have leisure time, it could surely be better spent than in inane talk of Catholicism and Comteism with unbelievers. As if to meet such a charge, Pigot had introduced her late friend of high attainments with the words

I am led to make these remarks at present, and to press them on the attention of our friends at home and in India, because I have to report the death of the native gentleman who, by the fees which he paid for the education of his family, aided us more than any other in our work. In so far as my own feelings indeed are concerned, it is the loss of a very true friend that I chiefly deplore; but as regards the Mission, I cannot shut my eyes to the loss in money we have sustained.

The unconventional, not to say *risqué*, contact with a more or less wide Indian acquaintance was then wholly bound up with the ambition to convert their wives and daughters to the true faith: the end justified the means. One house in 1873 was paying Rs 30 a month for daily tuition,<sup>199</sup> ten times the average. The 80 zenanas counted in 1877 would have brought in Rs 240 per month.

Funding problems were inevitable given the aim of the Ladies' Association to expand their operation. Macalister Thomson sent a reminder to the 1874 Annual Meeting in Edinburgh that more money was needed.<sup>200</sup> James Wilson, speaking at the orphanage Christmas fete that year,<sup>201</sup> went further:

the work of female education has increased beyond the power of the Ladies' Association to overtake. Miss Pigot, on the one side, is harassed by people clamouring for schools to be opened; and she, in her turn, harasses the powers that be, a thing not pleasant either to her or them, for more money to carry on the work. Things are coming to something like a dead lock. And I confess that I do not see how the difficulty is to be overcome, unless the Foreign Mission of the Church will itself undertake some part of the work.

James Wilson was no coward. He knew his words would be reported in Edinburgh, and he surely understood that talk of the Foreign Mission Committee—the men—muscling in on the ladies' operation contradicted the very idea of “woman's work.” The last thing women's

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198 *NFM* July 1874 pages 269-270. The unnamed friend might have been Rajah Kalikrishna Bahadur of Shobha Bazar, who died at Benares in April 1874. In *NFM* July 1873 page 66 Pigot writes that “Lately, we have entered the family of one of the chief rajahs of these parts.”

199 *NFM* October 1873 pages 189-190.

200 *NFM* October 1874 page 294. The message was delivered by George Green Gillan.

201 *NFM* April 1875 pages 47-48.

societies wanted was the coverture of the men's societies. Macalister Thomson wrote in early 1875 to the Ladies' Acting Committee urging them to apply to the Foreign Mission Committee for a grant "to carry on the zenana work more efficiently".<sup>202</sup> James Herdman, convener of the Foreign Mission Committee that year, was more circumspect, restricting his remarks on Pigot to praise of her "experience and aptitude" for the work and stressing that it was the Church of Scotland, not the Ladies' Association, that lacked the organization necessary to raise more money.<sup>203</sup> The drive to expand the female mission in Calcutta—and therein to exploit Pigot's capabilities to the full—was the work of these men. She undoubtedly agreed with them,<sup>204</sup> and it is reasonable to suppose that she was both confident in herself and ambitious, but without their advocacy she would not have been able to expand her operation very far.

In the immediate term, more money was found. The Christmas fete in 1874 was not the regular "Christmas Tree" at the Orphanage. Pigot had decided to mount a spectacular distribution of prizes for the purposes of publicity,<sup>205</sup> and gather all the girls from the five schools at the orphanage:

Through the kindness of other Missions, we got the loan of eight omnibuses for the occasion. A large part of the Orphanage grounds was covered in with an awning, and decorated with the flags of six ships and branches of palm trees, which had a beautiful effect. Several young men of our congregation deserve the greatest credit for the kind way in which they laboured the day before the gathering, and also from early in the morning of the day itself, until three o'clock, when the visitors were invited to come.<sup>206</sup>

The distinguished visitors duly came, and their standing in Calcutta society rubbed off to some extent on the orphanage, and increased the likelihood of press coverage. A year later an omnibus for the orphanage was ordered, "the cost not to exceed £80,"<sup>207</sup> not for the purpose of bringing schoolgirls in to the Upper Circular Road but to expedite the movement of the teachers out to the schools and zenanas. Macalister Thomson, as the General Secretary of the Calcutta Female Mission, was charged with acquiring the conveyance, he passed the job on to Wilson, and the result a year later was the largest omnibus in Calcutta, specially constructed and as long as a tramcar, in which a delighted Pigot took a rather nervous Wilson for a drive through the streets.<sup>208</sup>

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202 Minutes of the Ladies' Association 26<sup>th</sup> March 1875.

203 *NFM* October 1875 page 150.

204 In *NFM* October 1881 page 188 Pigot is quoted as writing "The country will gradually develop, and female education become an institution in the country, and the heathen take it into their hands. Now we have the whole field, and unless we press with a force that will possess the city, we shall either get beaten, or a great victory will be ours. This is a momentous time for the women of India." Her words are quoted from a letter "lately received" in May of that year.

205 James Wilson in 1875, and Pigot in 1877, explain the value of extravagant display, "great éclat" in her words, in impressing Calcutta. *NFM* April 1875 page 46, and April 1877 page 47.

206 Frances Macalister Thomson, *NFM* April 1875 page 43. For the identity of the visitors see page 40 above.

207 Minutes of the Ladies' Association December 12<sup>th</sup> 1875.

208 *NFM* July 1877 pages 90-91. See also the *Statesman* December 5<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3, where Mrs Wilson writes that "When school-houses had to be repaired, when a horse or carriage had to be bought, or an omnibus to be built, when a funeral or a marriage had to be arranged for, the looking after the matter fell upon my husband's shoulders."



At the end of March 1875 Pigot travelled to Britain, on the standard pretext that she needed to recruit her strength.<sup>209</sup> She brought with her two of Lizzie Tremearne's nieces.<sup>210</sup> In the case of European missionaries the medical fiat is usually credible enough, since their health was a constant concern, but it may be questioned in the case of a woman born at Chandernagore, who might have rested for a month or two at Simla or Darjeeling. "Rest and change" however is what we are offered. In her absence Mary Macnamara did her best to fill her shoes, and Mrs Colquhoun Grant took the Dhobaparah and Sonai schools, and ten zenanas in the vicinity, entirely under her wing.<sup>211</sup> Macnamara could count on the assistance of the Wilsons, the Macalister Thomsons and the Steel brothers, and if supporters in Scotland were left in no doubt that Pigot was irreplaceable, nevertheless "arrangements can, it is believed, be made to prevent the operations of the mission from suffering seriously by her absence."<sup>212</sup> The report for 1875 was written by Macnamara, and although she could not expand the work, she had no contraction to lament. Regular zenana visits she delegated to Frost and Dorkin, reserving her own time for filling gaps. She was able to open some new houses.

On the list of our new houses we have some wealthy and influential families, which help considerably to keep our fees from falling as low as they otherwise might. We have one Mahomedan family, and another of the up-country Sikh caste, a cousin or aunt to Dulip Singh, who is now in England. Her husband is one of those forbidding-looking men who prides himself upon the many innocent lives he took during the Mutiny of 1857. Had he not been so old and infirm, and his wife of such winning friendly ways, I think I should most certainly have held back from entering the family.<sup>213</sup>

In addition she engaged extra staff to make up her workforce:

Our staff of pupil-teachers in the Orphanage, numbering only ten, was found insufficient to carry out the several branches of our work. Outside native teachers were engaged, who are at present working under great disadvantages, having to walk long distances daily to their work. It was for this purpose Miss Pigot had so wished for an omnibus...<sup>214</sup>

She kept up the Wednesday bible class for the Indian teachers, bringing in a catechist from the Native Church to supply Pigot's teaching. Macnamara could hardly be expected to make good every want occasioned by the absence of the *burra mem*, but by all accounts she did a creditable job.

Pigot's movements in Britain cannot be reconstructed in any satisfactory manner because so little is recorded or dated. The Ladies' Acting Committee read a letter from her in October 1875, written from England, asking permission to attend medical training classes during the winter session. They took the advice of Dr T.E. Charles,<sup>215</sup> who was then in Edinburgh, and

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209 *NFM* July 1875 page 63: "Miss Pigot, your invaluable agent at Calcutta, has been compelled to seek rest and change by a visit to England." The word *England* was frequently substituted for *Scotland* or *Britain*, but Pigot was in England until at least October, possibly staying at Octavius Steel's house in London. She sailed on the SS Java (*IDN* March 31<sup>st</sup> 1875 page 3) which docked at London on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

210 Lt-Col Bradford of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Bengal Native Infantry had five surviving daughters that we know of, and no sons. Mrs Tremearne's sister Alice was his third wife, and he was her third husband.

211 So involved was she in the schools that after Pigot's return she asked "to continue to keep charge of them." *NFM* July 1877 page 92.

212 *NFM* July 1875 pages 63 and 66.

213 *NFM* July 1876 page 71.

214 *Ibid.* Self-respecting residents of Calcutta were not seen walking the streets.

215 See note 165, page 40 above.

he turned Pigot down, pointing to the “very great influence” she already had as a zenana visitor.<sup>216</sup> Her object was doubtless to broaden that influence. She had after all lived for three years with Dr William Robson, who understood very well the link between medicine and mission. She was also perhaps hearing enthusiastic voices advocating medical missions: as in Hong Kong, she visited and observed missions at work in London, her particular interest being the getting of money.

A clergyman’s daughter was telling me of a young brother having a farthing collection, and he was able to make up £20 this year by it for their Church Missionary Society. I was present at a sale of work that she had done at a small working association, by which they realised over £40, which was given to the Z.M.

I saw one interesting collection of work in London for the Z.M.; it was the contribution of servants. We need to get more and more to help, and there is no one that *cannot* help ...<sup>217</sup>

By late November Pigot was in Aberdeen. The Sabbath Schools in the city sponsored one and sometimes two of the Calcutta orphans, and a year earlier a valedictory service had been held there for Emily Bernard, a niece of no less a celebrity than Sir John Lawrence, as she prepared to sail for Poona to join her sister Eleanor in the service of the Ladies’ Association. At all events Pigot went there and on the 20<sup>th</sup> November addressed the Annual Meeting of the Aberdeen Auxiliary:<sup>218</sup> whereupon the Ladies’ Committee in Edinburgh received a medical certificate from Dr Farquhar, who was prominent in a number of Aberdeen charities, advising them that her health was not such as to permit her return to Calcutta, indeed saying she was at “considerable risk.”<sup>219</sup> Farquhar had heard Pigot speak, and either assessed her state of health across a crowded room, or agreed with her afterwards that she needed a pretext to remain in Scotland and address further meetings. At all events the Ladies’ Committee was minded to concur. Pigot as a fundraiser might be more effective in Scotland than she was in Calcutta, and the campaign to raise more money was at full steam. By mid-December the Committee was deciding to write to friends and relatives around Scotland suggesting they organize meetings that she could address.<sup>220</sup>

She was voted an allowance, and proceeded to attend meetings at 42 auxiliaries of the Ladies’ Association in different parts of Scotland. These she listed in the *News* of July 1876,<sup>221</sup> not forgetting to mention “the places that I visited at an earlier period” such as the East Neuk of Fife. Cash and boxes of work are the material outcome most readily reported, and in Aberdeen a Juvenile Association of “young ladies, varying in age from five to thirteen,” which survived until at least 1882.<sup>222</sup> The many meetings are ill represented in the Scottish press, but there are subsequent hints that they garnered for Pigot the support of a number of the natives of Scotland—support for her first, and for the mission in consequence. Her tour was accompanied by three articles which appeared in the *News* between April 1876 and January 1877. Entitled ‘A Peep into Zenana Life,’ they were the work of Alice Ferguson, the

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216 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association October 5<sup>th</sup> 1875.

217 *NFM* January 1876 page 10. The letter from Pigot is undated. The “ZM” is the zenana mission.

218 *Aberdeen Journal* November 24<sup>th</sup> 1875 page 6.

219 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1875.

220 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association December 16<sup>th</sup> 1875. Note also the letter from the Rev GM Grant to Mrs Goldie in *NFM* July 1876 page 87 “But it would be a great pity if advantage be not taken of Miss Pigot’s visit to Scotland to give the society a new impetus.”

221 Page 89.

222 *NFM* January 1882 page 16. A Mrs Robertson reports that her aim is to produce 100 dolls a year, but that girls drift away as enthusiasm wanes.

daughter of Joseph and Hannah Mullens, who had assisted her mother in zenana visiting in Calcutta as early as 1861,<sup>223</sup> and had opened zenanas at her husband's very successful Chamba mission in the early 1870s.<sup>224</sup> She therefore wielded great authority in the matter of zenana visiting. She addressed meetings, like Pigot, all over Scotland later in the year, building on and improving on Pigot's performance and raising substantial sums.<sup>225</sup> Pigot's speaking tour was, then, a component of a determined fundraising campaign. How determined can be judged from a notice placed in the Church of Scotland *Record* for April 1876.<sup>226</sup> Worded as if written by Pigot herself (as it may have been) it briefly relates how she was recruited with the assurance that funding from Scotland would come through, how the public has failed the Ladies' Association insofar as contributions are no higher now than they were five years ago, and that she now cannot pay her teachers. As soon as they are trained, they leave for better-paid work elsewhere, and "our mission has now become a reproach." If the Church of Scotland can conjure up the funding "I am ready to return to Calcutta and carry it on; if not, there is no choice but to withdraw and let it be given up."

The language was strong, and the appeal to readers of the *Record* was genuine, but the notice additionally served to prepare the public for the financial support which the Foreign Mission Committee was in due course to give to the Ladies. Herdman and Macalister Thomson were members of the Foreign Mission Committee, had urged the Ladies to embark on the expansion of their operation, and were ready to back their words with money. The Ladies were inevitably in close contact with the gentlemen, since often enough the husband sat on the Foreign Mission Committee and the wife on the Ladies' Committee. The Stevensons of 17 Heriot Row in Edinburgh are an example. At some undated point Pigot called on Margaret Stevenson<sup>227</sup> and found her away from home. Instead she met the son Robert Louis, and a lifelong friendship took root on the spot.<sup>228</sup> The Stevensons sent Pigot his books, from Samoa and from Edinburgh, and after their death Miss Balfour kept up the supply. A copy of *A Child's Garden of Verses* sent in 1885 by Margaret Stevenson to Miss Pigot is currently in the catalogue of Abe Books.

Pigot returned to Calcutta on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1876, to find a new Director of Public Instruction in place and Mary Macnamara preparing for her wedding to a Calcutta freight broker.<sup>229</sup> Macalister Thomson married them on the 16<sup>th</sup> at St Andrew's Church, and James Wilson was a witness to the union. Whether or not the effort of running the mission single-handed for 19 months had exhausted Macnamara's strength and patience there is no way of knowing: similarly Pigot's alarm at the loss of her trusted lieutenant has to be guessed at, since she

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223 Mary Weitbrecht *The Women of India and Christian Work in the Zenana* page 74 dates Hannah Mullens's first zenanas to 1861, on her return from England.

224 She lost an infant daughter on arriving at Chamba at the end of 1871: *Record* September 1872 pages 156-7.

225 *Record* for May 1877 page 347. The same item tells us that "From Calcutta and Madras there are urgent requests for additional well-qualified ladies to act as Zenana visitors and as superintendents of high-caste native schools," and of Pigot herself, "The extent of the work and the responsibility are very much greater than ought to be laid upon one woman."

226 Page 7.

227 M. I. Stevenson sat on the Ladies' Acting Committee and sponsored two orphans at Calcutta.

228 National Library of Scotland MS 6295 folios 125-127. Writing in 1913, Pigot complains of failing memory, but says of RLS that "I cannot avoid remembering him. Bless him." There are one or two highly partisan references to her, and to Hastie, in his letters: Booth and Mehew, *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* Yale University Press 1994-5.

229 *BER* volume 158 folio 177, *IDN* November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1876 page 2 Domestic Occurrences. The husband had been widowed the previous year—Macnamara bore him a son in September 1877 *BER* volume 162 folio 65.

maintained silence. The only indication in the *News* of Macnamara's departure is a gift costing £5 12s 6d, although what was bought we do not learn.<sup>230</sup> Likewise the nearest thing to a comment from Pigot is that Macnamara had allowed too many of the orphans to marry: "during my stay in Scotland, all who asked had received...we had parted with so many that it had become detrimental to our other work."<sup>231</sup> Lizzie Tremearne joined the team in November,<sup>232</sup> and conceivably Pigot wanted a friend to replace a friend.

Henry Woodrow was on the point of succeeding Atkinson as Director of Public Instruction when he died

At St. Paul's School, Darjeeling, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, 1876, in the 54<sup>th</sup> year of his age, Henry Woodrow, M.A., Director of Public Instruction, Lower Bengal, and formerly Fellow of Caius College, Cambridge.<sup>233</sup>

He was understood to have had heart disease for some time, and the upshot was that Atkinson and Woodrow were swept away in the same year. James Sutcliffe was promoted *pro tem* to stand in for Woodrow, took furlough in March 1877 (again on grounds of health) and was replaced by Alfred Woodley Croft. Pigot, then, lost two familiar figures—sparring partners, perhaps, rather than friends or foes—even as she sailed back to Calcutta. In December the Department of Public Instruction acted on a plan that had been maturing for some time, certainly before Sutcliffe's time: an inspectress was appointed, a woman who would have access to the zenana, and who could assess the nature and the quality of the education that the missionaries were promoting and government was to some extent funding. The woman chosen was an Anglican with impeccable credentials, Mrs Monmohini Wheeler, daughter of the celebrated Krishna Mohun Bannerjee and wife of a respected Church of England missionary. She was highly educated, entirely at home in western culture—the residents of Chandernagore would have called her *très évoluée*—and received invitations to Government House, alongside Lady Garth, the wife of the Chief Justice, Katharine Wilson, and Jane Macdonald, but not as far as we know Mary Pigot.<sup>234</sup>

Katharine Wilson was not however to attend any further tea parties at Government House. Her little boy William, not yet three years old, contracted measles and was ordered home by the doctor, and she had left Calcutta with the children early in May, never to return.<sup>235</sup> Pigot could still rely on James Wilson, but only of course in the spheres in which a man was competent.

Eleanor Bernard at Poona, meanwhile, was found to be in ill health and was "strongly advised to take a sea-voyage to Calcutta" for a change of air.<sup>236</sup> She arrived during December

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230 *NFM* July 1877 page 187.

231 *NFM* July 1878 page 94.

232 In the third of three letters printed in the *Record* for June 1877 pages 393-5. "L.T." explains that she is new to the work, but that she has been accustomed to visiting respectable Bengali neighbours and can speak sufficient Bengali to maintain a conversation among women. The other letters are from S.D. (Dorkin) and L.F. (Frost).

233 *IDN* 16<sup>th</sup> October 1876 page 2 Domestic Occurrences, and *BER* volume 158 folio 228. WHB Laurie in his second volume of *Distinguished Anglo-Indians* has him falling ill while reporting to Temple, now Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, at Darjeeling.

234 *IDN* January 10<sup>th</sup> 1880 supplement The Drawing Room. That Pigot never received an invitation to a levee cannot yet be taken for a fact, but she has not figured on any list so far consulted.

235 *Statesman* December 5<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3, *IDN* May 12<sup>th</sup> 1876 page 3 Passenger List.

236 *NFM* January 1877 page 21. A Miss Bernard arrived from Madras with the steamer *Dorunda*: *IDN* for December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1876 page 3. Eleanor Bernard, five years younger than Pigot, sailed for Poona at the end of 1874 and retired in 1909 aged 67. She died in 1919.

and was soon, in all apparent good health, visiting schools and zenanas with all of which she was, on paper at least, both pleased and impressed. How impressed appeared in the *News of Female Missions* for April 1877.<sup>237</sup>

... it was a long work yesterday to unpack all the beautiful dolls and presents that you sent Miss Pigot. We spread out all the dolls in the large veranda of the Mission-house, and I counted 251. Then the teachers came and chose first what they thought the nicest for their zenana pupils. I tried to carry off a baby from Aberdeen, who cried and held up its hands, to show the native babies who come to the Poona Mission-house; but I am sorry to say that it was not given to me.

And

Miss Pigot took me to one house where the mother has received God's witness and is rejoicing in her Saviour; she looked quite different, — neat dress and happy face. She cannot receive baptism herself, but her teaching has been blessed to another lady, her relative, who has since been baptised. No doubt she has troubles in her heathen home. I saw a letter to Miss Pigot calling her 'mamma,' and entreating her to come soon and see her.

And

It was holiday time in the Orphanage, so that I cannot tell you much about it. I used to hear very sweet sounds of a hymn sung down stairs as soon as it was light in the morning. And the last week, going down before eight o'clock on another errand, I found classes seated, and work going on regularly in the school-room. Miss Pigot says these girls turn out her best school-teachers; so that the long costly training you give them is not lost.

Of Miss Bernard herself Mrs Hannah reported that "I have seen Miss Pigot several times. She was present on our closing day.<sup>238</sup> Miss Bernard also visited the school yesterday (we reopened on the 8th January), but her time was too limited to see much of the work. I like her greatly. She seems truly and earnestly devoted."<sup>239</sup> The mutual admiration and praise are to be expected in the pages of the *News*, but Eleanor Bernard was nothing if not consistent. In 1881 she was to say of her own operation at Poona that it was "no great or grand work, such as that of my friend Miss Pigot in Calcutta."<sup>240</sup> Thus the Pigot who had written "do not over-rate me" was now being rated rather highly. A Mrs Drury wrote from Madras in 1878 that she had discovered "how much Miss Pigot and I think alike in many matters connected with the work and its improvement," and hoped to meet her.<sup>241</sup> In a small way Pigot was being made a celebrity. Still in 1878, we learn that an unnamed woman left her home in Howrah "to be prepared for baptism by Miss Pigot,"<sup>242</sup> and an Indian Christian called Mary Turner brought her two daughters from Lucknow to Calcutta with the intention of placing them at "Miss Pigot's school."<sup>243</sup>

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237 *NFM* April 1877 pages 66 to 69.

238 Mrs Hannah's school for Jewish girls closed on December 18<sup>th</sup> for the holidays.

239 *NFM* April 1877 page 73, dated January 12<sup>th</sup>.

240 *NFM* July 1881 page 90.

241 *NFM* April 1879 page 40.

242 *Indian Female Evangelist* January 1878 page 32. The anonymous woman is Rajeshuri, and Pigot had the gravest doubts about baptizing Indian women.

243 *India's Women* April 1892 pages 151-152.

Miss Bernard left Calcutta on January 20<sup>th</sup> 1877, having made a suggestion that Pigot adopted with alacrity.<sup>244</sup> This was that she should set up the orphanage—the “mission house” as it was coming to be called—as the venue for regular social meetings of the Native Bengali Church. Pigot proceeded to get up a committee of management that in due course comprised all the indigenous pastors in Calcutta, and the third Tuesday of each month was set down as the day of the meeting. Each pastor decided who among his flock should be invited. The first such gathering seems to have been in February 1877, and as well as prayer and appropriate readings, “tea and cakes went round, and free scope was afforded for conversation. Then there was a little secular music on the piano.”<sup>245</sup> Occasionally lantern slides were shown. John Steel wrote from Calcutta in February 1878 that men and women, both Indian and European, attended: he named among others James Wilson and Kenneth Macdonald, who had brought “some of the girls of the Free Church Orphanage.”<sup>246</sup> Steel presses home his conviction that here was “an attempt to bring together two races who have become one in Christ Jesus,” not to mention its significance for “the equality of women.” The element absent from this encomium is lower-class Christians, and the natural assumption would be that none were entertained. The classes that did not mix in England did not mix in India either, added to which the label of *dhal-bhat*, ‘rice converts,’ or ‘bread-and-cheese converts,’ too readily stuck to them. Their reputation in Calcutta was low on all sides, among Hindus as perverts to an alien faith and among Anglo-Indians as no true converts at all. The only word of their setting foot inside the orphanage drawing room is from Mrs Oliver:

What was it you did not like about the social gatherings? I thought they were very peculiar.

How? The gate was wide open; anybody and everybody entered.

Well? I thought that was strange for a female institution.

Who used to be at these social gatherings? Anybody and everybody.

What classes of people? From what I could see, some very low class people used to be present; similarly some in good position. It was a mixture.<sup>247</sup>

Almost absent from the initial reports is the presence, on occasion at least, of non-Christians.<sup>248</sup> In 1902 Pandita Ramabai related that her first exposure to Christianity was an

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244 We have only Pigot’s word that Bernard made the suggestion (*The Pigot Case* page 201, *IDN* supplement September 13 1883). Such Christian reunions were however not unknown to India (e.g. the *Record* for May 1877 pages 342-344 describes a social gathering at Poona in 1868) before Pigot introduced them in Bengal, so that the assertion is likely enough. On the other hand Pigot’s first report of the initiative in *NFM* July 1877 pages 91-92 makes no mention of Bernard: “It had often occurred to me that after these are converted and baptised, we leave them alone to go their solitary way without any other loving solicitude. I convened a meeting of native pastors and leaders of the different churches, and proposed that we should gather certain in turn from the various congregations, and have a monthly meeting for social, kindly intercourse.” The “meetings of native pastors” mentioned by Pigot were a regular monthly event, regularly hosted by Pigot, and are to be distinguished from the social reunions: *NFM* April 1879 page 37.

245 *NFM* October 1877 page 205. The piano was on loan. The account is from “a friend in Calcutta,” and he must have attended the June meeting, since “Mr Chuckerbutty announced, first in Bengali, and then in English, that the next meeting would be on the 17th of July.”

246 *NFM* April 1878 page 44. Octavius Steel was also present on that occasion.

247 *IDN* supplement September 10<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 119. Emily Bernard in February 1879 mentions “the monthly social meeting of native Christians of all classes.” *NFM* April 1879 page 37.

248 The “friend in Calcutta” of October 1877 says that “Only Christians are invited, but a Bengali factor, who is not a Christian, happened last night to call just before the people began to come, and Miss Pigot could not well avoid asking him to remain, which he did very willingly.”

invitation from Pigot, in 1878, to a meeting which was “partly of a social character and ended with prayer,” on leaving which she had been given a Sanskrit Bible.<sup>249</sup>

Pigot herself, in describing the “social reunions,” makes no mention of bridging racial divides, promoting the equality of women or inviting unbelievers. A certain caution can be read into all her letters and reports that are printed in the *News*. Schools are supported because others have opened them and then pressed her to supply a teacher: when she visits one zenana she is stopped in the street and urged to visit another. The Wilsons and the Macalister Thomsons employ the same language, insisting that the mission is answering not just the need, but the vocal demand of Calcutta for its services. Pigot’s account of the social evenings<sup>250</sup> opens therefore with the “need and craving” of Bengali Christians for social life and adds that “this is a new education in itself to these people.” She then describes Hindu weddings as ostentatious and ruinously expensive feasts for hundreds and sometimes thousands of strangers, so that “social life becomes a burden; and hence no social usages exist with them... There is nothing of social intercourse and friendly kindness,” from which it follows that “Much needs to be done for the Christians to foster and develop their new life.” The utter poverty of Bengali *mores* is standard fare in missionary literature. The only variation here is that Pigot extends the shadow of that vacuum over those who have adopted Christianity: baptism alone does not solve their problems, be they men or women, so that their Christianity is incomplete. With that preamble, she describes the social evenings.

In our social reunions, European and Bengali Christians meet on the ground of our common Head and unity in Christ. The evening is spent in singing hymns and other sacred songs. Occasionally short readings are given, helpful to Christian life. And we part after reading the blessed Word and prayer. Opportunities are given for conversation, and all move about freely in the room and veranda and on the terrace. The endeavour is made to give such animation as is consistent with our Christian principles. And I trust the heathen are shown and Christians are being taught, to practise, “Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”<sup>251</sup>

The chatter, then, and the moving about freely, are hedged about with prophylactic piety, and the refreshments only figure in the mouth of St. Paul. Once again, donors in Scotland must be shown a pleasing picture in clean primary colours.

The letters to and from Edinburgh have disappeared, and the Ladies’ Committee minutes are silent on the social reunions, so that the extent to which Pigot obtained the agreement of Edinburgh in hosting them cannot be known. The carefully worded defence of them just quoted was, as like as not, prompted by communications from Edinburgh. The objections to inviting men into a female orphanage for tea, cakes and ices were self-evident.

A venture, again in 1877, which certainly aroused opposition was the entertainment of ‘parlour boarders.’ A small number of Bengalis wanted their wives and children taught at least the rudiments of a western way of life, usually when the menfolk were obliged to leave Calcutta. Annette Akroyd had boarded one or two such abandoned families at the Hindu Mahila Vidyalaya between its founding in 1873 and temporary closure in 1876.<sup>252</sup> The closing

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249 *NFM* January 1902 page 3, December 1902 pages 89-90. She was baptized four years later: the *Indian Mirror* for November 9<sup>th</sup> 1883 describes her conversion as “recent.”

250 *NFM* July 1878 page 92.

251 1 Corinthians 10.31.

252 *Proceedings of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Education Department* May 1877, “On Female Education in India” page 6 reproduces a long letter from Mary Carpenter to the Secretary of State for

of one door inevitably set husbands and fathers in search of another, and Pigot was under pressure to emulate Akroyd before she left for England.<sup>253</sup> Romesh Chunder Dutt wanted his two oldest daughters taught by Pigot while he was out of Calcutta on government business,<sup>254</sup> and early in 1877 she was persuaded to comply. Some months later, in or about April 1877 and presumably at Dutt's urging, his wife and all four daughters moved into the orphanage: whereupon Bihari Lal Gupta sent his wife and two little children in their wake, this second family arriving in August. Pigot wrote an account for the *News*, a lively sketch brushed with humour and explained by "This will give you some knowledge of all the things that fall upon mission hands to do; for these lower things have a most important bearing upon our influencing in the higher," and again "Missions have varied labours and many struggles, and we have to do all that comes to hand, that by some means this great end might be gained."<sup>255</sup>

The initiative with parlour boarders seems not to have been cleared in advance with the Ladies' Committee in Edinburgh. The minutes, usually unforthcoming, record that

Mrs Murray suggested that a letter should be written to Miss Pigot, Calcutta making more particular inquiry as to the propriety of receiving heathen families, such as are now being admitted into the Mission House.

The Secretary wrote to Miss Pigot as suggested.<sup>256</sup>

Clearly Mrs Murray was not beguiled by Pigot's "we have to do all that comes to hand." Pigot's tactics in converting the female half of Calcutta were of course largely in her hands, but by her own account the Guptas disturbed the peace and crowded the space of the Mission House. The Ladies' Committee was well within its rights to require an explanation of its agent's tactics; and, as ever, the reaction of readers of the *News* had to be considered. Pigot's task was to sally forth and batter down the doors of heathen houses, not let her drawbridge down and invite the heathen in.

Pigot's reply can only be guessed at, but doubtless it mentioned the sums Dutt and Gupta were paying. The next reference to parlour boarders in print appeared in the *News* for July 1878.

Another and bolder step is the attempt to influence favourably the wives and families of enlightened native gentlemen—some of whom have been in England—by receiving them as boarders in the Mission-house. It is a remarkable proof of the influence which Miss Pigot has, that such an arrangement should have been possible; for long before she was connected with our Mission her resolute determination to insist under all circumstances on Christian teaching was matter of public notoriety, and from this determination she has never swerved. The experiment now being made will cause no fresh expense to the Mission; the Association have every confidence that in the hands of Miss Pigot, with the advice of the local board, everything that prudence and zeal can suggest will be done to render it a means of real blessing.<sup>257</sup>

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India, dated August 30<sup>th</sup> 1876, which refers to "Miss Akroyd's Boarding School" for adult ladies, to which gentlemen sailing for England had entrusted their wives, in the hope that they would pick up something about English ways.

253 *NFM* January 1878 page 6.

254 Lucinda Oliver worked briefly for Dutt as a governess after she had left the orphanage: *The Pigot Case* page 124. Oliver as a freelance, and Pigot as a professional, were here serving the same market.

255 *NFM* January 1878 pages 6-8.

256 Minutes of the Ladies' Association January 18<sup>th</sup> 1878.

257 *NFM* July 1878 page 85.



A self-financing experiment under the prudent eye of the Corresponding Board was a sufficiently reassuring prospect for even the most sceptical. In the same number of the journal we learn that four families, 16 bodies in all, have been entertained during the year, “usually for six months’ training.”<sup>258</sup> Pigot reports that “They occupy rooms alongside of mine, dine at our table, and join at our devotions. The only drawback is, that their term is so short;” before delivering 900 words on the unhappy consequences of Bengali husbands adopting western manners and leaving their wives to make the best of it, and closing her account with an unnamed daughter of an unnamed family openly confessing her belief in Christ.<sup>259</sup> We may safely conclude after reading this that if the Ladies’ Committee forbid further parlour boarders, then the Ladies’ Committee will be wrong.

The October number of the *News of Female Missions*<sup>260</sup> informs us that the third family to board was that of a barrister, the fourth of a covenanted doctor, and that one of the four families had stayed for seven months. Little is heard thereafter in the *News* of parlour boarders, but we learn in 1881 of “three native ladies” and their children boarding at the mission house.<sup>261</sup> Pigot’s argument seems to have prevailed.

The lease of the orphanage on the Upper Circular Road expired during 1877. A minute of the Ladies’ Committee meeting for November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1875 tells us that it was due to expire in March,<sup>262</sup> and instructs the secretary to write to Macalister Thomson asking him to move the Corresponding Board to find “a more commodious house” in Calcutta. Mrs Wilson later maintained that a good deal of the finding was done by her husband— “I can well remember my husband writing to me about the many hours driving about he had at different times, looking for suitable accommodation.”<sup>263</sup> A large house in Bow Bazar was identified, and Octavius Steel and Macalister Thomson negotiated a long lease at a high, but acceptable, rent. Pigot relates how

Mr Steel found this house; and with his keen foresight, pronounced it the very thing for us. I met him and Mr Thomson to judge of it; and as we stood in the inner courtyard, choked with rank, tall weeds, and saw the neglected and dismal look of the large dirty rooms, and all the strange nooks of a purely Indian house, and a wide drain surrounding the house, bubbling in its steamy, black mass, my heart sank—losing heart because it lacked cheer, and, much more, because we lacked the money for such a house. But the question resolved itself into, “This house or no house at all.”<sup>264</sup>

The orphanage on the Upper Circular Road had meanwhile been bought by Keshub Chunder Sen, apparently for Rs 20,000. He renamed it *Lily Cottage* and moved in as soon as he could: the words of the *News* are that he “begged that possession might be given as soon as possible.” The want of more detailed information prevents any clear statement as to these transactions.

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258 *NFM* July 1878 page 89.

259 *NFM* July 1878 page 92.

260 *NFM* October 1878 page 194.

261 *NFM* July 1881 page 78. A letter written in October 1882 and produced at the 1883 trial tells us that “Adeline was supposed to be a Parlour Boarder at Rs. 40, but her “extras,” whatever the charges were, exceeded that item by a great deal. I heard that it was never below Rs. 50 to Rs. 55.” *The Pigot Case* page 10.

262 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1875. “March” implies March 1876, but the lease expired “in the middle of 1877” according to *NFM* July 1878 page 84. The wording of the announcement might suggest that Sen bought the house in 1876 and gave the Ladies a further year or so to find suitable premises.

263 *Statesman* December 5<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3.

264 *NFM* July 1878 page 101.

The simple fact of Keshub Chunder's having bought Miss Pigot's orphanage might tend, at first blush, to reinforce a sense of their intimacy. But all it shows is that he had seen the place and liked the look of it.

Sen and Pigot were in regular communication during 1877. He is not recorded as a guest at the annual distribution of prizes at the beginning of March, held at the General Assembly's Institution and the most spectacular to date,<sup>265</sup> whereas she attended the prize day of the Native Ladies' Normal School, held at his house in Colootollah, later that month. But they must have conferred closely on the domestic upheaval which now struck Sen. The young maharajah of Cooch Behar was to be sent to England to round off his education, and his mother stipulated that he must be married beforehand. Sen's daughter Suniti was fixed upon, his doubts were overcome, notwithstanding that neither of the youngsters was of age, and government first assessed Suniti's suitability as a bride and then insisted that they, not Pigot, continue her education.<sup>266</sup> The assessment of Suniti by the Deputy Commissioner was under Pigot's eye, however, since the Sen house was deemed unsuitable.

The ancestral home, where she then resided, capacious in nearly one hundred apartments, where often one hundred and fifty members of the joint family resided, was felt to be too disconcerting a place for the ordeal of a young girl suffering herself to be inspected. It was accordingly arranged she should meet him in the Scotch Mission house where she took lessons. Thus in all the naivete of girl innocence, she entered the room where Mr. Dalton awaited her.

He asked her to show her lesson books, she read from her English literature and played a piece on the piano to his satisfaction. At 13 years of age Indian girls are as attractive as the sweet 17 of Europe. Slight, in her graceful form, the contour of her delicate features perfect, and the tenderness of her lustrous eyes looking up to him in trustful confidence, she captured the heart of Mr. Dalton, making him her gallant champion in all that followed.<sup>267</sup>

We are not told whether the interview with Dalton was at Upper Circular Road or at Bow Bazar. There was a piano at both addresses; the move to Bow Bazar was complete by December, when the Steel brothers visited the place; the extensive refurbishment and alterations there probably took months, and the most likely *locus* of Suniti's ordeal was Upper Circular Road.<sup>268</sup>

On February 25<sup>th</sup> 1878 the Sen party set out for Cooch Behar, although Pigot seems not to have accompanied them.<sup>269</sup> Certainly she was present at the betrothal (as the Government of Bengal insisted on calling it) or marriage (as Sen's critics called it), and she described her part in it for the Edinburgh ladies in a "rough journal".<sup>270</sup> The *varan* ceremony was enacted on March 5<sup>th</sup> and shortly thereafter the maharajah departed for England, Pigot returned to the

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265 *Friend of India* March 9<sup>th</sup> 1877 page 285, *IDN* March 3<sup>rd</sup> page 3, *NFM* July 1877 pages 80, 89-90.

266 Suniti Devi attended, at least for a time, the Bethune School, according to her *Autobiography* (pages 15-16), where she correctly identifies one of the teachers, Miss Hennings. But in 1877 (page 49) "We drove over to dear Miss Pigot's school-house, where I usually had lessons. I was very nervous ..." to see Dalton.

267 *Brief Reminiscence* pages 12-13.

268 The accounts for the calendar year 1877 (*NFM* July 1878 page 185) show "Rent of Orphanage—11 Months £144. 11. 0. Repairs to New Orphanage, ... £119. 16. 0". Eleven months starting when?

269 Suniti records that "two ladies (wives of missionaries)" were of the party. *Autobiography* page 60.

270 The MS journal seems not to have survived. Pigot describes her part in her *Brief Reminiscence* pages 17-18. The events at Cooch Behar are briefly described in Prosanto Kumar Sen *Biography of a New Faith* Calcutta 1954 vol. 2, and he adduces Pigot (page 198) as an eyewitness to his account. She was away from Calcutta for three weeks (*NFM* July 1878 page 99).

new Mission House in Bow Bazar and Suniti resumed her interrupted adolescence at Lily Cottage, where her teacher, Mrs Tremearne, was soon to be replaced by a governess appointed by government.<sup>271</sup>

In assisting at the ceremony Pigot missed an event that she would otherwise have unfailingly attended. Macalister Thomson had completed 17 of his 20 years' service, and was entitled to round it off in Scotland. There was a ceremonial farewell with speeches on March 1<sup>st</sup>, and Thomson sailed for home immediately, about two years after his wife Frances.<sup>272</sup> Pigot had now lost, in short order, Mary Macnamara, both of the Macalister Thomsons and Katharine Wilson—and for good measure William Robson, in Scotland himself for his health, died in April aged 40. Pigot's response to the haemorrhaging of unpaid voluntary expertise was to ask, before the summer of 1877, for two ladies to be sent out "to share with her the superintendence of the work." It is legitimate to wonder if she missed Frances Thomson and Katharine Wilson in particular. Frost and Dorkin seem to have been competent and reliable assistants—Frost relates that whenever she lost a zenana, Vidyasagar himself promptly found her another—and the trained local girls were deemed, as we have seen, passable if regularly supervised. But for supervision Pigot was now reduced to Lizzie Tremearne and herself, both of them saddled with their own teaching. The plea for two ladies to "share the superintendence" tells us that Pigot thought her staff two deputies short of a full team.

In Scotland the problem was understood, and measures were proposed. The Glasgow Auxiliary of the Ladies' Association was eager to take full responsibility for the funding and government of the Calcutta mission, by April 1877 negotiations were in hand, and in due course the trial was attempted. At the same time Alice Ferguson agreed to move to Calcutta,<sup>273</sup> although a woman of her standing could hardly have contemplated serving as Pigot's deputy. Addressing the 1877 annual meeting, Ferguson restated the case bluntly: "There stands the fact that we have not one Scotch lady among our agents in the field." The rallying cry, or rebuke, was not exactly fair. Ferguson herself, and Thomson and Wilson, were missionary wives,<sup>274</sup> which is to say, unpaid part-time agents of the Ladies' Association, and the Bernard sisters, full-time paid agents, were only formally English since their mother was a Scot.<sup>275</sup> but it made Pigot's point well enough. Supervision by *mem sahibs* who had the confidence, the needlework, the Bible knowledge and the general education, as well as fluency in Bengali, was indispensable to a well-run zenana mission. If volunteers were wanting, paid agents must fill the gap.

None came. Ferguson's husband was posted to Cyprus, and she of course went with him: while trade in Glasgow took a turn for the worse and the local Auxiliary was obliged to draw in its horns. The Association's revenue fell back by £140 in 1878 from the previous year, and

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271 A lady with a strong Scottish accent, says Suniti, who thought that German was the only foreign language worth knowing. *Autobiography* page 76.

272 The nearest we can find for Frances Macalister Thomson's leaving India is a Mrs M Thompson sailing in April 1876: *IDN* April 20<sup>th</sup> 1876 page 3 List of Passengers. She gave birth to a daughter in Edinburgh on September 8<sup>th</sup>: *Dundee Courier* September 11<sup>th</sup> 1876 page 4.

273 It was proposed in the Ladies' Committee (Minutes of the Ladies' Association April 20<sup>th</sup> 1877) that she be appointed as an "additional agent at Calcutta," and she was agreeable.

274 The *Friend of India* for June 24<sup>th</sup> 1869 page 733 tells us that "It is difficult to answer the question, who has done most for the evangelization of the east — the missionaries or their wives."

275 The appeal to national pride is repeated in an advertisement for a lady for Madras, under 28 years of age, in the *Record* for March 1880 page 56, which says "It is Mrs Drury whose situation we have to fill, and any one doing so will have devoted fellow-workers at Calcutta and Poona in Miss Pigot and the Misses Bernard. But *they are not Scotchwomen*, nor members originally of the Church of Scotland."

spending exceeded income by some £350.<sup>276</sup> Despite all of which, and building no doubt on the advantages of the new and larger Mission House,<sup>277</sup> Pigot expanded her operation. The five high-caste girls' schools became eight, Mutteabruz (mentioned on page 40 above) being added in January, a seventh school for the local children around Bow Bazar and conducted in the Mission House itself, and an eighth at Bag Bazar,<sup>278</sup> that accommodated some 50 girls in the house of one Nagendra Mookerjee, both opening before the summer of 1878. These ventures were not as expensive as they might seem. Mutteabruz was rebuilt and partly funded by the two local founders of the school,<sup>279</sup> and Mookerjee charged no rent for the use of his house. Yet another new departure would prove, it was hoped, self-financing.<sup>280</sup> This was what Pigot called the Upper Christian School, and again it was conducted, starting in February 1878, in the Mission House. Miss Mary Eliza Leslie, the daughter of a Baptist missionary and the sister of a solicitor at Entally, had for some years run a boarding school for the daughters of the "respectable class of Christians" or "better-circumstanced Christians" of Calcutta. She was well regarded by opinion at large<sup>281</sup> and attracted contributions from supporters who "aided the school through interest in Miss Leslie herself," and when for some reason she felt obliged to discontinue it the parents of the pupils immediately began to look for a substitute. "Thus a small deputation came to me a short while since to supply a school..." wrote Pigot in her 1878 annual report. Leslie's school had offered a higher level than the elementary schooling of almost all female education in Bengal, and Pigot now set aside a block of the new Mission House for this new intake, which like Leslie's would be boarded. The Ladies' Committee were, in public at least, unfazed by the initiative. "It had for some time been matter of reproach that so little was done for the children of native Christians, and of late years more than one Mission has made efforts similar to those now being made by Miss Pigot. Many urgent appeals to do something in this direction were received by Miss Pigot." Once again she was responding to demand, although the "better-circumstanced Christians" of Calcutta pursuing higher education for their girls were an admittedly restricted market.

The social meetings and the Upper Christian School tell us more about Pigot's ambitions than the simple expansion of the Ladies' operation. More schools, and more zenanas, had been the Ladies' intention since the 1860s, in Miss Hebron's time. The need to break out of the elementary schooling available to girls, to offer more advanced academic teaching to those able to grasp it, had been and was being attempted, and the effort put into the Upper Christian

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276 *NFM* July 1879 pages 73-4.

277 In particular the housing of all the teachers under one roof. "Hitherto they have been scattered at different extremities of the town, with temptation to neglect their work, and little opportunity for advice and help. ... We see them constantly, and sympathy is being established that is producing a marked difference in their work." *NFM* July 1878 page 102.

278 *NFM* July 1879 page 91.

279 Tariny Chunder Pal and Koonjo Behary Deb. Together they contributed Rs 10 a month to the maintenance of the school, which they were rebuilding in January 1878. *NFM* July 1879 page 91 and April 1878 pages 42-3, the latter account dated to February 1<sup>st</sup>.

280 The Upper Christian School is introduced in the *NFM* for July 1878 pages 85 and 93-94.

281 Mary Leslie first came to public attention in the dark days of 1857 with a book of youthful verse which was thought promising. Although two later volumes were judged disappointing, she continued to write (for instance *The Dawn of Light, a story of the zenana mission*, London 1868) and devoted herself to charitable work. Her Home for Inebriates, opened in March 1878, attracted particular support, was funded by public subscription, and put out six-monthly reports. Her "Boarding School for Native Christian Girls (in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society)" at Entally is listed in Thacker's Directory for 1878. Mary Ellis was the lady superintendent at Entally, and simply moved to Bow Bazar when Pigot took over the school.

School shows that Pigot was committed to it. The social meetings, for which the Bow Bazar house offered ample space, were a mirror of the monthly missionary conference,<sup>282</sup> a gathering here of the congregations of the different denominations to rival the meetings of the pastors. The pastors' conference met in one or another of the reverend gentlemen's houses, to discuss matters of common concern and try to shape a common policy. Pigot threw open the Scottish Ladies' house for the flock, to allow them to discover and to express their community, perhaps a degree of solidarity, in her words to inculcate in them the germ of a Christian society. Not after a European template: the Calcutta reflection rather of a Christian society. Missionaries knew well enough that when India was fully Christianized—as she must be one day, since that was the will of Providence—it would be by a South Asian apostle, and the result would be a South Asian Christianity.<sup>283</sup> Pigot may or may not have shared this view. But the object of bringing Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans and Unitarians together for tea and cakes was not so that they might quarrel among themselves, but that they might meet, and talk together. In the social gatherings she, and the Ladies' Association with her, were reaching out to the local Christian population as to one body, and it is surely fair to conclude that they knew that they were fostering the cohesion of that Christian population. As with the schools and prize-givings, they sought publicity for the gatherings,<sup>284</sup> so they were confident that applause, not controversy, would be their reward.

Any further ambitions, such as John Steel's "equality of women" and "bringing together two races," cannot be foisted onto Pigot with any confidence. Steel's remark tells us more about him than about her. The same is true of the *Indian Mirror's* "freer social intercourse between the two races which she and her Zenana teachers were quietly promoting."<sup>285</sup> So quietly did they go about it that the only echoes we can catch now are the uncertain claims of these male observers.

As if to compensate Pigot for the two deputies she was not getting, further salvos of praise were showered on her from Scotland. Macalister Thomson, addressing the Annual General Meeting in Edinburgh, summarized the position admirably.

He did not wish to exaggerate the importance of help being sent from home—because he believed that, owing to the difficulties about language and other things, the agency employed must always to a great extent be got on the spot; but some amount of European assistance was no doubt urgently called for; and the Moderator<sup>286</sup> had rightly estimated the value to be attached to Englishwomen going kindly and gently amongst the women of India, even if they were, as they must be for a time, in imperfect communication with them. He therefore rejoiced that there was reason to hope that Scotland would discharge her duty in this matter.

And meanwhile, of Pigot,

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282 Which met on the second Monday of each month. There were upwards of 50 protestant missionaries, of whom ten were native Bengalis, with "some six or seven lay friends" and the missionary wives to accommodate at each meeting. *Indian Evangelical Review* April 1881 page 428.

283 For instance the fifth paragraph of the article "The Desire of all Nations," *Friend of India* May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1861 pages 564-5, or James Wilson in *NFM* July 1870 page 89. It is a reasonable assumption that the Wilsons and Pigot, who met frequently after her appointment, discussed their hopes and expectations for India's future.

284 "We in common with many others have been to social gatherings and school examinations at 125, Bow Bazaar." Editorial in the *IDN*, September 18<sup>th</sup> 1883.

285 September 23<sup>rd</sup> 1883 page 3. The editor was Norendro Nath Sen, and the newspaper a stalwart supporter of Pigot.

286 John Tulloch.

No agent so well fitted to work in Calcutta could possibly have been found; and it was a matter of thankfulness that ... her services should have become available. Under her the Mission, as he had said, speedily attained large dimensions. He could not, of course, speak of numbers from personal observation in this case as in the case of the schools, which were open to him or anyone to inspect—the zenana was necessarily closed against the visits of gentlemen; but he knew that they were doing—relatively at least to the number of agents employed, and he almost thought he might say absolutely—a larger and more successful work than any similar mission in Calcutta. Government had appointed some time ago a lady-inspector, and we threw our work cheerfully open to be tested in any way, knowing well we had nothing to conceal.

And of the Upper Christian School,

whether it would be a decided success, it was impossible to predict. No doubt in other hands it had proved somewhat of a failure. Miss Pigot, it seemed to him, had gone about the matter in the wisest possible way. At the monthly social gatherings in her house, she cultivated close intercourse with leading members of the native Christian community, leaving the task of inviting their friends to these meetings very much in their hands. In conversation with them this matter was strongly pressed upon her notice, and she said, “Very well; I yield to your desire, and it remains with you to make the school a success.” ... She might or might not succeed, but he ventured to think that she had at least taken a singularly wise and prudent course, and that if she failed it would be because success was at present impossible.<sup>287</sup>

For the Scottish deputies, then, hope that they might turn up; for the zenana mission, she is the best agent in Calcutta, and we have “relatively at least” caught up with our competitors; and for the Upper Christian School, her wisdom and prudence should ward off failure. It was of course necessary to dress up difficulties and risks in a mist of optimism and congratulation for the ears of the annual meeting. Jardine, speaking the year before,<sup>288</sup> had been unusually frank in censuring reports from the field that were “too sanguine” and supporters at home who were too easily discouraged. But the two impulses, to be less than candid on the one side and less than spendthrift on the other, were then as now reciprocating. The celebration of Pigot’s talent and ability served two ends, one to mask obstacles and uncertainties and the other to so magnify her that money would come in “through interest in Miss Pigot herself.” The following year another speaker at the annual meeting endorsed Macalister Thomson’s words just quoted “in praise of the zeal, self-sacrifice, and administrative power shown by Miss Pigot.”<sup>289</sup> As far as Edinburgh was concerned, in print at least, she bestrode her narrow world in a wholly satisfactory manner.

Macalister Thomson’s cheerful reference to the lady-inspector of schools is unlikely to have reflected what he was thinking. He surely knew—Indian missions in general knew from hard experience—that if you sup with government you needs must sup with a long spoon. He had been eager to apply for the grants for zenana teaching, the grants had come, and now Monmohini Wheeler had come in their wake. The education reports came out in the autumn term after the year under review, and by the end of 1877 the report for 1876 to 1877 was on every missionary secretary’s desk in Calcutta. Government spending on zenana work had been some Rs 16,000 for the year:

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287 *NFM* July 1878 pages 118-121.

288 *NFM* July 1877 page 104.

289 *NFM* July 1879 page 102.

American Mission	Rs. 725 Monthly grant
Church Missionary Society Zenana Agency	300
General Assembly ditto	200
Free Church ditto	90 <sup>290</sup>

Miss Brittan's operation was by far the largest, with 160 zenanas and schools, ten western and 40 local women, and attracted the lion's share of the grant. The Scottish Ladies' Association (gratuitously merged here with the General Assembly's mission) had overtaken the Free Church but was still "relatively at least" well behind the Church Missionary Society. Mrs. Wheeler seems to have started at the top and begun her work with the American mission. She tested and graded over 1200 pupils and found the results "unsatisfactory to the last degree. Nor do I gather that there are any signs of improvement. A system of education whose highest attainable standard (except in a few solitary cases) is the reading of easy sentences, and under which the majority of pupils fall short even of that standard, is of very trifling value."<sup>291</sup> The failings were pointed out to Miss Brittan, but Wheeler added that the missionary agencies were not at fault: it was the men of the family who put a stop to a woman's schooling as soon as she knew enough to manage the household accounts.

The warning signs in Wheeler's report that Macalister Thomson overlooked were the wholesale condemnation of the missionary sector, the angry language, and the attribution of blame. To some extent her report was the first effort of an enthusiastic tyro, who had grasped the department's distrust of missionary claims and missionary aims but not yet acquired the tact and discretion, the soft tread as it were, of effective government. For decades the missions had gathered in "heathen children, unwashed, uncombed, untaught" in Miss Cockle's words of 1858, echoed by Miss Pigot 20 years later with her "all untaught, rather wild; coming with tangled hair and clothes soiled black,"<sup>292</sup> and here was Mrs Wheeler finding it a wholly unsatisfactory "system of education." The gulf between what government wanted and what the missions were attempting could not have been clearer.

We have already seen that the missions dressed up their doings in transparently imperial new clothes. More than once in *News of Female Missions* does Pigot refer suggestively to the quiet, order and cleanliness of the Orphanage, and contrast it with the disorder and dust of Hindu houses<sup>293</sup>. The implicit charge is clear: a Christian household is under the eye of a competent woman, and a Hindu household is at the mercy of a parcel of men. Wheeler first visited the Bow Bazar orphanage in 1878, and found it dirty.<sup>294</sup> "I had to pass through a sort of verandah where I saw refuse of food lying about, and dirty bits of clothing, and I had to pick my way through this," she told the court in 1883. Perhaps the truth is that after the sweepers had been in action the place was fairly tidy, and after the children had been there it was nothing of the sort. Similarly the sarcasm of Wheeler's "system of education" is not

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290 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1876-77* paragraph 259 page 75. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and London Missionary Society zenana missions had, perhaps wisely, not sought government funding.

291 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1876-77* paragraph 261 page 76.

292 *NFM* July 1878 page 95. High-caste girls were not necessarily from high-income families. Pigot goes on to describe a little girl in a sewing class "pressing closely against us, innocent of the odour and disgust of her garments".

293 "Our clean, quiet home," *NFM* January 1878 page 6. "The other day three native ladies stole in to see me. What struck them first was the cleanliness and orderliness of the house," *NFM* July 1874 page 275.

294 *IDN* supplement September 8 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 108.

wholly undeserved. The missions wanted to be “systematic” in their operations and peppered the pages of their publications with the word, Pigot being as free with it as any. In July 1874 for instance readers of the *News* learned that “It is intended that the teachers should give details of their operations from time to time; and otherwise I am endeavouring to introduce that regular system in an agency, without which it is impossible to keep matters in a healthy state.”<sup>295</sup> The regular system at that point was an aim, but in later years the word was thrown in here and there as if the aim had been realized.

Mrs Wheeler is able in one other area to flesh out our otherwise sketchy picture. She was inspecting schools and presumably zenanas of the Ladies’ Association in 1878 and afterwards, and was displeased with much of what she found. We know from Pigot that some at least of the teachers in the schools needed supervision, that without it they would not “do their duty.” Wheeler added some colour to this at the 1883 trial. One day

when I was passing one of the schools in Kidderpore, I heard great sounds of laughter. I went in to see what it was all about. At my entrance, it suddenly lulled. But I was very much disgusted.

Mr. Jackson. – I object to this.

His Lordship to Witness. – What did you see? Never mind your state of mind. Well, I saw the teacher who is in charge of all the work there,—a Christian woman seated with an utter disregard of modesty. The children left to do as they liked, and the Pundits sitting with this woman.

His Lordship. – What has this Kidderpore school got to do with the Orphanage? It is a branch of the Mission work that was under supervision of Miss Pigot.

Mr. Gasper. – The Pundits that you speak of. What do you mean by Pundits? Hindoo teachers employed there to help in teaching the children.

His Lordship. – I should have thought that Usher would have been the more correct term.

Witness. – Well, they are called Pundits, my lord.

Mr. Gasper. – You have said that you saw her seated there with an utter disregard of modesty.

His Lordship. – Is it necessary to ask this question? Let Mr. Jackson cross-examine on that point.<sup>296</sup>

Here Wheeler echoes Woodrow’s remarks of a decade earlier about little girls lying on the floor admiring each other’s bracelets: but whereas Woodrow was speaking in general, on the strength of numerous inspections, Wheeler in a court of law can only attest to instances she has seen. Her second complaint about immodesty (the teacher’s sari, we learn, did not cover her shoulders, and that lapse was backed up with another sighting of a teacher in the street in her sari but without a choli and leaning over a box-wallah to see his wares) only serves to show that she personally adhered to the English doctrine, at its apogee in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that a lady may expose part of her person in public only if she has occasion to remove her gloves. Jackson saw no need to cross-examine her on any of her evidence, the judge concurred, and nothing more is heard of Mrs Wheeler’s strictures about the dress code of teachers. If the incident tells us anything about Pigot, it is only that she did not share Wheeler’s view.

To return to the quiet, order and cleanliness of the reports in *News of Female Missions*, we learn in 1877 that the orphans had been divided into two groups, the normal classes and the

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295 *NFM* July 1874 page 268.

296 *IDN* supplement September 8<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 110.



preparatory classes. There were 31 orphans listed that year, and 32 girls—19 normal and 13 preparatory—were notionally at least under training. “As pupils,” Pigot reported, “they are often negligent of lessons, untidy, and unpromising,” and one of the best among them, Hamontho, “had been considered one of the most wayward and wilful, and was somewhat of a ringleader in mischief.”<sup>297</sup> Once given work in the zenanas, however, they showed a different demeanour. The level of attainment varied not only from class to class, but as always among members of the same class.

The two normal classes of the Orphanage are taught from 6 to 9 a.m., the first class giving less time, for they have to prepare the lessons for their own advanced pupils.

In preparing for instruction in the zenanas, literature is the chief secular study, and the course ranges from a simple colloquial form into complete Sanscrit; and the teacher has to prepare each day to do such work accurately. No two pupils are reading the same portion in the various books, while some zenana pupils are so advanced that the teachers can hardly keep abreast. A Pundit assists the teachers every evening in their preparation, while all my leisure is given to those lessons that he is not able to do. Wednesday I am engaged for the whole day with the married native zenana teachers, and Saturday is, again, given to the most deficient among our teachers, to bring them up in some of the subjects to the standard of the others. This forms all our secular labour.<sup>298</sup>

The women and girls in the zenanas, then, were all reading different parts of different books, and the grammar and vocabulary of those books ranged from the simplest to the most demanding. The zenana teachers Pigot was trying to mould out of frequently “unpromising” girls were preparing for spells of home tuition in Bengali that in no way resembled the lectures, delivered in English to scores of boys all the same age, at the General Assembly’s Institution. The two kinds of teaching cannot be compared. Yet the one side hoped to be as “systematic” as the other. And Pigot, in her search for a system, was trying to catch up with and overtake her competitors. The Free Church had opened its own normal class in its own orphanage before she opened hers. Finally James Wilson and the other Europeans in Cornwallis Square were of no use to her in teaching in the vernacular.

Such were Pigot’s problems, as far as we understand them, at the close of 1878. From that point on the sources favour us with a certain amount of detail, not so much of her management of the orphans and the teachers as of her relations with missionary Calcutta. This change of perspective, this turning of a page, will mislead us unless we take care. Where so far she has been flattered by the rose-coloured lens put up in *News of Female Missions*, from now on she is framed in a far harsher light. Neither camp has any more claim on our credulity than the other: where the sources set up conflicting narratives history may be caught in the cross-fire but cannot take sides.

The principal since 1845 of the General Assembly’s Institution at Calcutta had been James Ogilvie, and James Wilson was assisting him in that role by 1870, so that when Ogilvie died at the end of that year he was made, jointly with Dr T.E. Charles, acting superintendent. But Wilson, despite a growing reputation as a teacher<sup>299</sup> had a background in commerce, and the

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297 *NFM* July 1877 page 83.

298 *NFM* July 1877 page 89.

299 Kenneth Macdonald in 1883 wrote, with some degree of exaggeration to be sure, that “from the purely educational point of view, Miss Pigot and Mr. Wilson had few if any equals in India.” *Indian Evangelical Review* October 1883 article viii.

Foreign Mission Committee were in search of the highest academic credentials for their principal, a substitute in effect for the revered Alexander Duff. Robert Jardine, a professor of philosophy at New Brunswick before his ordination, was recruited to fill the post in 1872, but left in February 1877 for Edinburgh and then returned to Canada. Wilson was again called upon to stop the gap, until in July 1878 the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh appointed William Hastie, a rising new star in the academic sky with an impressive command of philosophy.<sup>300</sup> On learning this Wilson wrote to the Foreign Mission Committee to express his disappointment: in October they offered him, in view of “his fame and zeal as an educationist,” the title of Vice Principal and £500.<sup>301</sup>

It is a fair assumption that Pigot knew that Wilson hoped to be made principal and was herself dismayed when a stranger was chosen instead. His value to her was clear, and was of long standing: whenever possible he co-operated with her.<sup>302</sup> The prospect of a friendly and compliant principal, equipped with experience and understanding of the female mission, was more than a matter of personal preference to Pigot.

Hastie, newly ordained as a minister of the Church of Scotland, set sail in late November, and Wilson, whose furlough was shortly to fall due, began to prepare a welcoming ceremony at the General Assembly’s Institution. A crisis immediately arose, however, while Hastie was still only one week into his voyage. William Robson’s younger brother Samuel had joined the staff of the Institution at the end of 1877 as a teacher of English Literature. As Dr. Robson’s brother he naturally came to know Pigot, and a friendship is said to have blossomed. At the end of November 1878 Robson resigned his post and accepted a place at the Presidency College, the government school with the best results in Calcutta and with which all the missionary schools were in strenuous competition. On receiving Robson’s resignation the Corresponding Board were enraged, and the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh, on being told of it, were dismayed. He had served barely 11 months of his contract before defecting to the opposition.

Pigot however had a crisis of her own to deal with. Monmohini Wheeler had been busy, and the education report for 1877 to 1878 appeared late in the year. Wheeler’s assault on the zenana teaching in Calcutta was now if anything more violent than the year before: in general “the teachers are lazy and good for nothing,” and “not a single child is able to read or write the simplest sentence.”<sup>303</sup> Few European teachers were available and of them fewer still spoke Bengali, so that

The chief part of the teaching is therefore done by native teachers, who are ill-educated and often indifferent, and who, being little supervised, are consequently irregular in their work. “Regarding the inefficiency of the native teachers,” writes Mrs. Wheeler, “I will relate the following: I examined the normal class attached to the Church of Scotland Orphanage the other day. I gave the 17 pupils a written examination in “Bodhoday” on the first day: on the second day 11 of them refused to go on with the examination on the ground that they did not belong to the class, and so

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300 For Hastie see Macmillan’s *Life of Professor Hastie*. Macmillan set out to write an encomium, and Pigot (“that abominable woman,” page 166) consequently gets short shrift in his pages.

301 Foreign Mission Committee minutes for July 16<sup>th</sup> and October 18<sup>th</sup> 1878. Wilson made clear at the 1883 trial that he had hoped for the post: “There were some persons, and I myself was one, who hoped that the officiating appointment would become a permanent appointment.” *IDN* supplement September 12<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 160.

302 For instance *NFM* July 1872 page 68: Pigot wanted the girls to sit a written, not an oral, examination, and Wilson obligingly set questions in Bible knowledge, English grammar, history, geography and arithmetic.

303 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1877-8* paragraph 274 page 80.

on. Of the six who remained only three did at all fairly, though one it is true was very good. The want of knowledge was really amusing, though some of the pupils were supposed to be teaching Charupath and 3<sup>rd</sup> Poetical Reader to zenana pupils.”<sup>304</sup>

A.W. Croft, the Director of Public Instruction in Bengal, drew the appropriate conclusions.

It is easy to understand the temptation to which the Mission agencies have been exposed by the necessity of showing an improvement in their figures year by year. The several agencies are in the keenest competition, not for the approval of Government in this country, but for that of the home societies which support them. The consequence of this is the extension of their work at all costs, and to this end almost any Native Christian woman professing to have had an education is enlisted and set to work as a teacher, without, it is to be feared, in all cases complete guarantees either of ability or of good conduct. The contraction rather than the extension of zenana work is, I am convinced, the object at which the Missions should now aim...<sup>305</sup>

The report caused consternation among all the missions, and the Missionary Conference immediately set to work to concoct a reply, but Pigot must have found Wheeler’s laughing at her normal class galling if not threatening. On December 18<sup>th</sup> she wrote to Dr Charles, the chairman of the Corresponding Board, making “certain charges” against Wheeler and demanding another inspection of her school.<sup>306</sup> On Christmas Day the orphan Seeta died at the Mission House, and was buried the same day, “the first dead I have carried out of our Mission-house.”<sup>307</sup> On January 2<sup>nd</sup> Hastie reached Calcutta.

He soon called on Pigot, a matter perhaps of leaving his card: on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> the Muharram festival peaked in the great procession of the 10<sup>th</sup> day,<sup>308</sup> and she invited him to breakfast so that he could see it.<sup>309</sup> On the Sunday he preached at St Andrew’s to a large congregation, doubtless eager to see and hear the new man, and on the Wednesday he fell ill at Octavius Steel’s house. Wilson and Pigot hurried to his bedside the next morning.

Mr Trevelyan. – You got cholera shortly after your arrival in this country? Yes.

How soon after? On the sixth day after.

At Mr Steele’s house? Yes.

Miss Pigot nursed you through that illness? Through a part of it.

Which part? Through the latter part, or rather, I should say, through a part of the latter part.

Miss Pigot sat up four days and four nights – didn’t she? Oh no, so far as I can

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304 *ibid* paragraph 268 page 79.

305 *ibid* paragraph 269 page 79.

306 *The Pigot Case* page 112 has Wheeler say “I heard that Miss Pigot had replied to my report. I heard it from Mr. Croft, Director of Public Instruction. Mr. Croft asked me to reply to certain charges which Miss Pigot had made. It must have been in 1878 that Mr. Croft wrote to me...” Compare the version in the *IDN* supplement of September 8<sup>th</sup> 1883, which says that Pigot sent a detailed reply to Wheeler’s report to Edinburgh. It would be astonishing had she not done so. Croft wrote to Charles on February 1<sup>st</sup> asking for a copy of Pigot’s letter, as is minuted by the Corresponding Board at the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, *The Pigot Case* page 320.

307 *NFM* April 1879 page 35.

308 Up to the mid-1860s the Moharram procession was a solemn affair, but over the following decade it evolved in the direction of a carnival parade. It was suppressed at Bombay as early as 1874 on public order grounds.

309 According to *The Pigot Case* page 195 “He came after breakfast and saw the procession.” The newspaper reports leave the impression that Hastie broke his fast with her.

remember, she was with me only one night.

Were you grateful to her at all for her devotion to you? *Very*.<sup>310</sup>

A nurse, Miss Caroline Alice Briggs, was brought in by Dr Charles to look after the patient, and stayed until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. Wilson and Pigot stayed in the house, Pigot relieving Briggs at intervals, until the Monday. Presumably Hastie by then, although still ill, was out of danger. On the 16<sup>th</sup> the Corresponding Board met, but it is not known if Hastie attended. Charles was the chair, Gillan was secretary, and among the other members were Octavius Steel, who was treasurer, Wilson, and a new recruit to the mission who had sailed at much the same time as Hastie, the Rev James Thomson from Aberdeen. At this meeting a sub-committee comprising Wilson and Steel was set up to handle Pigot's demand for an independent inspection.<sup>311</sup> It was a question of trying to persuade Croft of the justice of the case, or failing that, of finding professors among the colleges affiliated to Calcutta University who could spare the time and would agree to examine the girls and assess their answers. Steel's function might have been to settle a fee for their trouble.

Pigot wrote to Edinburgh on the 17<sup>th</sup> to thank donors for the boxes of dolls and patchwork which had arrived from Scotland and mentioned that Mrs Ellis, who had joined the staff some nine or ten months earlier to teach the Upper Christian School, was away, leaving Pigot to fill her place.<sup>312</sup> Clearly if her demand for a second inspection succeeded it was imperative that the classes were prepared. "The days get so busy," she wrote, and "I cannot get a moment" to sort out the prizes. In connection with her inspection, Govind Chunder Dutt called at some point, and offered to examine the school. Pigot presumably accepted the offer: she certainly told Wilson of it, and he told the Corresponding Board.<sup>313</sup>

The annual picnic in Barrackpore Park came off on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Mrs Edwards,<sup>314</sup> James Thomson and his wife Annie, Hastie, Wilson, Wilson's brother Bob, Helen Leslie, a Mrs Falkner who had just joined the staff, Lizzie Tremearne and Samuel Robson are named as having been present as well as the orphans: Lavinia Frost is not mentioned but should have been of the party. Tiffin was between 2 and 3 in the afternoon, they left Barrackpore before 6 and were back at Sealdah railway station for 6:30. Wilson and Pigot then drove to Steel's house in Old Court House Road in her brougham, and after half an hour there she dropped him at the General Assembly's Institution where he had a room: Hastie, who had the use of Steel's carriage, drove to the Edwards house where he was staying *pro tem*. What Wilson, Steel and Pigot talked about for the half hour is not recorded, but Robson's resignation, Wheeler's attack on Pigot and Wilson's approaching furlough were available topics. Two days later Wilson wrote to Gillan, as secretary of the Corresponding Board, that he would commence his furlough on February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

On February 4<sup>th</sup> the Corresponding Board met, and took note of Wilson's letter. Gillan reported that he had written to Robson that the whole matter of his resignation was to be put to the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh. Hastie reported that he had telegraphed Edinburgh asking for a replacement for Robson, Wilson reported the offer to Pigot made by

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310 *IDN* supplement September 5<sup>th</sup> 1883: *The Pigot Case* page 66.

311 *The Pigot Case* page 320.

312 *NFM* April 1879 page 35. This is the first mention of Mrs Ellis in the *News* (not counting *NFM* October 1877 page 205, where "Mr and Mrs Ellis, of the Baptist Church" attend a social meeting).

313 Minute of February 4<sup>th</sup> in *The Pigot Case* page 320. G C Dutt, a magistrate and a Christian, kept a sharp eye on the progress of female education in Bengal.

314 Wife of the Rev James Edwards, a member of the Corresponding Board and on the staff of the General Assembly's Institution.

GC Dutt, and a letter was read from the Department of Public Instruction asking for a “spare copy” of Pigot’s letter to Dr Charles.

On February 8<sup>th</sup> Hastie sent Pigot a book—the title of which is nowhere mentioned—and at some point gave a picture to the nurse, Caroline Briggs, entitled “The Return from School.” On the fly-leaf of Pigot’s book he wrote a sprightly verse from Burns calculated to irritate most if not all women, and she returned it with a letter which puzzled and annoyed him.

Were you annoyed at her not accepting the book? Well, a little.

His Lordship. – Was your pride mortified? No, not in that way.

Mr Trevelyan. – What was it that annoyed you? It was the letter that accompanied the book. I have not got the letter.

His Lordship. – Was it the fact that you were her Minister, and that she had refused the book from her Minister that annoyed you? No, I had no feeling of that kind. I thought it was very capricious; but the letter which accompanied it was very unsatisfactory.

Mr Trevelyan. – You thought she was “uncertain, coy, and hard to please?” No, that was not the feeling at all. She referred to the Mission in the letter, and so far as I can recollect, said she would be very glad to work with me. I could not understand the letter, and I showed it to Mr Steele, and he could find no motive for it.<sup>315</sup>

If Hastie and Steel were puzzled by the letter, we are in a worse case, since we cannot read it. We can at best make two conjectures. Pigot, in writing that she would work with him, was perhaps indicating that she was an agent of the Ladies’ Association, more than likely hard to please but no more coy than a column of the Bengal Native Infantry. On a darker note, she might have been hinting that her disappointment at Wilson’s relegation to vice-principal had festered and swollen into straight hostility to any substitute, however debonair. As like as not her feelings were a mixture of both.

Two days after the letter had been read, possibly on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup>, Steel gave a dinner party for Hastie, Wilson and Pigot. The occasion was probably wholly social,<sup>316</sup> and Steel perhaps was hoping to see some warmth, or maybe some clarity, come to pass between Pigot and the new head of the mission. She had been at Kidderpore that day, and was tired: her conversation according to Hastie showed levity, according to Wilson vivacity. Hastie himself was subdued.

The minutiae of these picnics, dinner parties, paintings and books have come down to us because the lawyers at the 1883 trial strove with might and main to tease out the sexual tensions between Hastie, Pigot and Wilson. Who sat where and with whom in Barrackpore Park was rehearsed *ad nauseam*. The interrogations failed. Pigot and Wilson would only admit to being good friends as well as colleagues, Hastie was infinitesimally more nuanced, admitting here that he “had a private interest in Miss Pigot”<sup>317</sup> and there that she had not seen Wilson “down the river” soon enough:<sup>318</sup> but these are straws too flimsy to grasp, and no indication that Hastie was any more candid with the court than the others. That the three of them experienced the magnetism, positive and negative, common to mankind is not in doubt, but the facts are that they gave nothing away, and that we therefore know nothing about it.

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315 *IDN* supplement September 5<sup>th</sup> 1883: *The Pigot Case* page 66.

316 Cf. the *IDN* supplements of September 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 1883: *The Pigot Case* pages 59 and 162. Neither Hastie nor Wilson revealed what the conversation was.

317 *IDN* supplement September 5<sup>th</sup> 1883. *The Pigot Case* page 68 has “I took an interest in Miss Pigot.”

318 *IDN* supplement September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 94. The river in question is not metaphorical, it is the Hooghly.

We are free to build cloud-capped towers of speculation. Pigot had worked amicably with Macalister Thomson and Jardine and Wilson, and Hastie must surely have intended to equal, at the very least, their achievement, to make the Scottish Mission in Calcutta, male and female branches hand in hand, outshine all the others. But beyond that conjecture, history withers and romance blossoms.

The distribution of prizes at Bow Bazar was held on February 15<sup>th</sup>. The previous year, because of cash constraints, two private events had been staged, one in the grounds of Kidderpore House and the other at the Mission House in Bow Bazar with no public invited. The 1879 prize day was a return to form, a public and a publicized entertainment. Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, who had been at Rugby with Woodrow and now sat on the Council of the Governor-General, presided, 600 girls were assembled, “and being for the most part loaded with jewels they presented a very gay appearance,”<sup>319</sup> and a good number of European residents attended, among them Samuel Robson. Gillan, like Macalister Thomson before him the “general secretary” of the female mission, read the report, which listed 11 schools registering just short of 700 girls, and giving the results of an examination on February 8<sup>th</sup> of 140 of them. Mohesh Chandra Nyaratna, the Principal of the Sanskrit College, had questioned them, only two proving so shy that they could not be examined, and the Upper Christian School had been examined in English by Kalicharan Bannerjee and the Rev Dr Wenger.<sup>320</sup> Arbuthnot and some of the ladies then distributed the prizes: silver pins, pasteboard boxes with chatelaines inside, dolls of course, jackets and so on.

The ghost of Monmohini Wheeler was the invisible guest, and Gillan acknowledged her presence.

This Report, I think, clearly shows that not a little good is being done by the Scottish Ladies’ Association and their representatives in this place. The statements are those of plain facts, not fancies; and the testimony, as, for example, of Dr Wenger and of the Principal of the Sanskrit College, is impartial and unimpeachable. Perhaps such facts are particularly valuable as in the light of some recent criticism, not that we decry healthy criticism. It has the use of a thunderstorm in clearing the air, which, in Bengal especially, is apt to be stifling. All the zenana agencies in the city have lately been exposed to a rather sharp fire of censure. Of that storm a somewhat special blast was hurled on Miss Pigot—in illustration, I presume, of the proverb that ‘the back is made for the burden,’ or the burden adapted to the back. At all events, few, if any, zenana teachers are more able to defend the work in which her heart and hand are engaged.

Sir Alexander was less evasive. Fewer than four girls, he said, for every hundred boys in Bengal were getting schooling, compared with maybe ten for every hundred in Madras. Yet the quality of that schooling was worse than the quantity.<sup>321</sup>

The Secretary in his report alluded to some recent comments which have been made regarding the teaching which goes on in the Institutions under your charge. He also read to us the report on the recent examination conducted by the different persons appointed by the managers of the Institution. But while it was impossible to listen to the report of these examiners without feeling a good deal of gratification, it was also

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319 *Englishman* supplement February 24<sup>th</sup> 1879. The article is reproduced in *NFM* July 1879 page 90ff. An edited account taken from the *Indian Christian Herald* (n.d.) is printed in *NFM* April 1879 pages 49-51. The passages quoted below are from the *Englishman*.

320 John Wenger, D.D., of the Baptist Missionary Society.

321 Cf Pigot’s words in *NFM* July 1871 page 67: “Our figures, I fear, are better than the worth of the work that is being done.”

impossible, after reading the comments of the Director of Public Instruction, based as they were on the report of the Government Inspectress of Schools, not to feel also that there was a good deal left undone.

I am not going to enter upon an examination of the controversy which these reports involve. Probably in this, as in most other cases, the truth lies rather in the mean than in either extreme. But making all due allowance for mistakes as to facts, or for erroneous conclusions in the report of the Government Inspectress, still I have no doubt that it will be admitted by the lady superintendent of the Institution, of whose efficiency and devotion to her duty we are all well aware, that the progress which has been made—the progress which for years past has been made—and I fear the progress likely to be made, is far below the expectations which the well-wishers of such schools as this might reasonably entertain.

James Wilson, after thanking Arbuthnot, and the ladies who had helped distribute the prizes—“or, rather I should say, presents”—added

I have also to tender my thanks to those gentlemen who were kind enough to examine our schools—viz., Pundit Mohesh Chandra Nyaratna, the distinguished Principal of the Sanskrit College, with whom was associated Professor Raj Kumar Sarbadhi Rary, of the Canning College, Lucknow. These two gentlemen examined, as has been stated, 140 girls in the different stages of the Bengali course; and they entered into that examination with great thoroughness, and, I am glad to say, with great kindness and condescension; for you will see, if you only look at these little children, that the work of examining them is one requiring peculiar tenderness and delicacy: it would not do to approach them with the severity of a university examiner. But the Principal of the Sanskrit College understood what was required of him in that respect, and the kindness with which, before examining them, he tried to set them at their ease by talking to them of their brothers and sisters, was perfectly delightful.

Wilson here anticipates the memorandum that the Calcutta Missionary Conference was then in the process of drafting in protest at Wheeler’s report: you cannot test these girls with a stern face and severe words.

Hastie may well have witnessed the distribution of prizes. The social gathering of the native churches followed on February 18<sup>th</sup>, and he seems to have attended it. He testified in 1883 that “I have been seldom at the mission school, but whenever I have been there I was dissatisfied with all that I saw. I attended the monthly gathering.”<sup>322</sup> Apart from the fact that he saw a good many native Bengalis there, and few Scottish ladies, he was asked no other question and therefore made no other observation. Shortly afterwards Pigot will have heard from the Department of Public Instruction that her demand for a special inspection of her normal class was not to be taken seriously. On the 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> Croft found a note on his desk to this effect—

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322 *Englishman* September 4<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3. *The Pigot Case* separates the two statements, putting “I have been seldom at the Orphanage” etc. on page 57 and “On the occasion of a Social Gathering, I do not remember seeing any of our own Scotch lady members present” on page 58. The *Times of India* of September 8<sup>th</sup> page 7 only gives us “Have you ever seen any European — I mean any Scotch lady? — On the occasion I refer to, namely, a missionary meeting, I don’t remember having seen any European lady.”

*Female Education.* The Director of Public Instruction informed that the Lieutenant-Governor sees no reason for directing a special inspection of the normal school attached to the Church of Scotland Mission Orphanage, under the superintendence of Miss Pigot, but that he is at liberty to remove any misapprehensions existing in the Lady Superintendent's mind as to the bearing and scope of the remarks made in his annual report on education for 1877-78, regarding her school.<sup>323</sup>

—and will have informed Pigot in a timely manner. Whether he succeeded in giving her any comfort we are free to doubt. She may or may not have misunderstood Mrs Wheeler's motivation but her immediate concern was the bad publicity. In early March an editorial in the *Indian Daily News* decided that “attempts at proselytizing in schools, ostensibly for the education of native boys and girls, by well-meaning men and women, have not been productive of much good...” and that the Education Department should itself commence zenana teaching on sound secular principles.<sup>324</sup> That surely meant withdraw the grants-in-aid from the missions. How much time Pigot had, meanwhile, to brood on such questions is problematic: these were her busiest months of the year, and

It was all very well for me, who had only been looking on and enjoying myself; but I cannot think how Miss Pigot can stand such long hours of teaching and examining. I think she was out nearly eight hours that day without any rest, and she had had a good deal of work in the house before she started.<sup>325</sup>

On February 22<sup>nd</sup> Wilson's furlough started: on the 28<sup>th</sup> Pigot sent a copy of the *Indian Christian Herald*, with its account of the prize day, to the Ladies' Association with a covering letter that stressed the value of shaping public perceptions.

The week before, I collected all our advanced girls from the various schools, and got the Principal of the Government Sanskrit College, who is the university examiner, to examine for us, along with another distinguished Sanskrit professor. The college Principal I did not know at all, so his judgment will not be from favour or friendship. If we can prove good work, we shall be more sought, and have increased opportunities for doing the real good we seek.<sup>326</sup>

She went on to place the government and its educational ambitions among the “anti-religious associations” with which the Ladies were competing, in order, doubtless, to put Wheeler's report in its proper perspective.

Early in March—between the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup>—Hastie called on Pigot. He was dissatisfied with her association with Wilson. The Corresponding Board “disapproved very much” of Wilson's disloyalty, and she had not “seen him down the river” soon enough.<sup>327</sup> What Wilson's misdemeanour amounted to we do not learn: possibly he had not left Calcutta with the necessary promptness after handing over to Hastie,<sup>328</sup> possibly he had befriended Samuel Robson, possibly he should not have spoken at the distribution of prizes. As for Robson, the Corresponding Board was deeply offended with his behaviour and Pigot should not have

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323 Bengal Education Proceedings 1879. Tabular Statement of Matters of Routine for February 1879 page 7, dated February 19<sup>th</sup>.

324 *IDN* March 4<sup>th</sup> 1879 page 2.

325 Emily Bernard, writing from Poona on February 15<sup>th</sup> after a brief visit to Calcutta. *NFM* April 1879 page 37.

326 *NFM* April 1879 page 49.

327 *IDN* supplement September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* pages 93-4.

328 Wilson formally handed over to Hastie at the General Assembly's Institution on February 8<sup>th</sup>. The speeches are printed in the *Englishman* for February 14<sup>th</sup>. Exactly when Wilson left Calcutta has not yet been traced.



given him so prominent a part at the distribution of prizes in February. Octavius Steel was particularly incensed at Robson's conduct and at Pigot's continued cultivation of the man.<sup>329</sup> So much for Hastie's account of the meeting. Pigot's testimony only tells us that she found him "very overbearing," that he "began by telling me that he was a representative of the Church, and set forth great claims."<sup>330</sup> She told Hastie that he was vain. After half an hour he had exhausted the disagreeable part of his discourse, and was about to turn to more hopeful matters, when a party of others arrived, one of whom was Robson. Hastie forthwith left the premises.

19 CORNWALLIS SQUARE,  
14th March 1879.

DEAR MISS PIGOT,

I am sorry that our conversation was interrupted at such a critical moment by the interruption of your friends. I had not got nearly all said that I wished to say, and as it was I had just nearly finished all the disagreeable things. A few more words would have dispossessed you of the idea that my feelings were in any way to be regarded as those of personal vanity, which you seemed to be foolishly attributing to me in this connection. And then I would have added that if, as it appears to me to be the case, you are being more and more overwhelmed with burdens too great for the strength of any one individual, there is help largely available here, which would be freely given and given in such a way as neither to diminish your authority nor to alter your methods.

Such was the real motive of my visit, as well as to put an end to this awkward relation that has been getting up between us. For myself I cannot give much, if any, personal aid. My own duties are too heavy, and my strength too little even were I more competent. But I had a suggestion which I think would have been good for you and good for your mission to have at least considered.

However, after the sort of feeling developed I think it would not be desirable to raise the subject again. And so I wish merely to say that I shall in no way interfere with your work either by suggestions or otherwise, unless I am specially asked to do so by the authorities of the church at home. Let us both go henceforth upon our several ways and be as friendly when we happen to meet as we can; that is all that need be said.

I am yours very sincerely,  
William Hastie.<sup>331</sup>

Clearly "a sort of feeling developed" which had nothing to do with Hastie's vanity. We have to infer that Pigot's duty was to shrug off any dependence on Wilson and to cold shoulder Robson, and it is easy to suppose that she refused. We are not helped by the fact that the letter makes reference to neither Wilson nor Robson, whereas Hastie's explanation of it in court is exclusively about them. It seems likely enough that there was talk of the burdens that were overwhelming Pigot: if there was not, Hastie had divined them from observation, read about them in the government report and heard about them from others.

On March 18<sup>th</sup> the Corresponding Board met, Hastie standing in for Gillan as secretary. A letter from Herdman in Edinburgh to Robson, in which the words "incompatible with honor

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329 Robson testified at the trial that he attended only as an ordinary spectator. Steel's quarrel with Pigot is attested only by Hastie.

330 *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 203.

331 *The Pigot Case* page 294.

and Christian principle” figured, was read, after which Dr Charles read out a letter from Pigot resigning her post. The minute goes on, “But as no cause was assigned for this step, a Committee, consisting of the Chairman and Mr Gregory, was appointed to confer with Miss Pigot upon the subject.”<sup>332</sup>

Pigot’s resignation is nowhere given a date, but it is fair to assume that it was written between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup>. It is of course possible that Dr Charles had received it earlier and kept it quiet until the Board met, but that possibility requires Pigot to have kept equally quiet on the matter, since Hastie’s letter assumes a future in which they will both be working at a polite distance.

Hastie was moved to try again: although what moved him is unknown. He could, of course, as head of the General Assembly’s entire mission in Calcutta, ignore the fact that it was Charles and Gregory who were to talk to Pigot. He was not writing to her as a member of the Corresponding Board but as their, and her, superior, and as a friend.

CORNWALLIS SQUARE,  
19th March 1879.

DEAR MISS PIGOT,

I am very much grieved at the way matters are moving. You are making a false step, committing a blunder, which if carried out will I am sure duly issue in pain and regret. You do not need me to tell you, how you are valued by our Church; you have been trusted and appreciated as never woman like you was, in the course of our history. Personally I believe you have thoroughly deserved it all, and your good work is a noble testimony to your endeavours. I do think, too, that you will not be happy apart from that work whether it should fail or be carried on by others; for I am sure you have it at heart, and it is your very special sphere.

We have had our little misunderstanding but that is a small matter; and though I am a very proud man (so my friends say) I am ready to bend for the sake of the cause, and you never made a greater error than by attributing any blame to me in this matter. I found Mr. Steel in a state of discontent and partly of alienation when I came. My visit to you last week was really an effort to bring things right and to avert the danger. I was trying to hold out a helping hand though it seemed from amid the storm. That was an unfortunate interruption; most unfortunate.

Now I write to ask you if you will let me come to-day and finish our conversation. After what you did for me when you accompanied me to the very brink of the dark river, I feel that we must not part in this way. Perhaps you don't think me worth reckoning with; but I believe I am able to save your mission and put all things right. I can come at 10 or any time after 3 in the afternoon. Do let us meet before the Committee appointed to confer with you enters upon the subject.

You may trust me you have been misguided. May I come?

Yours, W. Hastie.<sup>333</sup>

The letter is evidently a kindly intervention from a well-disposed and rational man. In leaving the Church of Scotland she will make herself unhappy; they have disagreed over something

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332 *The Pigot Case* pages 320-1.

333 *The Pigot Case* pages 292-3.

or other, but he will concede whatever it was, he can bend; Octavius Steel, not William Hastie, is the angry one, and if only she will let him Hastie can save the situation. She has blamed him for whatever it is that alienated Steel, and she is wrong to do so: presumably this attribution of blame occurred in the interview during which she told him he was vain.

These letters were put in as evidence at the 1883 trial by Pigot's lawyers, and they questioned Hastie about them. What was the little misunderstanding? "My impression is that it was about the book." For what was she blaming him? For influencing Mr Steel, for coming between Steel and her. In what way had she been misguided? "I refer there to Mr Robson and his friends." What was the blunder she had committed? She was "taking up a man whom the Board had unanimously condemned," namely Robson. What was the false step she had taken? "Going in that direction, instead of going loyally with the authorities of the Mission."<sup>334</sup>

Once again there is no mention of Robson in the letter, although Octavius Steel and his discontent are there in black and white. Nothing so far compels us to conclude that Pigot was at this point blaming Hastie for her resignation. Her letter to Charles "assigned no cause" for the step according to the Board's minute, and even though that minute was written by Hastie himself it is all the evidence we have. Yet subsequently she did blame him. That is why the letters were produced at the trial, and why the questions that Hastie evaded were put. His determination not to allow her resignation to be linked to the interview proves nothing, to be sure, but it is suggestive.

What then was Pigot's state of mind? Had she seen in two months what the Foreign Mission Committee saw four years later—that Hastie was a man whose "temper and disposition" were "unsuited to the high position he occupies,"<sup>335</sup> and that they simply could not work with him? When she refused his gift of the book she had been prepared to try, or so Hastie said: was it the interview then, his "overbearing" manner, that changed her mind? Hastie explained in sufficient detail at the trial that the female mission fell under the authority of the General Assembly, i.e. the men and in particular the ordained men.<sup>336</sup> He tried and failed to convince the court that as a consequence the Ladies' mission in Calcutta fell under his, Hastie's, authority. George Gillan, the senior chaplain, listed female missions among "collateral missionary agencies" along with the press and medical missions,<sup>337</sup> thus subscribing to a slightly more fluid view than Hastie's: what is collateral cannot be entirely subordinate. Pigot of course knew of this diagrammatic ordering, this compulsive building of hierarchies, but her experience had been of men determined to advance zenana visiting and female education, Jardine, Wilson, and Macalister Thomson, men who had trusted her to know her business. And now the new man, speaking as the Church of Scotland in person, was telling her who could and who could not be her friends. She was 41 years old, and a woman of some standing in Calcutta. If what she saw was not so much a new broom as a hostile takeover, and that by a man with all of ten weeks' experience of India, she need not have asked herself if she could work with him, if he had the requisite "temper and disposition". Collaboration is not on offer when loyalty is being demanded.

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334 *IDN* supplement September 5, 1883: *The Pigot Case* page 67.

335 FMC minutes, November 6<sup>th</sup> 1883.

336 *IDN* supplement August 29<sup>th</sup> 1883, "The defendant then read a few passages, showing that the Ladies' Association was now in every respect under the control of the Assembly. This exactly expressed his own view, and it was in that belief that he had been acting." *The Pigot Case* omits the proceedings in court of the first three days.

337 *Record* for June 1873 page 363.

There is also simple discouragement to consider. We know from Mary Macnamara that Pigot was “often disheartened.” Wilson was leaving Calcutta for two years, Octavius Steel, if Hastie is to be believed, was “at daggers drawn” with her, Mrs Wheeler had mocked her efforts publicly, the orphan Seeta had died and the Chitpore murder, associated in late February with “some school in the neighbourhood” was at the beginning of March firmly fixed on “Mrs Piggott’s school” and “Miss Pigot’s Girls’ School at Sobha-bazaar.”<sup>338</sup> Pigot may well have felt depressed as well as threatened.

Was her resignation, finally, an emphatic cry for help? She could easily picture the consternation in the Ladies’ Committee at the imminent disappearance of their most expensive and perhaps their most lavishly praised lady superintendent. Did she expect not so much to leave their employ as to compel them to take action, any action that would protect her from the threats she saw? There is no way of measuring either her cold foresight, her ability to calculate a move and another player’s likely reaction, or her impulsiveness, her instinct to act in the heat of the moment.

Whatever actuated Pigot to send in her resignation, she subsequently bethought herself of the Ladies in Edinburgh and wrote at length to them, although the letters themselves and the date of them are lost.<sup>339</sup> The trend of her thinking however is reconstructed for us by Hastie himself, if we can trust him. We left him writing *May I come?* and he obtained a second interview with the lady superintendent.

Mr Trevelyan. – Did you see Miss Pigot the next morning after that? I saw her during the next few days.

And discussed this matter? Yes.

Did you see her often after that in 1879? No, not often.

You did not convince Miss Pigot that she was wrong? I did not succeed.

His Lordship. – What did she tell you? She abused the Corresponding Board.<sup>340</sup>

Pigot told Hastie, probably, what she was to write to her contacts in Edinburgh and say to Chater Gregory, to wit that she wanted to be left alone. When Gregory reported to the next Board meeting in May, he said that

he had seen Miss Pigot on the previous day on the subject of her resignation, as recorded in the minute of the Board’s last meeting, and that he found her equally indisposed to withdraw her resignation, or to give any very coherent reasons for it. Her dissatisfaction appeared to him to be based for the most part on personal grounds, and her attitude implied a disinclination to be controlled in any way by the advice of the Board, so that he found it very difficult to put before the meeting any thing definite or lucid in connection with her complaints and wishes. She had stated,

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338 *IDN* March 4<sup>th</sup> 1879 page 3 and *Englishman* March 6<sup>th</sup> 1879 page 3.

339 In 1884 Pigot drafted, and her solicitors printed, a statement for the use of the appeal court. Of her resignation she wrote “I made no direct communication to the Head Committee of Edinburgh, but wrote to such members that I was bound to give some explanation. The Rev Macalister replied in great urgency that whatever the sacrifice it cost myself, I should not leave the Mission.” *The Pigot Case* page 329.

340 *IDN* supplement September 5<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 68. The same conversation is perhaps rehearsed in the *IDN* supplement September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 91, where the Board’s standing as gentlemen is defended by Hastie. “She said they were not educated men and could not understand her work. I said they were all educated men, and quite able to understand. I said, I have just come, state to me any thing about your work that I could not understand. She gave a slight laugh, and gave no reply.” We have to hope that Hastie was poking gentle fun at himself here. His question was asinine, and Pigot’s slight laugh spoke volumes.

however, that she had written home to the Ladies' Committee fully on the subject, and was awaiting a communication from them.<sup>341</sup>

The Ladies' Acting Committee did not table the resignation until Gillan, as secretary of the Corresponding Board, had written to them. His letter was dated to May 9<sup>th</sup>, three days after Gregory's report and over seven weeks after Pigot's resignation, so that the ladies considered it fully 11 weeks after she had written it. They recognised immediately the nature of the problem.

The meeting having taken into consideration the whole subject of Corresponding Boards as affecting the Female Work in India – especially considering that frequent difficulties arose between the Association's agents at the various stations in India and the local Corresponding Boards under the present system, and although no special blame was attached to either party as it was believed such difficulties were almost inseparable from a system which placed the agents under the control of several different bodies:

Resolved that some modification of the existing arrangement was very desirable and for that purpose and also with a view to defining more exactly the present position of their agents with regard to the Corresponding Boards: the Meeting resolved to complete the Regulations now existing in Draft and submit them to the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church for approval, with a view to their being sent to the various stations for the guidance of the Agents.<sup>342</sup>

Margaret Stevenson agreed to write to Pigot that she was not answerable to the Corresponding Board except in matters of finance, "and then only as a collective body not as individuals," and that her resignation was not accepted. The secretary replied to Gillan that the Ladies had not received Pigot's resignation, "and that as she held her commission from them, they cannot accept any resignation not addressed to themselves, and have written to her to that effect, and that they further consider that her resignation at present would cause the collapse of the whole work at Calcutta," not least because funding in Scotland would suffer. Many contributors were interested in Miss Pigot first, and the mission second.

The Ladies, then, registered just another tiresome case of dominance display, and responded suitably. The Corresponding Board in Calcutta, however, meeting in July, expressed regret "at the tone and reflections" of the letter sent to Gillan, "and other communications" unspecified, and further felt "that it would be necessary for them to be relieved of further official connection with her work as speedily as the convenience of the Ladies' Committee would allow."<sup>343</sup>

The Board, in a word, took umbrage. The secretary of the Ladies' Acting Committee in Edinburgh was Horatio R Macrae, a member of the Foreign Mission Committee, and clearly he had expressed himself forcibly about the ladies' rights and the gentlemen's responsibilities. Hastie, writing in 1882, chided the Ladies' Committee "from whom I have never received the slightest recognition since I came to India but on the contrary have been excluded by a

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341 *The Pigot Case* page 322. The minute is dated May 6<sup>th</sup>.

342 Minutes of the Ladies' Association June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1879. A Miss Sanders had drafted a reply to Pigot which was read to the meeting, but not sent.

343 *The Pigot Case* page 322. Minute of July 25<sup>th</sup> 1879.

specially enacted resolution from any participation in their sphere of work,”<sup>344</sup> and that assertion may guide us as to some of what Macrae’s letter contained. The Board’s request to be spared any “further connection” with the female mission might be a mere expression of pique, or conversely a serious threat. The male and female missions worked together and depended on each other: as we have seen, Pigot had drawn heavily on the services of members of the Board as well as of their wives, and without them her operation, already understaffed and underfunded, would suffer.

Whether there was any residual resentment, or suspicion, of Pigot in the wake of her resignation among members of the Ladies’ Acting Committee cannot be judged. John Steel’s wife, and Frances Thomson, were members, and we may suppose that they were Pigot supporters, as almost certainly was Margaret Stevenson, but the sentiment of other members we know nothing about. In general, the truly committed devote their life to their work and do not resign: and that thought must have occurred to some or all of the ladies. How reliable was Pigot? Or was sheer exhaustion affecting her judgement?

The burdens which were overwhelming Pigot, to borrow Hastie’s phrase,<sup>345</sup> were by and large unchanged: what is not clear is how overwhelmed she was, emotionally and physically. In March Lavinia Frost was married and left the work. Susan Dorkin had wed the previous July, and they were Pigot’s best Bengali speakers<sup>346</sup> among her Eurasian staff. Mary Ellis and Lizzie Tremearne could not fill their place, although the latter took over four of Frost’s zenanas. Ellis as yet did no zenana visiting, and Tremearne’s health problems interrupted her work, whereas the two younger women had no time off and enjoyed excellent health. The Barham sisters, who had started in January, were for their part too new to the work to replace Dorkin and Frost. In April Pigot took on a new assistant, a young woman called Grace Gordon, who had known Mary Eliza Leslie from childhood and latterly been employed by her in the school for “better-circumstanced Christians.” Gordon seems to have functioned as a second matron, possibly part time, since Helen Leslie, the incumbent matron who “answered very well,” had asked for and been given a certain amount of teaching.<sup>347</sup> Outside the mission house were the eight schools: the turnover of teachers at the Mutteabruz school was rapid, and the distance to be walked to Garden Reach was identified as the cause. One of the local sponsors—which one we are not told—promptly built a house for the teacher next to the school. The house at Bag Bazar in which Pigot’s school met was put up for sale and another house nearby immediately offered.<sup>348</sup> Local support, then, was consistent: Pigot’s difficulty was in sustaining the supply of teachers. Disease took a particularly heavy toll among the native girls at the end of 1879, including two teachers, a former orphan identified as Bessie at

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344 *The Pigot Case* page 18 reproduces Hastie’s memorandum of May 17<sup>th</sup> 1882, from which these words are taken. The specially enacted resolution to which he refers has not been found in the Ladies’ Committee minutes.

345 James Wilson in December 1874 described probably the same burdens to which Hastie alluded in 1879. See page 47 above.

346 *NFM* July 1879 page 77. Pigot writes that they “had been longest with us, and thereby acquired some facility in the language.”

347 Gordon names a native matron, Ramonie, in her 1882 letter to Mrs Walker, suggesting three matrons, at least for a while. In *The Pigot Case* she works for Pigot from April 1879 to 1881 (pages 129 and 133), in the *IDN* (supplement of 10<sup>th</sup> September 1883) from April 1879 until February 1881 (in answer to Gasper) or September 1<sup>st</sup> 1881 (in answer to Jackson). Leslie taught one class three days a week, and the infant class of the Upper Christian School for an hour every day, while clearly keeping a supervisory eye on all the children (*NFM* April 1880 pages 56-7). Her time at the mission house overlapped Gordon’s during most of 1879.

348 *NFM* July 1879 page 81.

the Sonai and an unnamed “very intelligent Christian native woman”<sup>349</sup> at the Kidderpore school, both trained and much valued by Pigot. To make up losses she hired outside women when and where she could: at some point in the first half of 1879 she took on an unnamed zenana visitor who had been dismissed from another mission for some kind of “gross misconduct.” Mrs Wheeler told Pigot that she ought not to employ such women, and Pigot replied that she knew them, and that they came to her as friends.<sup>350</sup> Wheeler’s hard words in the Education Report, that these women should not be employed, were based on not only their laziness and ignorance but their immorality as well. The quarrel was between justice and mercy. A Bengali woman, once baptized, had abandoned caste: she either married a Christian or found work of some sort among Christians, but if they too once cast her out, she had nowhere to go. Neither side of the argument could be dismissed easily. Lower-class converts had a bad reputation, their misdeeds made newspaper copy often enough,<sup>351</sup> and missions were at fault in bringing the class into being. The so-called conversion of the undeserving poor solved no problems.

The tussle between Monmohini Wheeler and Mary Pigot at street level was magnified for public consumption in the government Gazette. The Calcutta Missionary Conference had collected its thoughts by the middle of April 1879 and fired off a salvo of stern reproof at the Department of Public Instruction for its wayward report of the previous year. It was missionaries who had first opened girls’ schools in India, and government had once been grateful for the fact. In Calcutta now there were maybe 40 foreign zenana teachers employed, of whom only four spoke not a word of Bengali and “systematically” needed an interpreter. A few bad apples among the local-born teachers did not mean that all of them must be tarred with the one brush. The missionary societies in Britain were not pressing for expansion of their operations “at all costs,” nor did the different denominations compete aggressively, in fact they cooperated closely. The rapid expansion was in response to real and genuine demand. The Department had not told the missions that grants-in-aid were given on the understanding that home tuition would continue and complete the teaching begun in the girls’ schools: the whole endeavour was pioneering, and the zenana was not a classroom. Missions had not presented their results in “too favourable a light.” The problem there was that government tests were ambiguous. Mrs Wheeler had provoked complaints from “most of our members,” some of the questions she had asked were so inappropriately worded that our pupils had not understood her, and teachers of far greater experience than her had found our results much better. Grants-in-aid for zenana teaching should if anything be increased.

At the end of May Croft returned fire. He was delighted that so many of the European and Eurasian teachers now spoke Bengali, but that was not what Miss Brittan said. She ran the biggest educational mission in Calcutta, her American teachers were far too busy to learn the vernacular, and it mattered little, according to her, whether they did or not. As to the native teachers, the Conference and the Department were basically in agreement—so long as we bear in mind that a few bad apples are a publicity disaster. The demand for zenana teaching

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349 *NFM* April 1878 page 41, written in February by John Steel.

350 Wheeler mentioned two women from the American, and one from the Church of England zenana missions (none of them named) about whom she remonstrated with Pigot: *IDN* supplement September 8<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* pages 108-110. Trevelyan in the *IDN* supplement September 12<sup>th</sup> 1883 said of one of these women that Pigot “gave a chance to a woman to prevent her going on the streets.”

351 Instances are commonplace. An example is the *Englishman* for September 9<sup>th</sup> 1868 page 2, “Murder at Bamam Bustee” (further reports from September 11<sup>th</sup> to December 22<sup>nd</sup>). For the mischief missionaries do see the *Englishman* of February 10<sup>th</sup> 1872 page 2 editorial, May 28<sup>th</sup> 1872 page 3 Summary of News. The *IDN*, on a case in Istanbul, exclaims “Where, however, is our danger from the indiscretion of missionaries to end?” (February 4<sup>th</sup> 1880 page 3).

was not, according to Mrs Wheeler, real and genuine: some houses were being “induced” to allow, despite their natural reluctance, missionary agents through the door. What was wrong with zenana work was the consequence of the headlong race to expand it: and if pressure from the home societies was not behind that haste, then the missionaries here in Calcutta were alone responsible. Nor had Mrs Wheeler been too strict. Croft had heard that complaint before. Neither he nor the Conference could go into the zenanas and check for themselves, on both sides they were reliant on what their womenfolk told them. And of course zenana teachers judged their own work with a lenient eye, “while, on the other hand, I can discover no probable cause for the display of undue bias on the part of the Inspectress.” Anyway Government was well enough pleased with missionary efforts to promote female education. It only wanted to help.<sup>352</sup>

Public support for missionary meddling was conditional on its impact. During the Indigo Commission hearings of 1860 the evidence of the missionaries had drawn brickbats from the press about “cheap and silly Germans” and “rice Christians.”<sup>353</sup> Debate in the mid-1870s had turned on the failure of missionary effort generally—the people of India had not set off in a body down the road to Damascus—but the diversion of that effort into education, which was much more successful, was no bad thing. By the end of the decade zenana visiting was well enough established to be judged and found wanting. The *Indian Daily News* in January 1880 put out an editorial that was, for the first time, overtly hostile. A zenana visitor spent about two hours a week in any one house, and

this time is taken up in various ways: 1st, There is the eager questioning of the zenana lady on all sorts of topics—it is a capital opportunity for a gossip, which ladies immured within zenana walls, not less than their sisters privileged to walk outside them, would be more than mortal, and less than women, if they let slip; 2nd, Then as a zenana teacher, owing allegiance to the “mission,” there must be Bible stories with more or less explanations and expansions, and conscious or unconscious exhortations, to break with the religious system and beliefs of their forefathers, and adopt the new faith invitingly presented by the lady visitor; 3rd, Then there is needle work, in order that the zenana pupil may beguile the weary hours of her life in “works of labour and of skill;” and, last of all, there is, 4th, The reading lesson. Which of us that knows women, and zenana women, will believe that number four, the last item, occupies the longest time of this precious two hours a week, for which the Government pays such a handsome sum?<sup>354</sup>

Not only did women gossip, but “sentimental talk and mutual laudation and rose-tinted statements and appeals for help to British and American church-going people” were also no substitute for a proper assessment of the results. Zenana visiting had precious little to do with education. It was “simply an organized attempt to unsettle the faiths of the native women of India. In our estimation this, at present at least, can only result, if it is at all effectual, in producing domestic discord” and there was no sense in giving grants-in-aid for such a purpose. Government money should be withdrawn as soon as might be.

It is not possible, without comprehensive polling of printed and archival documents, to arrive at an assessment of “public opinion,” insofar as there is such a thing, in any period past or

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352 The documents are published in the *IDN* for February 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 1880. See Appendix 5. Croft’s “display of undue bias” is splendidly ambiguous. Display by whom?

353 The *Bengal Hurkaru* June 18<sup>th</sup> 1860 page 3. A number of early CMS missionaries, including Christian Bomwetsch of Calcutta, were supplied by the Basel Mission.

354 *IDN* January 21<sup>st</sup> 1880 page 2.



present. What is certain is that Pigot herself, the ladies in Edinburgh, Hastie and other bearded gentlemen in Calcutta of whom we know little or nothing, all read what was appearing in the press and made their own interpretations according to their individual and tribal prejudices and viewpoints. To the pious, of course, the attitudes struck by lay voices speaking to and for laymen presumably raised more sorrow than anger. But undeniably editorials such as the one cited here constituted bad publicity, and to whatever extent Pigot discounted it, if at all, in her own mind, she cannot have been happy that her employers in Edinburgh were reading it. What they were far less likely to be reading was the Bengali side of her publicity, some of it in print and much of it by word of mouth. She herself hints occasionally at this second, indigenous aspect of her standing in Calcutta:<sup>355</sup> but to the ladies, and to subscribers in Scotland, it was English-speaking sentiment that carried weight.

On top of their concern for the public standing of their mission, the ladies were more immediately exercised as to funding. The word *retrenchment* was in the air. In her report for 1879 Pigot explained how “the most studied care” was used in paying the zenana teachers. The Mission House could accommodate all the school teachers, so that they were no longer “morally exposed, living in cheap lodgings among the lower classes of heathens,” but

it is the rent of this house that now comes a strain upon our funds, and we are unable to meet the cost. A crisis has come upon the carrying on of this work, in the details here represented. The question is, Shall we leave this house and go back to our illness, and the moral exposure of our native teachers? or shall we shut up our schools, and give no chance to the little ones that we are bringing together now? Otherwise, shall we say to the poor Zenana women, “We must abandon you, and leave you to your darkness”?

It is difficult for us to have set our plough upon any ground, and then leave it alone and retreat from it. The question of retrenchment in such a cause is an arrangement that none in the present case would be able to adopt<sup>356</sup>.

Our sceptical Scottish reader will have retained the words *crisis* and *retrenchment*, and discounted Pigot’s rhetoric. James Wilson, speaking at the May meeting of the Ladies’ Association, ended his address by evoking the 600 girls on the roof of the Mission House.

Such a gathering of 600 children attending day-schools could not even have been dreamt of ten years ago. But there they were in living presence, gathered from all parts of the city, with great trouble and expense. They had all to be brought in conveyances, for almost every child was loaded with jewellery, and could not have passed along the streets on foot without great risk of being robbed. As I looked at the great multitude before me, and remembered the zenana work besides, which was not represented there at all, I could not but think that very soon this Association would be ruined by its own success. The work is growing so rapidly that, unless there be a corresponding expansion in the financial resources of the Association, its present resources will be more than exhausted.<sup>357</sup>

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355 At the distribution of prizes addressed by Arbuthnot 600 girls were lined up on the roof. Pigot relates that rumour soon swelled the number to 1500. *NFM* July 1879 page 80.

356 *NFM* July 1879 pages 82-83.

357 *NFM* July 1879 page 108. Constant annual deficits would exhaust the capital fund and “ruin” the association financially. In his subsequent remarks Wilson met Croft half way: one day in a distant future zenana teaching would continue and complete the learning begun in schools.

The Corresponding Board assessed Pigot's needs at £1,500, and were of the opinion that she should give up part of the work. A special appeal by the Ladies' committee had raised £86 by the end of December,<sup>358</sup> and efforts to recruit more parishes to the Association were in hand. But the Ladies' income for the year 1879 was £500 less than the year before, and £800 more was spent than was got in.<sup>359</sup> These figures are quoted, in an appeal for donations, by the Rev James Williamson, the temporary Senior Chaplain at Calcutta in 1872. In the same place he states that over the four months from December 1879 to March 1880 Pigot took in Rs 1,056 in zenana fees, Rs 714 from parlour boarders and Rs 1,403 in fees for the Upper Christian School. The figures are valuable, in that the accounts published annually in the *News of Female Missions* only show the income and outgoings of the association in Edinburgh, not of the stations abroad. In principle Pigot might have been taking in three times the total of these sums, or some Rs 9,500, for the year. In fact, as we have seen, zenanas opened and closed their doors unpredictably, attendance at girls' schools was inconsistent, and there were long holidays. Nevertheless the possibility arises that to the £1,354 supplied by Edinburgh<sup>360</sup> for the year 1880—not the £1,500 asked for—Pigot could add several hundreds of pounds sterling in local earnings. As a general rule it can be taken for granted that girls' schooling was underfunded, but uncertainty hangs over Pigot's accounts precisely because of the unknown income from parlour boarders, the Upper Christian School, St Andrew's congregation and, perhaps, generous but discreet Indian donors. Octavius Steel, the Corresponding Board treasurer, will have known what it was: but his accounts have long since vanished.<sup>361</sup>

At all events Pigot's operation continued to grow. In the early 1870s the General Assembly's Institution had boasted two European staff, Jardine and Wilson, and the Ladies had matched this with Pigot and Macnamara, as well as other less permanent staff. Hastie in 1880 had four assistants, Wilson, a John Mackintosh to replace Samuel Robson, the Rev James Edwards and James Thomson: Pigot went one better and supervised "five other English ladies"<sup>362</sup> for the Upper Christian School and two further "English female teachers" for zenana visiting. These were Mrs Ellis, the Barham sisters, Mrs Oliver and a Mrs Mackenzie, who joined the staff in October 1879 and stayed only ten months, and Mrs Tremearne and Miss Hoff visiting the zenanas. But comparison with the General Assembly's Institution is misleading. James Thomson after a twelvemonth in Calcutta was earning £386 a year. Pigot herself after ten years was paid Rs 150 per month, a little less than half Thomson's salary at the conventional exchange rate, and her subordinates were getting substantially less than her. He taught classes of 100 boys, often more, who were breathlessly attentive in his academic lectures and yawned through his Bible sessions: Pigot bribed girls to attend school with dolls and silver pins and presumably had her fair share of "little ones lying at length on the floor admiring one another's rings and bracelets," in Woodrow's words. Mrs Tremearne, in a letter written in November 1879, mentions grown women showing off their new jewels during zenana visits.<sup>363</sup> Nonetheless Pigot's establishment was impressively large. In 1880 a staff of 59 was

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358 *NFM* January 1880 pages 4-5.

359 The *Record* for September 1880 pages 225-6.

360 *NFM* July 1881 page 147.

361 For 1881 there is in fact an account in *NFM* July 1882 pages 139-140. Fees and grants-in-aid brought in Rs 11,736 for the year, of which boarders and the Upper Christian School paid Rs 5,438 and "other sources" Rs 292. Grants-in-aid that year came to Rs 2400 for zenana visiting, so that a healthy Rs 3,606 must have come from zenana and school fees.

362 *NFM* July 1880 pages 91 and 92.

363 *NFM* April 1880 page 54.

reported,<sup>364</sup> the seven “English female teachers,” 19 Indian female teachers and one pupil teacher, nine male pundits, one of them “a Christian master of arts ... to bring up the higher pupils to the matriculation standard in mathematics and Sanskrit,” eight fully and 13 partially employed orphan girls and two matrons. Where the General Assembly’s Institution aimed at educational quality,<sup>365</sup> the female mission was constrained to look for arable breadth, a wider acre in which to scatter the good seed: and Pigot had now grafted onto that ambition an attempt to get girls through matriculation.<sup>366</sup> It appears that she was deaf to counsels of contraction and consolidation, let alone retrenchment. Whatever drove her was not to be gainsaid.

In early 1880 three new acquaintances made their appearance. The young William Fish reached Calcutta in February, to replace Mackintosh who appears to have “been given to drink.”<sup>367</sup> Pigot invited Hastie to the distribution of prizes in March: he excused himself, asking Fish to go in his place, and he, showing great tact and discretion for his years, discovered that he could not attend either. When James Wilson returned to Calcutta in 1881 he was to take Fish, as a fellow English teacher, under his own wing, and the young man became a frequent visitor at Bow Bazar. But Wilson was still in Scotland, and Fish seems to have kept within Hastie’s boundaries.

Pigot may have met William Macfarlane on the few occasions when he passed through Calcutta on his way to and from Scotland. In 1870 he had opened the mission at Darjeeling, and made of it the Church of Scotland’s “first great success,”<sup>368</sup> scoring relatively large numbers of conversions year after year. His sister had joined him in 1871<sup>369</sup>, staying while briefly in Calcutta with the Macalister Thomsons and therefore quite likely herself meeting Pigot. William Macfarlane was pressing for a zenana mission at Darjeeling by 1886,<sup>370</sup> and his sister must have played a role in his planning. There was contact between mission stations of which we only catch hints. For instance a catechist of Macfarlane’s married one of Pigot’s orphans in 1874,<sup>371</sup> showing that the contact was at all levels, and that the relentless demand for young wives was not merely local: the negotiations preceding that marriage must have been between the Macfarlanes and Pigot. In 1880, as Macfarlane was preparing to take a much-needed furlough in Scotland, two newly ordained men passed through Calcutta on their way to join him. Archibald Turnbull arrived early in January and spent ten days in the capital. He was met by Hastie, given bed and board by the Gillans, and was taken on a Sunday school picnic: “Nor was the visit less interesting or gratifying which I paid to Miss Pigot’s school for orphans and day-scholars, as many as possible of whom are trained up as female missionaries

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364 *NFM* July 1880 pages 91-2.

365 The *Record* for December 1869 page 536 claims that Scottish schools in India taught to exactly the same standard as those at home.

366 In competition with the Bethune School and the Free Church. Two girls at the Bethune were to pass the Entrance exam in 1881, beating Pigot by a year. In the same year the first two girls to graduate in all India passed the First Arts exam after studying at the Free Church Institution.

367 National Library of Scotland Private Letter Book of the Secretary of the FMC, MSS 7546 entry for November 16<sup>th</sup> 1882.

368 Macfarlane’s obituary in *Reports on the Schemes* 1887 pages 65-6. He never married.

369 The Church of Scotland archive in the National Library of Scotland contains a photograph, taken apparently at Darjeeling, of James and Katie Wilson and William and Miss Macfarlane. Margaret Macfarlane moved to Darjeeling at the beginning of April 1871 (*NFM* October 1871 page 175), “a bright, rosy-cheeked country girl” according to Frances Thomson in *NFM* January 1913 page 1.

370 Archibald Turnbull wrote to the Ladies’ Committee on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1886. National Library of Scotland MS 7629 Chairwomen’s Letter Book 1885-1920 folio 46.

371 *NFM* July 1874 pages 264-5.

for the zenanas, or wherever they can find an opening for good work. Miss Pigot is doing what she can to supply a want which is sorely felt and daily growing ...”<sup>372</sup> Clearly he was not allowed to proceed to Darjeeling until he had heard the authorized version on female education. William Sutherland followed him in February, staying with James and Annie Thomson for nine days, and it is likely enough that he too did not pass through unscathed. Sutherland agreed in later years entirely with Macfarlane on the importance of missions to women, and he certainly knew Pigot in her retirement. Addressing the Annual Meeting of the Ladies’ Association in June 1891 (*NFM* July 1891 page 147) he mentioned “our loved friend, your aged servant Miss Pigot.”

Young William Fish, then, sent his excuses to the distribution of prizes on March 11<sup>th</sup>, at which Croft himself presided. Four hundred girls were assembled, “a large attendance” of visitors assisted, and Gillan read the report. The Upper Christian School had re-opened for the year with 56 pupils, as opposed to the previous year’s 31. Preparation of girls for the Entrance examination had pressed ahead, and teaching, examining or advice on the syllabus had been provided by Gillan himself, Principal Robertson, Samuel Robson, James Thomson, Mr Bomwetsch, G D Banerjee, T N Mitra, G C Dutt, R B Ghosh and Kalicharan Bannerjee.<sup>373</sup> M C Nyaratna (“whose presence at the Bow Bazaar examination was a feature of the greatest importance in native opinion”)<sup>374</sup> had again examined 200 girls in Bengali literature, Biprocharan Chuckerbutty had visited all eight high-caste schools, both had declared themselves highly satisfied, and Mrs Gillan had examined the younger ones in the Upper Christian School. The list of the great and the good is impressive, and the intention was clearly to show an academically sound enterprise in vigorous good health.

Croft declared himself suitably impressed, and turned forthwith to the problems of zenana teaching.

He referred, in particular, to the apathy of the pupils, the want of familiarity on the part of the European teachers with the language of their pupils, and the necessarily imperfect training of the native teachers. These difficulties, he suggested, might in some measure be obviated, if those pupils were sought out who were most likely to profit by and value the instruction given them, and a distinct normal training was insisted on as a preliminary to the active work of teaching. He also pointed out the advisability of placing limitations on the amount of work which a single teacher had to do. If the teaching of women in the zenanas was to be workmanlike and sound, if it was to avoid the reproach of unreality, and of being merely amateur work, it must be done by carefully trained teachers, strictly supervised, and strictly limited in time.<sup>375</sup>

Croft’s remarks, constrained as they were by the demands of civility, chastised zenana missions in general for using “pupil teachers” too soon, and over-working all their staff, two faults (he might have but did not add) soon corrected if they were to contract instead of

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372 *Record* for June 1880 page 145.

373 *NFM* July 1880 page 87-92. On page 88 “the Rev A. Bomwetsch of the Church of England Missionary Society” conducts the Scripture exams. Christian Bomwetsch had three sons and a daughter (CMS Archive Section VI Part 5, Papers of Christian Bomwetsch 1847-1880), and A. Bomwetsch is presumably one of the three. At the trial Pigot said that “Mr Bomwetsch is a particular friend of mine,” but which Bomwetsch is not made clear. James Robertson had been principal of the Doveton College, and was now principal of the Free Church Institution, Trailokyanath Mitra sat on the Senate of the University and Rashbehari Ghosh, like K C Bannerjee, was at this point a *vakeel* of the High Court. G D Banerjee we cannot identify.

374 *NFM* July 1880 page 88. But how many readers in Scotland cared a fig for “native opinion”?

375 The *Statesman* and the *IDN* March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1880 page 3. *NFM* July 1880 pages 91-2 prints the passage without the last sentence. ‘Workmanlike’, ‘unreality’ and ‘amateur’ are perhaps the offending words.

expanding their operations. The *News of Female Missions* had the courage to print his words almost unedited, not omitting Gillan's thanks "for his kindness in presiding, and especially for the suggestions he had made," before hurrying the reader on to a list of the schools and their 765 pupils and 59 teachers, not to mention 109 zenanas receiving "systematic teaching." The answer to Croft's—and Gillan's—reservations was still, for public consumption at least, sheer size. Any doubt that was felt by the Ladies' Committee was kept from the public and indeed from the minutes of their meetings. The Calcutta mission, as far as the Scottish public was concerned, was striding towards ever greater success.

Anne Barham died in April. Pigot wrote that she was "such a gifted teacher, that her sister asked that the higher class should be given to her, and she has all along been the first teacher of our Upper School. Her teaching was remarkable, and her place is most difficult to fill."<sup>376</sup> Lizzie Tremearne, who had nursed her, broke down in exhaustion and grief, and for a time Pigot lost her services as well. In the same month news came that Macalister Thomson had collapsed and died at the end of March, a loss of some magnitude, in that "In her report for 1879 Miss Pigot refers the Committee, in enthusiastic terms, to the testimony she is sure will be borne to the success of her work by her beloved pastor, the Rev John Macalister Thomson, who had carefully watched over it from its commencement. This year, alas! we are called to mourn ..."<sup>377</sup> In June Samuel Robson moved to Dacca,<sup>378</sup> and on June 25<sup>th</sup> Octavius Steel sailed for London and stayed there two years. What Pigot felt about his loss is unknowable, in view of Hastie's insistence that the two of them were "at daggers drawn" over Samuel Robson. His departure certainly marked the end of the old guard. If Pigot now retained the voluntary services of any of her old acquaintance, it was among the Bengali, not the Scottish, community.

She might have lost another friend that summer. Fifty years had passed since Alexander Duff founded the General Assembly's Institution, and Hastie got the acquiescence of the Foreign Mission Committee to celebrate the jubilee. The Free Church planned its own celebration of the event, Hastie let it be known that they had no business to be doing so, and Kalicharan Bannerjee published two unsigned articles in the *Indian Christian Herald* pointing to errors in Hastie's reasoning.<sup>379</sup> Hastie wrote to Bannerjee on August 3<sup>rd</sup> demanding that he admit to having written the articles and met with a refusal, whereupon a heated exchange of notes followed, Bannerjee writing on the 5<sup>th</sup> that "I won't receive any more of your *most impertinent and impudent* letters."<sup>380</sup> Hastie thereupon cancelled his subscription to the *Indian Christian Herald*, and forbade Bannerjee access to any of the Church of Scotland premises, including the female mission. As we have already seen, Hastie regarded himself as the head of both the male and female missions, regardless of what the ladies in Edinburgh said, so that in his own eyes the interdict on Bannerjee was in perfect order. Had the latter

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376 *NFM* July 1880 page 114. The same page prints an obituary notice from the *Indian Christian Herald* which praises "her accuracy, her power of simplification, and her thorough conscientiousness" as a teacher. Pigot has her working in "the Upper Girls' School," the newspaper puts her in the Upper Christian School: the two classes—"schools"—is surely too grand—seem not to have been very distinct.

377 *NFM* July 1880 pages 87-8.

378 *IDN* 24<sup>th</sup> June 1880 page 3.

379 Copies of the newspaper have yet to be traced. At the Free Church celebration on July 13<sup>th</sup> Krishna Mohun Bannerjee (Anglican, but a convert of Duff's), Kenneth Macdonald, Kalicharan Bannerjee, Lal Behary Dey and John Hector all made speeches: *IDN* July 14<sup>th</sup> 1880 page 3.

380 *IDN* supplement September 5<sup>th</sup> 1883. *The Pigot Case* page 70 omits the wording of the letter.

been faint-hearted, Pigot would have lost his assistance. In the event he ignored Hastie's ban.<sup>381</sup>

Kalicharan Bannerjee apart, Pigot's relations with the Free Church were altogether more cordial than Hastie's. A recent innovation in Calcutta was the Bengali Christian Conference, a week-long celebration in which the converts of all the denominations (at least all the protestant denominations) came together to pray, listen to speeches and eat together. The first such conference was perhaps that of 1879, when, after a week of meetings, debates and speeches, Alexander Duff's former house in Cornwallis Square, empty since repairs were being done, was thrown open to 1,000 men and boys for a love feast.<sup>382</sup> In 1880 it was decided that the love feast would be hosted, the day before the climactic procession through the city, at 125 Bow Bazar.

#### REUNION MEETINGS OF THE NATIVE CHRISTIANS.—

The annual Christian Conference meetings, with the feasts given to the native Christians of Calcutta and vicinity, bid fair to pass into a permanent institution. The assembly that met on Friday last in the house of Miss Pigot, Bow Bazaar-street, was composed of about 700 persons, including nearly 250 European ladies and gentlemen. After the singing of hymns in Bengalee, composed for the occasion, dinner in the native style was served, and the Europeans and natives sitting side by side on the floor partook of it. "It was not practicable," says a correspondent, "to have done with the eating business at one sitting, so there were three or four sittings commencing at 7 PM, and terminating at 12 at night. The most cordial interchanges of thoughts, ideas, and sentiments took place. The European members of the company, both male and female, evinced great solicitude to please the converts. The gathering in the Free Church Institution buildings, Cornwallis-square, on Saturday, the 16th instant, consisted of over a 1,000 persons, including Europeans whose number was smaller than in the previous day's feast; but several worthy Ministers of the Church of Christ, Missionaries, &c., both European and native, were present, [as] at Miss Pigot's house. The day having been spent in religious services and songs, and the hearty enjoyment of the feast (*Prem-bhooj*, or Feast of Love) the guests, at Cornwallis-square formed themselves into a procession, which started at about 6 o'clock, and directed its course through Cornwallis-street, College-street, and Mirzapore-street, and did not separate till they had traversed the Amherst-street on their return journey. Songs in Bengalee and dancing, accompanied by instrumental music, and performed with all the enthusiasm and joy of conscious regeneration, imparted a solemn beauty and importance to the procession, which made an impression even on the minds of the heathen spectators and listeners."<sup>383</sup>

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381 Bannerjee's involvement in female education was not restricted to Pigot's schools. After examining the girls at the Hindu Girls' School in February 1880 he said that "the girls acquitted themselves to my entire satisfaction, which means, to the entire satisfaction of one who takes a rather despondent view of the prospects of female education in this country." *IDN* February 10<sup>th</sup> 1880 page 3.

382 In the *Free Church of Scotland Monthly Record* for January 1880 pages 11-12, Kenneth Macdonald reports that "The conference was also peripatetic. It held sessions in the London Missionary chapel at Bhowanipore in the south, and in our Free Church chapel in the north end of the town, as well as in premises belonging to the Church of England and the Baptist Missionary Societies in places intervening. On one day they had the Lord's Supper, and on the last they had both a "love-feast" and a procession through the native quarter of the town."

383 *Statesman* October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1880 page 3. The inserted "as" in *as at Miss Pigot's house* seems necessary for the logic of the sentence.

Seven hundred or a thousand are modest numbers for a truly memorable Calcutta event, when ten times as many would gather and be fed.<sup>384</sup> But feeding 700 mostly male Bengalis over five hours must have stretched the resources of the mission house at Bow Bazar to the limit. In terms of publicity, of the need expressed earlier by Pigot to show some *éclat* on the Calcutta stage, the event could be classed as a success. In the eyes of Lucinda Oliver, and those who thought like her, throwing the door open to “anybody and everybody” was no way to run an orphanage: and the ladies in Edinburgh were surely irritated by the abiding habit of the Calcutta press of referring to their schools as “Miss Pigot’s schools” and their mission house as “Miss Pigot’s house.” Some in Scotland would have seen the event as a needless extravagance.

It was described for them, in the *News of Female Missions*, by Annie Thomson, writing in November.<sup>385</sup> She made the throng maybe 600, and turned the reader’s attention to the slide show given to the women and children and away from the men feeding their faces. The women took tea and native sweets at 9 o’clock, and appear to have consumed nothing else, and an hour of hymns and prayer followed. There was no mention of midnight, nor of Europeans and Bengalis sitting cheek by jowl and eating with their fingers. Annie Thomson seems effortlessly to slide into the space left vacant by Frances Macalister Thomson and Katherine Wilson. She writes on this occasion because Pigot is busy and “has asked me to do so instead.” She and James “greatly value Miss Pigot’s friendship” and while Thomson was away at Darjeeling she has spent a month at the mission house so that “I look upon Miss Pigot’s as a second home.” That the Thomsons were friendly with Pigot is not in doubt, since later evidence bears it out, but how missionary wives learned to expurgate, and with such a sure touch, their letters home needs further study.

Pigot herself wrote in November to stress that “I do not seek my success in educational achievements, though we do well in that respect. My great desire is to do more that is purely evangelistic;” and she sent at the end of the month a suggested schedule for a week of unified prayer in the new year, for her zenana teachers and their students, “both those who are a trial and those who are a comfort to us,” for the Upper Christian School, the high-caste girls’ schools, the orphanage and “those trained there,” for the Ladies’ Committee and the Association at large, and finally for “God’s forgiving acceptance.”<sup>386</sup>

In the new year Hastie disciplined Thomson for some lapse or dereliction that is nowhere specified. Thomson complained on January 19<sup>th</sup> to the Foreign Mission Committee, which on February 10<sup>th</sup> telegraphed to him its “perfect confidence.”<sup>387</sup> Asked to provide full information, Hastie failed to comply and was told by the Committee that “nothing but immorality or the gravest insubordination can in the future call for or justify the suspension of a colleague.”<sup>388</sup> At the 1883 trial Hastie deposed only that he had “found it necessary to suspend” Thomson, and that “he was removed to Poona.”<sup>389</sup> The *News of Female Missions* confirms this last scrap of information, announcing in April 1881 that “the Rev Mr Thomson of Calcutta, so well known in Aberdeen, is to go to Poona to take over during Miss Bernard’s

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384 At the funeral of the Dowager Maharanee of Sobha Bazaar in 1882 some 10-12,000 are reported. Hastie describes the ceremony in *Hindu Idolatry and English Enlightenment*, Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta 1882, David Douglas, Edinburgh.

385 *NFM* January 1881 pages 11-12. See Appendix 6.

386 *NFM* January 1881 pages 8 -10.

387 FMC Secretary’s Letter Book National Library of Scotland MS 7545 February 10th 1881 folio 33, FMC minutes February 10<sup>th</sup> 1881.

388 FMC minutes May 5th 1881. The Committee “refused to receive” Hastie’s retort, minutes July 13<sup>th</sup>.

389 *IDN* supplement September 7 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 88.

absence”<sup>390</sup> from March or April to November. It would appear, then, that the Thomsons were out of Calcutta from the spring at the latest, and of no further service to Pigot. They did not return. In February 1883 Annie gave birth to their son, John Archibald Glover, at Sanquhar.

That Pigot was struggling, for want of teachers and time, is suggested by her reporting on January 19<sup>th</sup> that she had opened an evening class.

My evenings are taken up entirely just now with an entrance class in our higher school, going up this year to the university. I would not miss any of my Bible-teaching and other precious work; so I have to make it an addition, and have a night class. This prevents me from writing at night, which has been my usual time.<sup>391</sup>

It is implied here that Pigot herself, not a paid agent or an unpaid volunteer, was doing the teaching: her voluntary assistants are unlikely to have had free time in the evening. On February 21<sup>st</sup> James Wilson came back from furlough and began to visit 125 Bow Bazar frequently. He brought William Fish with him, and they, and Kalicharan Bannerjee, were all caught up during the year in teaching the Upper Christian School.<sup>392</sup> After his return from furlough Wilson dined with Hastie, as did Fish, at the General Assembly’s Institution, and is unlikely therefore to have taught at Bow Bazar in the evenings.<sup>393</sup> Bannerjee did dine at the Mission House when he taught there, either with the lady teachers, when Mrs Ellis was present, or alone in the drawing room when she was not:<sup>394</sup> but he taught for an hour in the afternoon, and there is no evidence that he taught in the evening. Pigot herself may not have dined at all regularly.<sup>395</sup> On the evidence, such as it is, she was either teaching herself, or assisting a pundit, in the evenings “entirely”. The upshot of the efforts made was that a number of girls attempted the Entrance examination at the end of the year, and Priotama Dutt passed.<sup>396</sup>

The distribution of prizes on March 8<sup>th</sup> followed the pattern of the previous two years. Three hundred girls were brought together at the Mission House, Augustus Rivers Thompson agreed to preside, and “a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen” assisted. Rivers Thompson mixed compliments with sure-footed generalities in a model speech, finding that “the standard of education here is comparatively high; that in addition to the ordinary elements of a fairly liberal education, we see that provision is made for the teaching of music and singing, and for many other arts and appliances of domestic life which are not only ornamental but

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390 *NFM* April 1881 page 48. Eleanor Bernard took furlough that year.

391 *NFM* April 1881 page 44. She used a writing table in the room in which she slept, *The Pigot Case* page 126, *IDN* supplement September 10<sup>th</sup> 1883.

392 The evidence suggests that they taught between one and three hours in the afternoon. Hastie deposed at the trial that Wilson taught “about one or two hours a day.” *IDN* supplement September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 93.

393 The references to “chumming” imply that Wilson and his brother Bob ate at Hastie’s table as a matter of course, not sporadically or occasionally: see Hastie’s letter in *The Pigot Case* page 291 and page 61ff, *IDN* supplement September 5<sup>th</sup> 1883.

394 *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 179.

395 The *Indian Mirror* September 27<sup>th</sup> 1883 mentions Pigot’s “habit of starving herself as is known to her friends” in connection with her “sickly constitution.” Is this special pleading, or is there some truth in it?

396 *NFM* July 1882 page 72 does not name her. The *Indian Mirror* for April 9<sup>th</sup> 1882, quoting the *Indian Christian Herald*, reports that Miss Priyathama Dutt has been awarded a scholarship by the Department of Public Instruction of Rs 10 a month to prepare herself for the First Arts exam. Miss Dutt “has since been attending the class for Female under-graduates opened by Miss Pigot.”



useful. We have also the very startling fact that of the girls who are now present, at least four are preparing for the entrance standard of the Calcutta University, intending to compete with boys of the same age and the same rank in life for academical honours.” On the proselytizing aspect of the Ladies’ Association—“that much more arduous, comprehensive, and complex consideration which bears upon the religion of the people”—he had no compliments to pay.

I admit that, if we have succeeded in many cases in reaching the heads of the people, we have failed altogether in touching their hearts. From a religious point of view, we stand confessedly at the point when, having demolished in innumerable cases the faith of the people in their own divinities, we have done little, comparatively speaking, in teaching them the knowledge of the truth. For, if we bring to our side the work of our large missionary societies, and count up all the results of long and devoted missionary enterprise, and could claim to have done all that we could in this direction, we should only have touched the question from the side of the men of India, leaving outside altogether at least half of its population. And yet, I suppose, we may accept it as true, that woman’s influence is as great in India as in other countries; and that in every effort that is made, and in every success that is achieved, in extending to the zenanas of the country the education which the men have been so ready to receive, you are, by instructing the wives and sisters and daughters of the people, enlisting on the side of light and purity and order the immense influences of their hearths and homes. I can only say that, in the prosecution of such a work, I give Miss Pigot and her fellow-labourers in the cause my heartiest good wishes; and if any words of mine can encourage them in their exertions, they are spoken earnestly, and without reserve.<sup>397</sup>

As if in answer to Pigot’s “great desire to do more that is purely evangelistic,” the most Rivers Thompson had to offer was his best wishes. Where Croft the previous year had dismissed as *amateur* the educational efforts in the zenanas, here was a spokesman for the Government of India writing off female education as a whole—we have reached their (male) heads, but failed to touch their (female) hearts—and linking that failure to the generally acknowledged checkmate of attempts to convert India’s women. A pessimistic reading of his speech tells us that after ten years Pigot had barely scratched the surface. The optimist registers his presence. Lady Lytton had presided in 1877, and the Scottish Ladies’ Association was maintaining its place among those benevolent Calcutta agencies that deserved the patronage of the great and the good.

The Education Report for 1879 to 1880, like the report for the previous year, reflected a stalemate in the difference between the Missionary Conference and the Department of Public Instruction. They agreed on the “circumstances” bearing on female education but not on the results achieved. Mrs Wheeler had in the previous year devised four levels of attainment and placed 80% of women and girls in the lowest of them, whereas the missionary agencies put the figure at 30%.<sup>398</sup> The most the Department would concede was that “the work in the zenanas is not wholly ineffectual.”<sup>399</sup> The provocative language of the 1877-78 report had of course ceased, but the nearest approach to a conciliatory tone was perhaps

The foregoing figures will help us also to appreciate the difficulties which beset the ladies of the several agencies in their work of teaching, as well as Mrs Wheeler in her

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397 *NFM* July 1881 page 80, copied from the *IDN* of March 17<sup>th</sup> 1881. The *Englishman* and the *Statesman* printed the same report, and the *Indian Mirror* contributed a fulsome editorial.

398 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1878-1879* paragraph 253 page 84.

399 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1879-1880* paragraph 256 page 84.

less pleasant duty of testing that work. At the same time it must be pointed out again to the several agencies that their efforts do not appear to be sufficiently directed to consolidating their work, instead of extending its operations.<sup>400</sup>

If there was no more laughter at Pigot's efforts, praise was reserved for others—the Church Missionary Society in general, and Dr Duff's Hindu Girls' School, the Central School, and one of the American schools in particular. Pigot may have been relieved to be passed over in silence, but the plaudits still to be read in the missionary magazines were not echoed in the account given by officialdom.

Those plaudits continued unabashed. William Macfarlane had started his furlough and was in Edinburgh for the May meetings. He told the Ladies' Annual General Meeting that he had called on Pigot when passing through Calcutta and seen the classes at 125 Bow Bazar, where children were taught from five years old up to the Entrance exam, and he “then gave a few particulars regarding the proficiency of some of Miss Pigot's pupils, showing how old prejudices were passing away.”<sup>401</sup> A reverend gentleman from Glasgow told the Ladies' Conference<sup>402</sup> that “they could not but congratulate themselves on having the benefit of the services of such agents as Miss Pigot of Calcutta and the Misses Bernard of Poona.”<sup>403</sup> Eleanor Bernard was in Edinburgh herself, and it was now that she made the remark, already quoted, about the “great or grand” work of her friend Miss Pigot. Margaret Stevenson, in the chair, read letters from Alice Ferguson, now in Cyprus, and Pigot in Calcutta. There was not the slightest hint in the *News* that Pigot might be facing difficulties.

Her Brahma connection was as close as ever, although its perceived value to the missionary effort was probably fading. A dinner was arranged on July 15<sup>th</sup> that she might have attended: but so discreet is the allusion to it that it hardly meets the standard required to be classed as information. “It was a happy idea that led two of the leading Native Christians in Calcutta to get up a dinner party, on Friday last, liberal enough to include Christians and Brahmos in a feast of love.”<sup>404</sup> Fifty guests apparently, including four Scottish missionaries, dined, but who and where and why are withheld, and we can only guess, if any women at all were of the party, that Pigot might have been one of them. Keshub Chunder Sen's second daughter, Srimali, was married on August 13<sup>th</sup> at Lily Cottage, and his oldest son, Karuna Chandra, on August 22<sup>nd</sup>. Pigot played a prominent role at the earlier event. Among the names we know Kenneth Macdonald, John Hector, James Wilson, William Fish, Kalicharan Bannerjee and Joygobind Shome, as well as Krishnamohun Bannerjee, Mrs Wheeler's father, were among the guests alongside “Miss Pigot and her lady friends,” one of whom was surely Lizzie Tremearne. When the time came to introduce the groom to the ladies of the household in the zenana, Keshub Chunder, Pigot “and friends” formed his escort. The lengthy ceremonial done with,

The assembled guests were then sumptuously entertained. On the adjoining verandah the European and Native Christian ladies and gentlemen were seated upon a piece of carpet on the floor, and *loochie*, *dal* and *currie* were served on plantain leaves and earthen pots. There were also varieties of fruits and sweetmeats, and curd and cream.

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400 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal for 1879-1880* paragraph 258 page 85.

401 *NFM* July 1881 page 109. Cf his remark in *NFM* January 1882 page 7, speaking at Aberdeen, that all branches of “Miss Pigot's Institution” were “in vigorous operation.”

402 The AGM was public, the Conference was for members only and usually devoted to fundraising and organization in Scotland.

403 *NFM* July 1881 page 99.

404 *The New Dispensation* July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1881 page 1.

The European guests seemed to enjoy the dinner served in native style. *Pan* was then distributed, and the guests after congratulating the bride and the bridegroom separated after 11.<sup>405</sup>

The feasting did not stop there. Thus in October 1883 the *Indian Christian Herald* recalled that

When Mr. Sen's son was married, Miss Pigot entertained the bride and the bridegroom by giving a grand dinner-party to which Christians, Brahmos, and Hindoos were invited, and amongst the guests were the leaders of the Bengali Christian community. Such parties are given by very near relations, and Miss Pigot evidently wished it to be understood that she stood in some such relation to the Sen family.

In December the same newspaper referred to "a sumptuous dinner in the right oriental style provided by Miss Pigot"<sup>406</sup> which must be the same event, and a letter to the editor of the *Statesman* added that "I remember a great feast in native style, which was given by Miss Pigot, in her celebrated verandah, in honour of the marriage of the son and daughter of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen. The great majority of the guests were natives; but there were also some Europeans, both ladies and gentlemen."<sup>407</sup> Now these statements attest to a lavish entertainment at Bow Bazar, in honour of the Sen family, at some date after August 22<sup>nd</sup> and about which the *News of Female Missions* kept silent. It is doubtful that the Ladies' Acting Committee would have authorized anything of the sort.<sup>408</sup> We are entitled to wonder what the more sceptical minds on the Ladies' Committee made of Pigot's entertaining not just Christian converts, but Brahmos and Hindus also.

The Brahma name had lost much of its lustre among Christians before this. The 1881 census registered just under 10,000 Anglicans in Calcutta, 1,300 adherents of the Church of Scotland and 487 Brahmos. The fear that the New Dispensation would take converts from the western missions had proved groundless, as had the hope that Brahmoism would metamorphose into Christianity: and the public addresses of Keshub Chunder Sen had been puzzled over and judged and he was dismissed with various pithy labels along the lines of "a Quaker-unitarian in a Hindoo dress."<sup>409</sup> That Pigot's friendship with the Brahmos, full of promise in 1870, may have been simply an irritant to the ladies in Edinburgh by 1880, can neither be known for a fact, nor excluded as a possibility.

The staffing problems at 125 Bow Bazar persisted: Lucinda Oliver left in July, and Helen Leslie presumably shortly before her. Grace Gordon's most likely date for leaving is September 1<sup>st</sup>. The Roman Catholic Mrs Pigott was brought in as matron, and a Miss Dakin is mentioned, a baptist like Mary Ellis and teaching the parlour boarders. Ellis herself in the

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405 *Statesman* August 16<sup>th</sup> 1881 page 3.

406 *Indian Christian Herald* October 5<sup>th</sup> 1883 reproduced in *Opinions of the Indian Press on the Defamation Case Pigot vs. Hastie*. Calcutta, printed at the Indian Daily News Press, No. 19, British Indian Street 1883, page 50. The article burnishes Pigot's hospitality by adding rumour to fact: "The rich and the poor were alike welcomed by her, and more than once we believe hundreds of poor Christians from the south villages were feasted in her house and at her expense." For the undated December article see the *Indian Mirror* for December 18<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3.

407 *Statesman* December 14<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 2.

408 For what it is worth, Pigot's counsel at the 1884 appeal said that "the entertainments in the Mission House were all permitted, and an account of the expenditure sent home regularly." *IDN* March 8<sup>th</sup> 1884 page 3, and again March 13<sup>th</sup> page 3.

409 The *Free Church of Scotland Monthly Record* July 1882 page 205, in a letter to Murray Mitchell from Joseph Cook of Boston, after his visit to Calcutta in February.

first week of August took six months' leave, "sick-leave" according to the *News*, and went to Bombay. Her letter from there to the *News*<sup>410</sup> makes no mention of sickness: she was warmly welcomed by her father, "whom I had not seen for ten years," and found it a great trial to leave her work and "dear Miss Pigot, who has always been such a good friend to me and my three bairns; but I felt I was in the path of duty, and that God was leading me here." She left 43 zenanas in Calcutta in the hands of "one of our native teachers, a good, Christian woman." This perhaps was Nitya Kali Ma Nuiye, who is mentioned as assisting Ellis during 1883 but is otherwise unknown.<sup>411</sup>

Help with supervision was however on its way. Pigot had asked for two Scottish deputies four years before, and in 1881 one finally came forward. Georgiana Smail, having paid her own passage and outfit, arrived in Calcutta on December 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>412</sup> Aged about 30, she was the sister of Annie Walker, the wife of Colonel Alexander Walker, Royal Artillery, Dum Dum, and may therefore have seen something of Calcutta before. She will certainly have had letters from her sister describing some of what she might expect. Her generosity and enthusiasm were acknowledged in the *News of Female Missions*: we are also told, later and therefore with much reduced certainty, that she was inspired by hearing Pigot address a meeting in Scotland. She herself later said that Frances Macalister Thomson had "pressed me hard" and insisted that "a lady of position" would make an immense impact among the zenanas, and the assertion is credible enough. Pigot herself, and Alice Ferguson, had long before made the same point. We can be reasonably certain that she came to Calcutta with the ambition to devote herself to zenana visiting.

Any attempt to trace Smail's progress is hobbled by the partisan nature of all the sources.<sup>413</sup> We are told, for instance, that Pigot made generous provision for her, so generous that eyebrows were raised on the Ladies' committee. We have a figure, to wit that "she had drawn the large sum of 400 rupees," but what the cash represented we are not told.<sup>414</sup> If it was three months' salary, it was not much less than Pigot's own pay. All seems to have been well until the end of December. Hastie told the court in 1883 that Annie Walker had passed on to him "a very favourable report"<sup>415</sup> after a few days. Pigot apparently set Smail to teach English to a class of the Upper Christian School, according to one source for half an hour per day; Smail asked for work in the zenanas but was given none. We are left to guess at the considerations that guided Pigot here, doubtless her concern to prepare girls for the Entrance Exam, and the need to train Smail not for zenana teaching, but to supervise zenana teachers.

Smail meanwhile was reporting back to more than one of the ladies in Edinburgh, and we are told that her first letters were "favourable to Miss Pigot."<sup>416</sup> She was to claim at the end of 1882 that "Before I left Edinburgh, several of the ladies of the Committee requested me

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410 *NFM* October 1881 pages 151-152.

411 *NFM* July 1883 pages 88 and 89 and October 1883 page 160.

412 *NFM* January 1882 page 18. The passenger list for SS Mira in the *IDN* of December 9<sup>th</sup> 1881 page 3 gives us "Miss J Small."

413 Assertions about Smail are to be found in her "Vindication," written at the end of 1882; a "Memorandum" by Pigot prepared for her solicitors, and the plaint put in to the court in March 1883; remarks made in the General Assembly of May 1883; the 1883 trial evidence (all from Hastie and Mrs Walker, since Pigot's barrister was prevented by the judge from putting his questions); the letter from James Wilson to Archibald Scott of September 1883, reproduced in the *Statesman* for November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1883 page 2; and there are oddments in the report of the India Commissioners published in 1885.

414 James Williamson at the General Assembly, *Scotsman* May 30<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 4.

415 The *IDN* supplement September 6<sup>th</sup> 1883. *The Pigot Case* page 82 tells us that Smail and Pigot "were getting on very nicely."

416 Kenneth Phin to the General Assembly, in the *Scotsman* of May 30<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 4.

verbally to send them a full and free account of the state of the Mission in Bow Bazar, as they were not satisfied with the very meagre reports they received from Miss Pigot.”<sup>417</sup> She does not name the dissatisfied ladies, is aware perhaps that she is charging them with trying to recruit her to a faction on the Ladies’ Committee, yet seems careless of the risk that the sceptical reader will jump to the conclusion that she was successfully recruited. How much of an *ingénue* Smail was is no easy question. At all events by January 1882 she was telling her sister, and writing to committee members in Scotland, of her complaints about Pigot.

The detail of her concerns has vanished. Already in the spring of 1884 Richard Garth, the Chief Justice in Bengal, could say that “We are not precisely informed as to what these charges were.”<sup>418</sup> She indicates some of them in her “Vindication”. Before we come to them, however, it might be wise to digress a little on the impact, and the value, of letters to members of committee. An entry in the Ladies’ Secretary’s Letter Book, from a decade later, is instructive.

Copy

21 Ravelston Park  
Edin<sup>r</sup>  
May 21<sup>st</sup> 1891

My Dear Miss Russell,

At the time M<sup>r</sup> Swan sent home D<sup>r</sup> M<sup>c</sup>Connell’s certificate we had some letters from your father which gave us a good deal of anxiety as he attributed yr. bad health to the following causes.

1. The season at which you went out
2. That you had been put to “work at once”
3. The “want of comfort in every way at 125 Bow Bazar.”

In another letter he spoke of “the miserable hovels too many of the Schools are in Calcutta” and also said, referring to you, “if she had known about Bow Bazar what she has learned by sad experience she would never have gone.”

You can understand I am sure how painful it was for the Committee to receive letters containing such statements especially as your own letters to the Committee had been invariably cheerful. You had never in them made complaints of discomfort or disappointment with Bow Bazar & always seemed much interested in your work. It was decided to wait till Miss M<sup>c</sup>Gillewie came home. She met the Calcutta Sub-Com.<sup>tee</sup> last Friday but said that you never complained of these things to her & it was therefore decided by the Committee on Tuesday that I should write & tell you about this matter & ask for an explanation. The Committee are *most anxious* for the health & comfort of all their agents, & feel that it is due to themselves & to you to ask what grounds your father had for making these statements. In replying to his letter some weeks ago I mentioned that with regard to the season of the year, Mrs. Clifford, Miss Reid & Miss Niven went out about the same time & did not suffer, & about work I knew that you had taught sewing in one of the schools as the other young ladies did.

In one of your letters lately you mentioned what a nice school Kidderpore was & with regard to schools in India you have been there long enough to know that an Association has to take for school rooms *what they can get*, not, *what they would like*.

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417 Her “Vindication,” in *The Pigot Case* page 334. See Appendix 7.

418 *IDN* supplement April 17<sup>th</sup> 1884, *The Pigot Case* Judgments page iii (after page 338).

I do hope you are keeping well & let me beg of you *as a friend* dear Miss Russell, always to tell the Superintendent frankly about all matters relating either to your health or comfort. The reason that we have a Superintendent is that she may be a head over all the younger members of the Mission and we expect them to be guided by her advice. I hope all our young missionaries will do this & thus save a great deal of worry to all concerned.

Miss M<sup>c</sup>Gillewie looks very thin, but says she feels much better already. I will post you a copy of “Fellow-Workers” with a part of one of your letters in it giving a nice account of the Prize-giving. The holidays will have commenced now, & I am sure you will all be glad of a rest.

With very kind regards to all y<sup>r</sup>. circle, Ever believe me,

Yrs. very sincerely,

(Signed) I. A. J. Williamson<sup>419</sup>

Isabella Williamson<sup>420</sup> was Secretary to the Committee for several years after 1888, and JL M<sup>c</sup>Gillewie joined the mission in October 1885. The letter not only reminds us that the correct language must always be used when addressing outsiders, as has been amply demonstrated in the *News of Female Missions* and the *Record*, but it also sets out the procedure for complaints. Clearly only the woman on the spot can resolve an immediate problem, and only she can pass back to Committee matters that they are competent to handle, whether it is raising more money or changing the rules. Private letters to Committee members can inform them as to conditions, opinions, gossip and events,<sup>421</sup> but can hardly complain to any purpose: and of course agents who undertake the work and then grumble about what they find in the field are gently discouraged, and told *as a friend* to desist.

What then was Smail about with her letters?—of which, all agree, there were a great many. According to her she was complying with a request to furnish some hard facts about the Calcutta operation. Pigot, when she was made aware of the letters,<sup>422</sup> promptly decided that Smail was conspiring with Hastie, but that charge, however understandable, is not supported by any solid body of evidence. The Ladies’ Committee as a whole, which tabled the letters at some point and considered them, concluded that for the most part they were complaints, and should be dealt with as such.

Smail’s “Vindication” is the best guide to what the letters contained. Much of that text however answers points in a report written for the Ladies’ Acting Committee in the early

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419 National Library of Scotland, Papers of the Women’s Association for Foreign Missions 1888 to 1920, MS 7629 Secretary’s Letter Book: Calcutta 1888-1920 folio 150.

420 Not the wife of James Williamson, who was called Agnes. Katharine Russell was the daughter of the minister at Walls in the Orkney Islands: *Queen*, February 1<sup>st</sup> 1890 page 172, *NFM* April 1890 page 63.

421 The Ladies’ Association Secretaries’ letter books before 1888 are lost, but the gentlemen’s books make the point for us. Thus Herdman was able to write to Hastie in 1881, of “my fear that, from an overbearing and fiery disposition, you might fail to carry your Scottish co-workers pleasantly with you” (quoted in Macmillan *The Life of Professor Hastie* page 79). Edinburgh knew what Calcutta was saying and thinking, but was confined to offering advice, not directives.

422 Some sources (Richard Garth, for instance, in his appeal judgement) maintain that Pigot only learned of Smail’s letters when she reached Edinburgh in the summer of 1882. It seems unlikely that her supporters on the Acting Committee did not alert her as soon as they got wind of the correspondence. The Ladies’ Committee minutes tell us nothing whatsoever.

summer of 1882 and printed for circulation to the auxiliary branches at the end of October. No full copy of that report has yet come to light: it assessed Smail's charges, or complaints, and what we know of it, added to what the "Vindication" tells us, reveals that

1. mission funds were being squandered "to feast hundreds of Baboos;"
2. the orphanage was filthy, and the orphans were swarming with lice;
3. none of the teachers was Presbyterian, most of them being Anglican. The matron, Mrs Pigott, was a Catholic, and Lizzie Tremearne was more than half a Catholic;
4. this ungodly crew mocked the Ladies' Committee and the Church of Scotland, and
5. Pigot was "a clever woman" who "threw a veil" over her doings.

There is a sixth and worse charge, not mentioned in the "Vindication" but reported in 1885, when we learn that "The last and most serious charge which is made against Miss Pigot's management is THE WANT OF PROPER SUPERVISION OVER MORALS. This charge appears in Miss Smail's complaints, where 125 Bow Bazar is spoken of as an abandoned house ..."<sup>423</sup>

Smail's letters, then, addressed privately to individuals on the Ladies' Committee—not yet published to the natives of Scotland at large—discarded the bright colouring of correct language and went straight back to the realities of Calcutta as revealed by Robert Kerr in his "Outcast Calcutta" of 1866.<sup>424</sup> Smail sketched a view of 125 Bow Bazar much too close for comfort to Kerr's foray into the *bustee*: "Is it possible that the tendrils of those gentle feelings that cluster round a home can cling to those dingy walls? It is not that the place is poor, but because its character is one of abandoned squalor." The logic is inescapable. If godliness fosters cleanliness, then squalor is the visible symptom of moral dissolution.<sup>425</sup>

The rate at which Smail's letters were circulated, or alluded to, among the Ladies' Acting Committee, and the date at which the Committee tabled them, are not known, but they were to a large extent classed as complaints. Mission funds were under the eye of the treasurer of the Corresponding Board, one J. Wetherill since Octavius Steel's departure, and Pigot was answerable to him for her finances. Committee knew that 125 Bow Bazar was in need of repair and redecoration, since Pigot had more than once told them so<sup>426</sup>; it was agreed policy that the orphans' regime should be spartan, since they would all be married by their mid-teens into Bengali, not European, families, and finally the ladies knew only too well that their orphanage was an interdenominational effort with almost no Presbyterian component. Over all this they had assisted Pigot, year in and year out, in cleverly throwing a veil. They can hardly have been pleased to hear that their superintendent was careless of the morals of her charges, the more so since 125 Bow Bazar was now hosting parlour boarders, low-caste converts employed to teach in zenanas, Upper Christian School boarders, and monthly and quarterly meetings of the Bengal Christian Conference, all of whom were men. How prepared to believe it they were is a different matter. Similarly descriptions of merriment at the breakfast table at their, the Ladies' Acting Committee's, expense will not have gone down well. But whatever their misgivings, their reaction to Smail seems not to have been far

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423 Report of the India Commissioners in *NFM* July 1885 page 113. Smail seems to have thought, wrongly, that Pigot was sending to Edinburgh false allegations about her. See the report of the Consulting Committee in *The Pigot Case* page 298.

424 See Appendix 1.

425 Of *bustee*, Hobson-Jobson says "The word is applied in Calcutta to the separate groups of huts in the humbler native quarters, the sanitary state of which has often been held up to reprobation."

426 *NFM* July 1883 page 89.

removed from the response to Miss Russell nine years later. Their first consideration, at a guess, was to shut Smail's mouth, above all to keep her words away from the public.

All we hear from Pigot (and her input too is partisan and to be treated with caution) is that Smail "treated me with great rudeness" after having "joined the Church officers who were at this variance with me."<sup>427</sup> Any elaboration of these allegations was stopped in court:

Do you know Miss Smail?

His Lordship. – Now, don't, don't.

Mr Trevelyan. – I just wish to ask one question.

His Lordship. – Now, don't do so. It is quite unnecessary.

The Witness. – There has been a great deal said about Miss Smail.

His Lordship. – But it has made no impression on my mind.<sup>428</sup>

The court's interest in, or indifference to, any one event has a disproportionate impact on what we know over a century later. The same goes for newspapers. Thus sundry comings and goings can be stated with confidence without answering any of the questions we want answered: at the October 1881 Calcutta missionary conference, for instance, held at Mrs Hannah's house in Calcutta, Hastie had the inviting of missionaries and saw to it that Pigot and Kalicharan Bannerjee were not invited. On February 9<sup>th</sup> 1882 Kalicharan threw a birthday dinner at his house, Pigot was invited and, it is safe to assume, Hastie was not.<sup>429</sup> At the missionary conference in February 1882, three days before the birthday party, Joseph Cook of Boston, Mass., was in attendance, and heard a paper written by Pigot. Who else attended we do not know, but Hastie, Smail, Gillan, Wilson and Bannerjee would have been invited as a matter of course.

At the February meeting of the Calcutta Missionary Conference the question under discussion was, whether Hindu ladies, who believe in Christ, should be urged to be baptized, when such a step would involve their leaving their homes. A paper was read, written by Miss Pigot, the Superintendent of the Scotch Church Female Missions. She strongly urged that in such case baptism should be deferred, which in most cases practically means "omitted". Most of the speakers agreed substantially with her. It was felt that the man and the woman occupy in this matter a very different position. The man is the head of the household, and if he becomes a Christian he ought to be baptized, and probably his wife will in time follow him. If a wife become a Christian, however, and be baptized, the probability is that she would have to be separated for life from husband and children. It was felt that we ought not to urge women to be baptized; but if any woman should herself feel it to be her duty to take that step, we could not dissuade her from it. It is a matter for the woman's own conscience to settle. Mr. Joseph Cook, of Boston, and Mr. Miller, of Madras, who were present, both pointed out the danger of preferring expediency to principle in the matter, and appeared almost to be prepared to take a more advanced position than the others present. One speaker suggested that the Lady Missionaries should themselves baptize the converts in their homes, and it has long seemed to us that this suggestion is worthy of consideration. It is nowhere commanded in Scripture that baptism should

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427 *The Pigot Case* page 330: the statement or "memo" written by Pigot and printed by her solicitors in 1884—not to be confused with the Memorandum of Appeal on page 326 of the same book. Pigot nowhere names the members of the Corresponding Board who were "at variance" with her.

428 The *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 203.

429 The missionary conference in the *IDN* supplement 7<sup>th</sup> September 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 94. The birthday dinner *IDN* supplement September 13<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 193.



be public, nor is it commanded that only ministers should baptize. Even the Roman and Anglican Churches recognise the necessity and validity of baptism by women in exceptional cases.<sup>430</sup>

Cook was in Calcutta from about February 12<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>, and delivered five, perhaps six public lectures on subjects ranging from the consumption of alcohol to eternal hope. Wilson and Pigot went together to hear one of them. On February 23<sup>rd</sup> a group of Brahmos organized a steam excursion upriver to Dakshineswar to see the Paramhansa, and Cook and Pigot were both invited, and in the evening of March 17<sup>th</sup> Pigot chaired a meeting of the Burra Bazar Family Literary Club<sup>431</sup> attended by Debendranath Tagore. Dates can be put to most of these relatively inconsequential events,<sup>432</sup> but about the middle of February Georgiana Smail left 125 Bow Bazar to live, almost certainly, at Dum Dum with her sister, and the date of that most significant development is nowhere disclosed.

It was Annie Walker who put her sister's departure at the middle of February. After that Smail continued to visit 125 Bow Bazar, often with Mrs Walker accompanying her, three times a week. She also continued to write to committee members in Edinburgh. Hastie, visiting the Walkers at Dum Dum, heard one or more of these letters read out, and advised that they not be sent,<sup>433</sup> but sent they were. Hastie also claimed in court that Smail told him of Pigot's flirtations with James Wilson: but it is unclear if she wrote anything of the sort to her contacts in Scotland.

Relations between the Church of Scotland's male and female missions had been reordered in 1879, a process partly accelerated by Pigot's resignation. Each Corresponding Board—answering to the Foreign Mission Committee—was to set up a “consulting board” which, sitting with the Lady Superintendent—answering to the Ladies' Acting Committee—would meet at regular intervals to ensure the smooth cooperation of the male and female missions. George Green Gillan had tried to establish such a sub-committee in Calcutta and failed. Subsequently, and in the context of the court case, it appears that the Corresponding Board blamed Pigot for this failure, and Pigot blamed the Corresponding Board. Smail's rejection of Pigot's authority, meanwhile, left no way out of the *impasse* nearer than Scotland. At some point Smail received a request from the Ladies that she return to 125 Bow Bazar. She refused to do so, and on March 22<sup>nd</sup> quit the mission altogether.<sup>434</sup>

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430 *The Indian Baptist* volume 1 number 3 March 1882 page 111.

431 Started in 1857 "to bring Europeans and Natives together in literary union and intellectual sympathy" and under the patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor. In February 1873 Pigot, Annette Akroyd, Katherine Wilson and Robert Jardine had joined Bishop Milman, Richard Temple and a gallery of other distinguished names at the Club's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting (*IDN* March 21<sup>st</sup> 1873 page 3). The Mullick family hosted the meetings at their houses in Mullick Street. The event chaired by Pigot is reported in the *Indian Mirror* for March 30<sup>th</sup> 1882 page 2. She sent her apologies to the April meeting: *Indian Mirror* May 19<sup>th</sup> page 3.

432 Cook's lectures in the *Englishman* for February 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 1882, page 3; Wilson and Pigot hear him *IDN* supplement for September 12<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 168: the river excursion in the *New Dispensation* for February 26<sup>th</sup> 1882.

433 Hastie refers to “a letter” in *The Pigot Case* page 52, Colonel Walker to “letters” on page 99. Compare the *Englishman* of September 4<sup>th</sup> (page 3) and the *IDN* supplement for September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883. Walker had joined the Calcutta Corresponding Board in December, and been introduced to Pigot in the same month. Hastie in court claimed a “most intimate” friendship with Mrs Walker.

434 Archibald Scott gave the date to the General Assembly of 1883: the *Scotsman* May 30<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 4. Annie Walker testified that her sister left the mission when “she received a minute from the ladies at home:” *IDN* supplement September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883. *The Pigot Case* page 102 gives us “Then she continued to visit the house three days a week, for a period of about six weeks,” omitting mention of the minute. The

The annual distribution of prizes was fixed for the first day of April, and as usual Pigot needed help with lists of girls' names, the marks they had achieved, and fair copies for the Department of Public Instruction. We know from the trial that one of the days on which Wilson and Fish were engaged at 125 Bow Bazar in this sort of work, which as ever was voluntary and unremunerated, was March 21<sup>st</sup>, the day before Smail's final departure. On April 1<sup>st</sup> the Mission House, swept and tidied for the reception of the public, opened its doors, and the girls chosen to participate, as well as the guests invited to admire, began to congregate at the appointed hour.

Gillan of course was present, since it was he who read the annual report, and he brought Georgiana Smail with him. Pigot, by all accounts furious, refused to start the proceedings until Smail had left the premises. Wilson, in the witness box the following year, could not deny Pigot's anger.

Were you present at a distribution of prizes when Miss Pigot lost her temper?

His Lordship. – There is no proof that she lost her temper.

The witness. – I was present at the distribution on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Will that do?

Mr. Gasper. – Answer my question.

Witness. – I was present at a distribution of prizes, when Miss Pigot was angry and spoke out her anger.

Do you remember her saying – “I will not allow this distribution to go on when that woman is in the house”?

His Lordship. – How does this affect the case?

Mr. Gasper. – The next question, I think, will show you.

Witness. – I didn't hear that condition expressed in those words.

What did you hear? “Unless Miss Smail goes away.”

To whom did she say that? To Mr. Gillan.

Do you remember what Mr. Gillan said? He said “Why.”

Didn't Mr. Gillan say “I can't stand a scene of this kind”?

His Lordship. – What has this to do with the case? It does not affect Mr. Wilson's case, nor any part of the alleged libel.

Mr. Gasper. – Did you then say to Mr. Gillan you ought not to have brought her here? I did say so.

Re-examined by Mr. Trevelyan. – Why did you say that he should not have brought Miss Smail there? Because she was at that time in rebellion against Miss Pigot.<sup>435</sup>

Smail may or may not have withdrawn, and the distribution of prizes seems to have proceeded. A group photograph was taken before it was due to start, and again it is Wilson's evidence that preserves the fact of the photograph, although nothing has intervened to preserve the photograph itself.<sup>436</sup>

Three days later Gillan, having obtained six months' leave from the government to go to Scotland, wrote to the Ladies' Committee giving an account of the “unfortunate occurrences” at the distribution of prizes, and telling them that he would be in Edinburgh at the beginning of June. He clearly thought that it was high time that the unhappy state of affairs between the

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Acting Committee asked Gillan to investigate: see minute of the Ladies' Association for April 21<sup>st</sup> 1882, on which day the Committee tabled letters from both Pigot and Smail.

435 *IDN* supplement September 12 1883, *The Pigot Case* pages 174-5.

436 Taken at the back of the building, featuring the assembled children, Wilson and Fish and doubtless Pigot as well. *IDN* supplement September 12<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 165.

Calcutta Corresponding Board and the female mission was brought to an end. A week after Gillan, Pigot wrote her own account for the ladies, and stated that she too intended to go to Edinburgh on three months' leave. She would set out on May 15<sup>th</sup>, her expenses being met by "a gentleman in Calcutta."<sup>437</sup> Octavius Steel had returned from London at the end of March, and Hastie was clear enough that he was the generous donor. Any question of Steel and Pigot being "at daggers drawn" was now long past, and he supported her, and opposed Hastie, in all that followed.

Pigot was better placed than we are to divine Gillan's motives in bringing Smail to the ceremony. Conceivably he was ignorant of the depth of feeling that separated them; certainly it was his role to reconcile them if he could, both as chaplain and as head of the paper "consulting board" that oversaw the female mission; possibly he hoped to embarrass and provoke Pigot. On May 2<sup>nd</sup> the Gillans called on her and found her resting in bed, and we are told that they took a cordial farewell of her before, the next day, embarking for London.<sup>438</sup> Pigot packed a tea chest with her papers, both private and professional, and sent it to her brother Edmund at Raneegunge,<sup>439</sup> where it would be safe: she asked Mrs Ellis to stand in for her during her absence. She had already sent an abbreviated version of her annual report to the newspapers, and the *Englishman* printed it.<sup>440</sup> James Wilson dined with her a number of times during April and May, and she drove to see him at the General Assembly's Institution at least as often. The frequency of the interviews suggests a crisis, suggests that they both knew that difficulties lay ahead, which of course they could not predict: that Pigot sent to her brother not just personal papers but also lists of girls' names, examination results and doubtless other documents related to the operation at 125 Bow Bazar might point to one risk that she and Wilson anticipated, namely that Mrs Ellis did not have the authority to keep mischievous eyes and fingers out of the office.

Pigot entrained at Howrah on May 13<sup>th</sup>, seen off by Wilson and Fish.<sup>441</sup> She will have been in Bombay by the 17<sup>th</sup>, and visited the Ladies' Association mission at Poona for a day, inspecting one of the schools. She also hobnobbed with friends and acquaintances, and relaxed sufficiently to speak frankly and openly about affairs in Calcutta. A letter from Annie Walker reached Mrs Hannah subsequently, and she passed it to Hastie.

Poona was favoured by Miss Pigot's presence on her way home, and well did she use the short time she was here. She left every one impressed with the extent of her own

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437 Minutes of the Ladies' Association for May 4<sup>th</sup> 1882, when both letters were read. Hastie was to write in August "we all know that one of our number, (who has always been a liberal friend of the Ladies' Mission, and who lately returned with a fresh enthusiasm for the cause), handed over a thousand Rupees to give Miss Pigot the well-deserved benefit of a first-class trip to Europe." See his "Remarks" of August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1882 in *The Pigot Case* page 308.

438 Katharine Wilson's letter to the Foreign Mission Committee, published in the *Statesman* 5 December 1883 page 3. She quotes a letter from her husband: "Mr. and Mrs. Gillan went to see Miss Pigot on Tuesday, the day before they sailed. Miss Pigot was ill and in bed, but received them there. After a careless conversation on things in general, she told him she had applied for leave, and spoke of meeting him in Edinburgh. They parted, she says, most cordially: and he went down with Mrs. Ellis to see the Upper Christian School, which happened to be in full attendance that day, and was looking its best." Mrs Wilson says that Mr Wilson says that Miss Pigot said that they parted cordially: what evidence could be more reliable? The Gillans sailed on Wednesday May 3<sup>rd</sup>: *Englishman* May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1882 page 3.

439 *IDN* supplement September 14<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 216. Edmund was the stationmaster at Raneegunge that year.

440 See Appendix 8.

441 Fish claimed at the 1883 trial that Wilson "said that it was perhaps the last time we should see her." *Englishman* supplement September 11 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 147. If true, it shows Wilson's foresight.

arduous labours, such as no other mortal could undertake! Her success in the cause was marvellous; her evangelistic efforts were unparalleled; her converts were innumerable; her power over the natives immense; her self-denial untold! Then, in contrast to the fancy portrait thus sketched of herself, she drew one in the darkest and blackest colours of Mr Hastie; he is represented as Hastie by nature, as well as by name; as a persecutor of the best and most devoted of women in her humble person; as a man of no honour, who falsifies his reports, is in the habit of making up fancy lists of converts and stoops to any meanness in order to swell his numbers.<sup>442</sup>

The account is at third hand (allowing that Mrs Hannah passed the letter to Hastie unedited) but, with all due consideration of Mrs Walker's hostility to Pigot, it remains credible that the lady superintendent boasted of her own achievements and ran down Hastie's, perhaps across the dinner table, among friends at Poona. James and Annie Thomson had preceded her, and their portrait of Hastie can hardly have been flattering. What the Bernard sisters thought of the gossip about the great man cannot be known, but they were not surprised to hear it.

Pigot sailed for Brindisi on May 19<sup>th</sup>, and we then lose sight of her for a month. The Ladies' Committee in May or June called upon a "Consulting Committee" of gentlemen,<sup>443</sup> led by the new convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, Archibald Scott, to look into Smail's charges against Pigot. These men were the venerable Kenneth Phin, an erstwhile Moderator of the General Assembly, James Herdman, the outgoing convener, James Williamson, now the Edinburgh correspondent of the Calcutta Corresponding Board, TG Murray, an elder of the church,<sup>444</sup> Thomas Stevenson (Margaret Stevenson's husband) and Robert H Muir. All of them were members of the Foreign Mission Committee. They sought and got reassurance from Wetherill, who had returned to Scotland in the spring of the year, as to the state of Pigot's finances, and by July 11<sup>th</sup> they had met Gillan and had formulated, or at least sketched out, some proposals. The next day Pigot was brought into the meeting, with Gillan, and confronted with her failings. The principal heads were that she was giving work to women who were unsuitable, and that this must stop; that 125 Bow Bazar was run down and dirty—and perhaps by implication that she had spent money on the wrong things, namely the Upper Christian School and the Bengali Christian Church, at the expense of the building—and that she was driving herself too hard. What they needed was a manager, not a zealot. Finally if she "promised amendment" she could continue as lady superintendent. How surprised Pigot was by this ultimatum, and to what extent she and Wilson had anticipated something of the sort, is a matter for conjecture.

During the first half of May James Williamson had written to Hastie asking him to use his good offices to bring about peace between Smail and Pigot. Hastie's reply, dated to May 17<sup>th</sup>, recommended a modified return to the arrangements of the 1860s. The modifications were that the Calcutta Corresponding Board would superintend not only the finances of the female

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442 Quoted by Hastie in his Remarks of August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1882, in *The Pigot Case* page 305 footnote, and again after page 338, Judgments pages vi-vii. Referred to by Hastie in his evidence page 80. The *IDN* supplement for September 6<sup>th</sup> 1883 summarizes this part of the cross-examination, omitting Walker's letter. For Pigot's visit to Poona see *NFM* January 1883 page 13.

443 The Ladies' three financial advisers and four others nominated by the Foreign Mission Committee, reporting in *NFM* January 1883 pages 4-8. Herbert Story amused the 1883 General Assembly by calling it the husbands' committee, and "He did not say these gentlemen should have reported otherwise, but he had no hesitation in saying they dared not report otherwise." *The Scotsman* May 30<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 4.

444 At the General Assembly of May 1883 Murray said of Pigot that she had "appeared to him to be an autocratic, despotic sort of person." Phin at the same time described "one who would not be controlled in her work." *Scotsman* May 30<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 4.

mission, as previously, but now its communications with Edinburgh and its appointments and staffing. Gillan's hitherto putative "consulting board" should be constituted—Hastie put forward six names, including Gillan, Wilson, Colonel Walker and Steel—and it was through this sub-committee that the Corresponding Board would "exercise its powers." Smail should be persuaded to return, and if Pigot agreed to work under these conditions she would be welcomed back "by all the friends of the Mission" and by Hastie himself. If not, Katharine Wilson, should she decide to return to India, would make an ideal lady superintendent and Pigot could work under her: "Mr and Mrs Wilson who are her strongest friends, would be sure to give her every consideration and support." Finally the policy of separation and independence pursued in recent years by the Ladies was a mistake. The male and female missions should work together "practically as two hands," and instead of spending £1,000 a year "in educating the wives and daughters of the Baboos of Calcutta, who can very well pay for it, and are now eager to have it, but with whom we are forming no real Church relationship," a fifth or a tenth of that sum might extend "a Native Church in connection with the Church of Scotland" most satisfactorily.<sup>445</sup>

The Consulting Committee in Edinburgh read Hastie's memorandum, consulted the ladies about it, and at some date in July rejected it.<sup>446</sup> Their principal reason for so doing was precisely the "separation and independence" deprecated by Hastie. Before Pigot's time the ladies had been able to achieve little in Calcutta.

When the Mission was more under the Corresponding Board, its funds and action were alike small; since greater self-action has been arranged, both these have expanded largely. Further, much of the work of Female Education in India must be done under the superintendence and responsibility of the Lady Superintendent only, not being open to male inspection, and any lady competent to take such superintendence and of such sufficient age and strength of character to leave home for the mission field, and to have charge of such a Mission, is not likely to be willing to be virtually under the orders of the Corresponding Board.<sup>447</sup>

The gentlemen agreed with Hastie that the non-existent consulting board should come to life, but they suggested that the lady superintendent should sit on it *ex officio*, and report to it her hiring and firing of subordinate agents. It should meet once a month, and a copy of its minutes should be sent to Edinburgh for the ladies' perusal. Pigot meanwhile, working with this sub-committee in order "to cultivate friendly intercourse with them in the management of the General Assembly's Institution and with Saint Andrew's Church," and having amended certain past failings, should retain her post.

She heard the detail of this proposal at the committee meeting of July 12<sup>th</sup>, and by the 18<sup>th</sup> had written to the ladies requesting that Gillan's new sub-committee be appointed and in place before she returned to Calcutta, and that she be given more leave to await those appointments. She glossed the request by adding that her difficulties "have arisen only through misunderstanding and misrepresentation of men. And the opposition has been of men

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445 Hastie's "Memorandum on the Calcutta Branch of the ... Scottish Ladies' Association," *The Pigot Case* pages 18-26. Inter alia the document tells us that "the failure of the Missionary career in India of one of our promising young missionaries"—James Thomson no doubt—"has, in my opinion, been mainly due to its presence here," it being the "Female branch."

446 *The Pigot Case* page 297 dates the consulting committee's report to June 19<sup>th</sup>, and the memorial from the Ladies' Committee, to which the report replies, to June 29<sup>th</sup>. The book contains numerous misprints.

447 "Report by Consulting Board to Scottish Ladies' Association," *The Pigot Case* pages 298-9.

not in measure.”<sup>448</sup> Clearly she did not want to be dealing with a sub-committee composed of Hastie, Gillan and Colonel Walker on her return: the ladies took her point and granted her two months’ additional leave.

Smail’s charges against her had of course leaked into the public consciousness, and there were stories going the rounds. A paragraph was appended to the July number of *News of Female Missions* alluding to the Consulting Committee’s resolution.

CALCUTTA.

In reference to reports which are understood to have been circulated as to the management and financial position of the Female Missions in Calcutta, the Acting Committee have to state that, in view of complaints made, their Financial Committee of gentlemen have (at their request), along with the Convener and two other members of the Foreign Mission Committee, gone carefully into all the matters brought before them; and the gentlemen now authorise the Acting Committee to state, that the accounts of the Calcutta Branch of their Mission are most exact and carefully made out, and that the work in Calcutta, in their opinion, deserves the support and countenance hitherto given it by their subscribers. The gentlemen are prepared to advise some alterations in the arrangement of the work, which may alike, they hope, tend to its closer connection with the Church of Scotland, and facilitate the working and thoroughness of the various departments, where these have seemed defective.<sup>449</sup>

Someone now telegraphed this latest development to Octavius Steel, and the following day he informed the Corresponding Board.

14, OLD COURT HOUSE STREET,  
Calcutta, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1882.

DEAR SIR,

I have this morning received a telegram from Edinburgh, dated yesterday afternoon, advising me, as I take it in my capacity as Addressee and Treasurer of our Church’s Corresponding Board, St Andrew’s Church Session, for communication to these bodies:—That Miss Pigot is returning (after six months’ change in Scotland) to her duties in connection with the Scottish Ladies’ Association’s work at 125 Bow Bazar, under the Calcutta Corresponding Board of our Church, presided over by Mr. Gillan, that we may expect her in October or November current.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

OCTAVIUS STEEL.<sup>450</sup>

A telegram was also sent to Annie Walker at Poona, to the effect that Pigot was “exonerated.” Walker acted quickly, drafting a leaflet,<sup>451</sup> getting it printed, and posting copies to her contacts in Scotland, possibly also to a number of auxiliaries of the Ladies’ Association. At all events it rapidly spread during August. Smail’s letters to the Acting Committee had failed to dislodge Pigot, so that the next gambit must be to attack the Committee itself and address

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448 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association July 18<sup>th</sup> 1882.

449 *NFM* July 1882 page 113.

450 *The Pigot Case* page 310.

451 *The Pigot Case* pages 310-312.

the public direct. The leaflet was said to rehearse “in a more offensive form”<sup>452</sup> the charges brought by Smail:

1. the Matron at 125 Bow Bazar is a Roman Catholic. Her daughter is being brought up at the mission house as a Roman Catholic;
2. Pigot “is reported” to have been brought up in a Convent in India, is Eurasian, Anglican, and “laughs the Scottish Church to scorn before the inmates of your Mission-house;”
3. her reports are as dazzling as tales from the Arabian Nights, but the miserable orphans are crawling with lice and their morals are neglected;
4. the Ladies’ Committee are to blame for letting this one woman ruin girls—such as Rhoda—for life, all of such cases being hushed up;
5. Pigot appoints “teachers, matrons, and zenana visitors favourable to the Church of Rome,” and a niece of hers, fresh from the Bankipore Convent, is one such;
6. are there no true, loyal, honest and willing Scottish women to do this work, that we must be represented by a Eurasian?
7. friends of the Church are kept at a distance from the mission, enemies warmly welcomed, and the money raised at home is “wasted on vain entertainments, feasting, and native brass bands for the glorification of a Eurasian in the eyes of the natives;”
8. Pigot wrote a paper, read at the last Missionary Conference, “against the baptism of the heathen” and
9. last January a village of native Catholics, dissatisfied with their priests, approached her for advice, and she sent them back to their priests. For this the head of the Jesuits thanked her in front of several Scottish ladies who can vouch for the truth of it;
10. the Ladies’ Committee know all this but persist in retaining her. “Will the people of Scotland continue to support a Romish Institution?”

There is new material here for the annalist. The incident of the villagers coming to Pigot, and her being thanked by “the head of the Jesuits”,<sup>453</sup> has not yet come to light, and the story of Rhoda is simply unknown.<sup>454</sup> Pigot’s brother Edmund had two daughters, Blanche (born 1864) and Mary (born 1868), and the leaflet tells us that one of them was not only visiting her aunt in 1882,<sup>455</sup> but also working for her. Neither circumstance is particularly unlikely. We know enough in general about Pigot’s staffing problems to accept that she would have gratefully seized upon a well-taught niece to fill a gap in the timetable.

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452 *NFM* January 1883 page 5.

453 The Vicar Apostolic of Bengal after 1878 was Father Paul Goethals S.J., but “the head of the Jesuits” speaking to Pigot in the presence of Scottish ladies sounds more like Eugène Lafont, the Rector of St Xavier’s.

454 A Rhoda is listed among the orphans from 1879. Her name is omitted in 1883, and she reappears as “Rhoda (blind)” in 1884. What happened to the poor girl (if it is the same one) is not recorded. Georgiana Smail in her “Vindication” says there was more than one girl at 125 Bow Bazar called Rhoda, and associates a Dr Anderson with the case. Lucinda Oliver at the trial said that she had called at Bow Bazar and talked to Mrs Pigott, the matron: “We were talking of the state of the Orphanage, and she said that such disgraceful things had been said about the Orphanage, and such fearful lies about the Mission, and she mentioned the case of Rhoda, and I saw that I knew nothing about it.” *IDN* supplement, September 10<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* p.125.

455 Mrs Augier’s letter to Mrs Walker, written in October 1882, tells us that both nieces were visiting and names “Mary, the younger of the two.” See below.

The Ladies' Committee, for their part, had no time for nieces, let alone annalists. Here were Smail's complaints, in the plainest possible language and repeating the words *Eurasian* and *Catholic* in the most provoking way, broadcast all over Scotland, on top of which they, the committee, were now under direct public attack. If Smail's fusillade of private letters had brought on a crisis, Walker's leaflet now compounded it. But what was to be done?

The committee's response can fairly be described as firstly contradicting the leaflet, and secondly playing for time. If no further leaflets were in store, and if authoritative denials were issued and re-issued, the initial shock would fade. The July number of *News of Female Missions* was already out, telling readers that Pigot "has been very much over-worked for some time," that Committee has tried to relieve her but that "These arrangements have not proved successful, and as it seemed very desirable that various matters about the whole Mission should be carefully considered, Miss Pigot is on her way home, which will give her the change she needs."<sup>456</sup> The leaflet was all over Scotland in August, brutally pointing out that Pigot's home was not Scotland and that the change she needed was peremptory dismissal. It was too late for the ladies to respond.<sup>457</sup> The weakness of the leaflet, however, was that it was anonymous: Walker had not signed it precisely because she was Smail's sister, and she felt that "it would have had more weight" without her name.<sup>458</sup> But the leaflet only reinforced what Smail had already said, and readers of it were free to suppose that Smail had written it. Committee could strike back therefore by bringing her revelations, and therefore her name, out into the open. She had assailed Pigot privately, and the public had as usual got wind of it, but the leaflet tore away any consideration of privacy. Necessity demanded that she be rebutted openly. To achieve this the Consulting Committee of gentlemen would have to produce a second, detailed report, much longer than the two and a half pages sent by Macrae to Hastie. It would have to list Smail's allegations, and record Wetherill's and other relevant responses. The gentlemen undertook the task, and probably completed it by October 31<sup>st</sup>.<sup>459</sup> A new investigation seems in fact to have been made: Pigot was re-examined, Wilson in Calcutta was asked to look into "the most serious of the accusations," and information was sought from "every available quarter" that might possibly help.<sup>460</sup>

Pigot meanwhile was in Scotland, and in limbo. Hastie worked off his disappointment with Macrae's report by writing an amusing and satirical riposte and sending copies to the Corresponding Board.<sup>461</sup> After that he settled down to his *Hindu Idolatry*,<sup>462</sup> a series of letters

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456 *NFM* July 1882 page 73. Clearly written at the beginning of June, and hardly consonant with the paragraph appended in July on page 113.

457 The Ladies' Association might have published an Occasional Paper to answer this emergency, but there is no evidence that they did so, and none have so far been traced during Pigot's 12 or 13 years of service.

458 *IDN* supplement for September 7<sup>th</sup> 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 103.

459 Minutes of the Ladies' Association for May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1883. Smail, at Dum Dum, had seen a copy by December 19<sup>th</sup>, according to her Vindication.

460 The Rev James Lillie, standing in for Gillan as Senior Chaplain at Calcutta, wrote a report on "the state of the Orphanage in the summer of 1882" of which we only know from a reference to it by the commissioners in 1885: *NFM* July 1885 page 111.

461 His "Remarks" reproduced in *The Pigot Case* pages 300 to 310. They were not intended for publication, but he sent a copy to Gillan at Edinburgh, which Mrs Gillan, her husband having embarked for India, sent to Archibald Scott (*Record* March 1884 page 60). The judges in 1883 and 1884 found the Remarks less amusing than libellous.

462 W Hastie B.D. *Hindu Idolatry and English Enlightenment*. Thacker, Spink and Co. Calcutta 1882 : David Douglas Edinburgh. First published as six letters to the *Statesman* beginning on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 1882.



which caused considerable excitement in Bengal and beyond. Gillan himself was still in Scotland,<sup>463</sup> and as far as we know no attempt was made to comply with Macrae's request that the new consulting board be brought into existence. By demanding that the board be named and in place—in effect that she approve it—before she returned to Calcutta, Pigot had inadvertently put herself into Gillan's hands. Her two month's additional leave expired, and nothing had changed.

Annie Walker meanwhile was not idle. She wrote to a number of women soliciting first-hand evidence of Pigot's crimes. One of her letters has survived, read out in court in its entirety. Addressed to Grace Gordon at Benares, where she was now working for Mrs Etherington's Baptist mission, it was a model of its kind.

*19 Dum Dum*, Nov 1, 1882.

My dear Miss Gordon,

— Will you excuse a stranger writing to you? Mrs. Leslie has told me of you, and she thought that, with your true religious convictions, and on moral grounds, you would be willing to help in a good cause.

Miss Pigot's true character has now come to light; she has been proved a faithless woman, neglecting her sacred duties, cruel to the helpless orphans, and, worse still, conniving at their ruin by continuing to employ a durwan who has been caught admitting men at nights into the dormitory of the orphans. When told of this, and warned about this man, she merely shrugged her shoulders, and said something about the customs of the country. Everyone in the house was afraid of speaking out; first, because she would cruelly ill-treat any of the children who dared to do so by severely beating them; secondly, by taking away the characters of the teachers, and maligning them in every way, if they said anything of the abuses of our Scottish Orphanage and School.

The Committee at Home have to answer for the ruin of many innocent girls by thus putting sole and uncontrolled power in the hands of one woman who has been proved to be most indiscreet in her own behaviour, and setting a bad example to those whom she ought to lead aright. Her flirtations with a married Scotchman and with a native pleader in the High Court are the common talk of Calcutta, and the Church of Scotland has now determined to put an end to this scandal. The Committee refuse to believe anything against Miss Pigot, so the Church at Home has taken it up, and has appealed to my husband to collect local evidence as to the evil courses and cruel conduct of the woman placed at the head of an Institution connected with the Church of Scotland. The inquiry will be done quietly, in order to spare the interests of our Church; and I am sure you will help in the good work which is to be the saving of helpless girls from ruin, both for time and eternity. — I am sure you will not keep "undue silence in a just cause," which, according to the larger catechism of our Church, is one of the sins forbidden by the Ninth Commandment, Lev. v, 1 ; Deut. xiii, 8 ; 2 Tim. iv, 16.

To keep silence now will be to encourage vice, to help in the ruin of souls, and to damage the cause of Christ.

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463 Gillan left Greenock on September 21<sup>st</sup> and reached Calcutta on October 28<sup>th</sup> aboard the *City of Khios*, *Friend of India and Statesman* (weekly) October 31<sup>st</sup> 1882 page 22. Mrs Gillan and the children sailed later.

I think you know that in many zenanas where Miss Pigot has music taught, no Christian instruction is given. I mention the following cases, but you may know of more :—

The daughters of Romesh Chunder Dutt, 20 Beadon Street; a widow at 24, College Street; and the ladies in Tagore's house.

Please consider this. I think you are a witness of the cruel treatment "Bedoo," one of the orphans, underwent, when she was accused of stealing a pair of bangles from Mrs. Mullick, a Hindoo woman boarding at 125, Bow Bazar. Were you present when she was unmercifully beaten, half naked, poor child, and did you afterwards know of her incarceration in a damp, dark cellar when hardly enough food was given her to keep her in life? Since then other cruel beatings have taken place. Are you aware that Miss Pigot has fits (or something else) when she is shut up in her room, and attended only by Showder Bene<sup>464</sup> and Mrs. Tremearne?

Please write and tell me, giving the date, as near as possible, of what you saw that night when you were awakened by hearing the door of the house being opened. It was eleven o'clock at night, and to your astonishment you saw Kali Churn Banerjee being conducted to Miss Pigot's bed-room,<sup>465</sup> and at four in the morning you again saw the durwan letting Kali Churn Banerjee out of the house.

You must not fear to speak out. Your confidence will be respected. The enquiry is to be a private one. Miss Pigot has spared none of the characters of those she has employed. She has insinuated the vilest things of them all. I am sorry that our Church has ever had such a woman in its employ; but now her career of crime is to be put a stop to, and the Mission cleared of her presence.

I write to you in confidence and out of a true desire to serve the common cause,<sup>466</sup> and I think you will write to me in the same spirit.

Believe me Yours sincerely,

ANNIE WALKER.<sup>467</sup>

The letter gives us not only facts about Pigot's reign of wrongdoing at the mission house, but an idea of the source of those facts. Mrs Leslie is the sister-in-law of Mary Leslie, who used to run the Home for Inebriates, and from whom Pigot acquired Grace Gordon: Gordon then has told the Leslies, and they have told Walker. She wants confirmation of facts concerning the teaching of music in zenanas, the beating *inter alia* of Bedu, and Kalicharan Bannerjee in Pigot's bedroom. She informs Miss Gordon of the durwan letting men in at night, presumably for a suitable fee, Pigot's calumny of those employees who cross her, and her flirtations with Wilson, facts she has learned elsewhere, some of them doubtless from Smail. Certainly Colonel Walker, as a member of the Corresponding Board, would know that an investigation of Smail's charges was being conducted by "the Church at home," and would have told his wife. She was only doing her duty by joining in.

Two similar letters went to an Ellen Augier, who had a young orphan staying at 125 Bow Bazar as a parlour boarder, and who withdrew the girl when she fell ill; and to Lucinda

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464 Showder Bibi in *The Pigot Case*. Miss Gordon's reply alters the name to Shoudomini.

465 *The Pigot Case* here inserts "you remained awake."

466 *The Pigot Case* has "the Mission cause."

467 *The Pigot Case* pages 238-240, and after page 338 Judgments pages xxi to xxii, *IDN* supplement April 17<sup>th</sup> 1884.

Oliver, whom we already know. All three replied.<sup>468</sup> Mrs Augier reported that she had spoken with Pigot's niece Mary, "a bright-faced, golden-haired, little girl," who had promised to reveal all that she knew if there were to be an enquiry, despite knowing "what I shall get for it." The other girls at 125 Bow Bazar were subject to fits, foaming at the mouth, convulsions, fever and diarrhoea. Adeline, the orphaned parlour boarder, had not been allowed to write to either Mrs Augier or her guardians about her own serious illness: "Mrs Ellis glared at me when I went for Adeline. I knew I should have trouble to get her away. I brought her out on medical certificate; she was getting paralysed; her right arm was so bad after each fit, so I thought I had more than enough of 125, Bow Bazaar." In addition young gentlemen had told her that that address was no school, and she held back from writing the impolite word that did describe it. In fact "If I had a good memory, I could have detailed to you ever so many disgraceful things done there under the cloak of Mission Ladies." In passing we may note that Mrs Augier has nothing to say about the lady superintendent, but anathematizes the institution as a whole.

Mrs Oliver's letter covers ground we have already travelled with her, adding the detail that Brahmin cooks were brought in for the social gathering that she witnessed. Another detail is that

I do not think any of the teachers, except Miss Barham and her younger sister, the late Miss Ann, were of the Scotch persuasion. Miss Gordon, Miss Ellis, Miss McKenna, and Miss Dakin were Baptists. I think I may safely say that the rest of us were Church of England. We attended the Scotch Kirk regularly in the mornings every Sunday, and anywhere, or nowhere in the evenings.

The European staff, then, of whatever denomination, went to St Andrew's Church on Sunday mornings, a token courtesy to the parent enterprise. Unless we are mistaken, this rule, presumably unwritten, is nowhere else clearly stated. Again,

I may add at the time I acted as Matron in the Orphanage five loaves of bread used to be shared amongst the forty children. But now there are forty-nine. They get seven loaves. The five loaves the generality of them ate when it was served at night before prayers, but some kept them till the next morning, it being a long fast till their breakfast hour.

Oliver stresses that the orphans were "utterly miserable" without saying anything about the state of their health. Presumably Mrs Walker did not ask her about it.

Grace Gordon's letter opens with beatings that she did not see but very clearly heard, then moves straight to Kalicharan Bannerjee. She saw him come every day and stay till late, and good dinners were prepared for him, and soups sent to him when he was ill, "in a bottle nicely covered," soups which were not available for the sick girls. As to Bannerjee spending all night in Pigot's boudoir, "I did see a figure go up the stairs one night (but do not remember the date) towards Miss Pigot's side of the house, and also saw it go away early in the morning, but could not safely say it was actually K.C.B., though the figure looked like his." She often heard that Pigot was ill, and when she asked was told it was a bad headache. She closes with a lively scene and a pair of slippers:

One Sunday there happened to be a row with some young men who came to see a girl of the name of Caroline Swaris. They were not allowed to see her, so they wrote

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468 The letters are reproduced in the *IDN* supplement of September 17<sup>th</sup> 1883, and *The Pigot Case* pages 10 to 16, and again pages 231 to 238.

something rude on a slate to Miss Pigot. When she came down, and told them to go away, they began to throw large stones at her. All the servants came to her rescue, and while this was going on, the durwan came running about over the house, asking where the Baboo Saheb was. Of course, we could not tell, when I and some of the girls who were standing on the opposite side of the staircase leading to our side, saw Kali Churn Bannerjee come out of Miss Pigot's room, and go downstairs with her slippers on his feet, and one arm in his coat sleeve, and the other out.

Annie Walker may have written to other informants, but if so gathered no other incriminating evidence. She received Gordon's reply on November 4<sup>th</sup> at Poona, and on the 10<sup>th</sup> the three letters, with a covering note, were on Hastie's desk. She asked him, for some reason known only to herself, to forward them to Robert Jardine in Ontario. He read them and jotted on the back of one of them,

*Note*—This communication has just been received by me and read. I wish it had not been sent to *me*. It has certainly taken me by surprise. I feel bound by my sense of duty to forward it to Dr Scott, Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, and Chief of the Councillors<sup>469</sup> of the Ladies' Association in Edinburgh, to whom it must be of much more importance and interest than to Dr Jardine. And I shall accordingly post it without any further remark.

W HASTIE

Hastie so far was acting well within the limits of his duty and of common sense. He put off posting the letters for two days, however, and consulted Colonel Walker, who was not at Poona with his wife, George Green Gillan, who had just arrived from Scotland, Chater Gregory, and Biprocharan Chuckerbutty. After hearing what they had to say, he took up his pen again.

*PS*—I shall only add that I have long been *more than* suspicious of such things as are stated here, and have myself observed that every *external propriety* was more than disregarded. I have, however, not had such *documentary* and *authenticated evidence* put into my hands until now. Any one who may read my "Memorandum" and "Note Explanatory"<sup>470</sup> will understand my position and views.

W H

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After which he posted the letters to Scott. The underlined words "documentary" and "authenticated evidence" may raise a smile, but Hastie was likely contrasting malicious gossip, and anonymous letters, with these signed papers.<sup>471</sup> If such horrors were in

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469 Hastie is probably here poking fun at Scott's "consulting committee" by elevating it into an ecclesiastical council. The text is printed in *The Pigot Case* page 9.

470 A prefatory note to his "Remarks" on Macrae's brief Report, written at the end of August. It explains that he will send a copy of the Remarks to Macrae, expresses his exasperation with the female mission, but adds a recommendation from Walter Scott *To gently scan our brother man, Still gentler sister woman*. *The Pigot Case* page 300.

471 Hastie claimed that he had "for years" received anonymous letters discrediting Pigot (*IDN* August 30<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3). Harriette Brittan complained to the *Indian Mirror* at the start of December 1877 that "I just

circulation, and if he was minded to take them seriously, he should have alerted the Foreign Mission Committee long before this: he had not done so because all he had witnessed with his own eyes was the contempt for external propriety. Gossip and rumour not being evidence, he had kept silent for three years.

Another consideration of some weight is the pressure under which he was functioning. His insistence on opening a new mission station that the Foreign Mission Committee was reluctant to fund, and the confusion into which his accounts were falling, had by the end of 1882 exasperated both the Committee and him. He had dashed off an angry post card to Scott the day before Mrs Walker's letters reached him: on November 21<sup>st</sup> he sent another.

I was just preparing a number of notes of a more scientific kind when your telegram came. Can you wonder I was annoyed? I am not angry; but I am most thoroughly in earnest. Herdman spiked my guns when I had put the Free Church to rout before; and it seemed to me you were going to do the same when I was out in the thick of the battle with Hinduism. You must support me, or I'll leave you and your mission without the slightest scruple or compunction.<sup>472</sup>

Hastie here alludes to his campaign to overwhelm, intellectually, the religions of India and the errors of rival denominations. A worthy successor to Alexander Duff has to make many converts, educate a great many young men, and outshine all competitors in scholarship and doctrine. Petty opposition from the female mission and harassment from Edinburgh about payslips and the Surplus Funds only waste the time of a man trying to outmanoeuvre and overwhelm the armies of ignorance. In addition to which Archibald Scott chaired the wretched Consulting Committee which had rejected his proposal for the salvation of the female mission. Scott as much as the Ladies' Committee was besotted with Pigot, and Mrs Walker's three letters would put a well deserved finger into Scott's eye. And in case Scott threw the letters straight into the back of the fire, he sent partial copies to Kenneth Phin and Horatio Macrae.<sup>473</sup>

On October 4<sup>th</sup> the Ladies' Acting Committee, far from besotted and on the pretext of a doctor's report on Pigot's health, had forbidden her return to Calcutta for a year and for good measure forbade any speaking engagements. They voted her £25 a quarter maintenance and effectively left her beached: her grip on her post as lady superintendent was now loosening apace. Yet the fact remained that she was the only lady superintendent they had. Alice Ferguson had during the year addressed numerous public meetings in Scotland, raising funds and morale in equal measure: she was now at Limassol, and the ladies asked her if she would manage 125 Bow Bazar during 1883. She agreed, but for only six months, since her duty lay with her husband in Cyprus. She sailed on November 10<sup>th</sup> from Suez, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> the *Liberal* printed news of her coming to stand in for Pigot, and added that

There is a rumour to the effect that a number of gentlemen connected with this mission are trying to get that lady superseded. We do not presume to know the

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tear them up or burn them. *I never believe them.*" The unwelcome mail probably denigrated her zenana teachers.

472 Read by Scott at the General Assembly of 1884, with a mention of the post card dated November 9<sup>th</sup>. A second threat to resign was dated June 16<sup>th</sup> 1883. *Scotsman* May 31<sup>st</sup> 1884 page 8.

473 Minutes of the Ladies' Association, January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1883. Giving judgement in the 1884 appeal, Richard Garth said, "Mr Hastie was then acting one or other of two parts: either he was himself party or privy to the scheme disclosed in Mrs. Walker's letter for getting up evidence to ruin Miss Pigot, or else he allowed himself to be made the tool of a woman whose animosity and bitterness towards Miss Pigot he was well aware of." *IDN* supplement April 17<sup>th</sup> 1884, *The Pigot Case* after page 338 Judgments pages xxii-xxiii.

sentiment which actuates them, but if Native opinion were consulted, it would be found that no zenana missionary is so popular and so highly respected as Miss Pigot.

Members of the Corresponding Board, then, were celebrating Pigot's sequestration and hoping aloud that they had seen the last of her. Steel and Wilson were perhaps the only members of the Board still to support her. Biprocharan Chuckerbutty missed her—she wrote to ask him to assist Mrs Ferguson, and he replied in effusive terms<sup>474</sup>—but he had no seat on the Board, which was solidly behind Hastie. Pigot had built up a loyal constituency among the natives of Bengal, but her standing among the natives of Scotland was founded in the dust.

Ferguson took over at 125 Bow Bazar on January 1<sup>st</sup>. There may well have been no monthly gatherings of the Bengali Christian Church since Pigot had left: Ferguson's coming certainly ended them, and love feasts with them. Attendance at the Upper Christian School had fallen away sharply after Pigot's departure, and Ferguson closed it at the end of February. Repair work on the buildings had been in progress for some weeks or months before she came:

The extensive repairs at 125 Bow Bazaar, Calcutta – which were absolutely necessary – have now been completed at a cost of more than £500, under the superintendence of Mr James Wilson, General Assembly's Institution, to whom the Ladies' Association is also deeply indebted for his services in teaching in the Upper Christian School, and general superintendence since Miss Pigot left Calcutta.<sup>475</sup>

Mrs Pigott, the matron, was replaced by a Mrs Jewett at some point, presumably early, and Mrs Tremearne's departure was planned and, as soon as convenient, brought about. "She was not formally dismissed, although she was really dismissed," was Hastie's phrase, and he learned the fact from Ferguson herself. By about the end of January, according to the *Indian Daily News*, Ferguson was writing home of Hastie's frequent visits, of his kindness, and of his and her having "the same cause at heart." The editorial goes on to assert that Walker and Smail were equally frequent visitors: "But it was not only Mr. Hastie who interviewed Mrs. Ferguson; Mrs. Walker also paid her visits. It is no secret that from her very arrival, Mrs. Walker and Miss Smail, saw her frequently as long as they remained in India; and that they did all they could to impress her with the truth of the charges they had made against Miss Pigot."<sup>476</sup>

Alice Ferguson's position was far from easy. The run-down state of the mission house had been corrected before she came, and getting Catholics and Bengali converts off the premises was a simple enough matter: but parlour boarders who were paying good money, whether or not they were frowned upon in Edinburgh, could not simply be told to pack their bags. On top of that there were eleven schools and 150 zenanas to be staffed and supervised. Monmohini Wheeler had publicly described Bengali zenana visitors as "good for nothing," and Georgiana Smail had called 125 Bow Bazar an abandoned house. Ferguson needed no advice from Hastie or Walker as to what she must do. Nor would the Acting Committee have had to make their needs clear to her—it was self-evident that the mission house at Calcutta must have as good a standing as any other in India. Pigot had bequeathed her a staff of 47 teachers, from

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474 He wrote on December 19<sup>th</sup>: *The Pigot Case* page 314. He had not been able to "do justice to my Assembly's duty and your schools" since October because of ill health; and "When shall you come back? We wish you to be here. Mrs Ellis and Mrs Tremearne are doing well. Mrs Tremearne went with me to inspect Kidderpore, Sonie, Moodeally and Matteabruj schools, all things are getting well."

475 *NFM* January 1883 page 8.

476 *IDN* May 18<sup>th</sup> 1885 page 2. On what does the newspaper base these assertions?

among whom she must now take out the bad apples and replace them with good. And like Pigot before her, she faced the task alone.

In Edinburgh on January 2<sup>nd</sup> the Ladies' Acting Committee had met with the Consulting Committee and considered Annie Walker's three letters. They could now see clearly that Smail and Walker were acting together against Pigot, and that Hastie was minded to assist them. Scott had read Hastie's "Remarks" of August, sent to him by Mrs Gillan, accusing the Consulting Committee of entirely exculpating Pigot "from misdeeds which no amount of falsehood or imbecility could conceal," not to mention "those evils which of late years have made our Female Mission in Calcutta a reproach and a byword wherever its real ongoings have been known." To tie the knot tighter, Hastie had written of Smail that "I believe she is as incapable of bearing false testimony as any lady in the Committee, and it has been painful to circulate such a slur as this report contains upon a near relative of one of my best friends," to wit Mrs Walker.<sup>477</sup> The trio in Calcutta, supported doubtless by others, were determined to see the back of Pigot and to that end were quite prepared to turn their fire on the imbeciles in Edinburgh. Scott will have communicated at least the gist of what he now knew to the ladies.

Whatever their deliberations were, the two committees decided to send Pigot back to Calcutta. Grace Gordon's letter had Kalicharan Bannerjee spending the night with her, Smail's correspondence had her running an abandoned house, and the threat of a lawsuit should bring Walker and Smail, and perhaps Hastie, to their senses. The letters were copied to Ferguson and the originals given to Pigot, and she was told to "take what steps she may" to vindicate herself.<sup>478</sup> The ladies were hardly being fair to Pigot, who was after all supposed to be recruiting her strength in the good air of Scotland: but they had a mission to run, an enterprise that depended on the free flow of funding from pious Scotland to heathen India, and to which any breath of scandal might be fatal. Firing Pigot back at her detractors like a bullet was ruthless, to be sure, but it is difficult to discover what better course was available to them.

She spent the last five days of her furlough with Katharine Wilson at Crieff, embarked at London on January 10<sup>th</sup> and reached Bombay on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. By that time Ferguson had despatched two letters to the Ladies' Committee, which they tabled on February 20<sup>th</sup>. The Consulting Committee retired to read them, perhaps over a cigar, and returned to recommend that "unless further communication from Mrs Ferguson should greatly modify her conclusion already expressed Miss Pigot should not resume her position as Head of the Mission." It seems that Ferguson's findings did not contradict, but instead bore out, Smail's assertions.

Neither the letters nor the final report sent by Alice Ferguson have survived, and we would have almost no idea of their general tenor but for an odd circumstance. She showed three of her letters to Hastie, and he took copies of them, and had them printed for the perusal of the General Assembly of 1884.<sup>479</sup> In 1885 Robert Knight, editor of the *Statesman*, saw them and published short extracts from them in an editorial. They are dated to "January and February 1883," and are written at intervals of about a fortnight.

It is necessary that our readers should see something of their nature, and we shall therefore make an extract or two from them:—

"I come now, writes Mrs. Ferguson, to the chief cause of the demoralization of the

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477 *The Pigot Case* pages 301-2.

478 Minutes of the Ladies' Association for January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1883.

479 The Chair of the Ladies' Acting Committee pointed out that there were inaccuracies in the printed letters, some of the variations being quite significant. Minutes of the Ladies' Association, October 31<sup>st</sup> 1884.

orphans. It is the presence of a number of women, nominal Christians, some widows, some wives away from their husbands, who are our zenana teachers and visitors. This is the part of the work that distresses me most. In returning to India after eighteen years' absence, I find the condition of zenana life and teaching much altered. We asked no fees, and were mistresses of the situation \* \* What is the character of the women (now) employed? Unless they are truly Christian, can they do anything to further real Christianity? They are exposed to much temptation. Some of them live outside in their own houses, and except coming here on Saturday, \* \* we have no other hold on them or their work. They walk to the zenanas, and by that very circumstance their moral character is at once questioned by passers-by, besides which all their daily surroundings are full of temptation. I don't think we are justified in sending out such workers."

In the same letter, which was written shortly after her arrival, Mrs. Ferguson tells us that some of these women had been dismissed from other Missions, no "characters" having been required of them, and adds, "naturally therefore there are some doubtful characters amongst us." As to the resident teachers, she writes, "Some of the teachers live on the premises, and these are our great trouble;" and she proceeds to tell us of one of them "bursting into such a torrent of native abuse," as horrified her:

"I have been enquiring if all the irregularity I hear of is incidental to Miss Pigot's absence, but it is not so. She was told of abuses, but either she did not believe them, or did not think it worth while to enquire into them. Any way the teachers are still employed. Their influence is very bad on the girls, and the few good and steady ones are taunted for their piety. Can we grow brambles in the Mission House, and expect to gather grapes in the zenanas? \* \* It is this blot of agency that is the stumbling block to me. It is not a question of charitable judgment, but these weak, doubtful, impure native women are our messengers in native homes."

In the same letter again, Mrs. Ferguson narrates the inquiries which she had quietly instituted amongst English ladies in Calcutta, whose judgment she could trust, as to the reputation of the Mission:—

"I went to Miss — who is so well known, and asked her to tell me candidly. She replied that it was bad. The agency employed, and Miss Pigot's very free intercourse with native men have left a very unpleasant impression. My old friend, Miss —, says the same, and these two ladies stand at the head of Christian work in Calcutta."

In her next letter, a fortnight later, Mrs. Ferguson confirms the unhappy impressions she had gathered, and—speaking of the prevalence of *hysteria* amongst the girls, remarks:— "It was as though the house were possessed by something evil, so many seemed to lose all control of themselves." As to the head European teacher, she writes, "the influence of our chief zenana missionary<sup>480</sup>—I shudder to use the term—is so pernicious, what wonder that our native teachers are so unsatisfactory."

"Mr. Hastie told me on Saturday he was irreconcilable, and under the circumstances, I am not surprised. \* \* \* It has been the want of supervision and control that has brought the Mission to its present condition. It was not always so. It has degenerated to it, and I can see no real cure but by starting afresh, with a new

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480 Lizzie Tremearne, left in charge of zenana teaching by Pigot.



staff, and on new principles.”

In her third letter, a fortnight later again, Mrs. Ferguson writes very strongly indeed, as to the true state of matters, having discovered much of which she had been ignorant in her earlier letters. It must be remembered that this lady was not working in co-operation with Mr. Hastie, but against him, the Home Committee having sent her out to disprove the statements made by him, as to the conduct and repute of the Mission:—

“I know ten times as much about everything as Mrs. Walker was able to find out, and instead of regarding Miss Pigot as an ill-used, persecuted woman, I consider her a very obstinate one, who is reaping the fruit of her own self-will. You will perhaps say I do not know the hard, unjust, cruel things that have been said, but if *right* had been on her side, she could have answered her detractors in a moment, by simply shewing her work, but neither Orphanage, Upper School, Hindoo School, or Zenana visiting could bear a plain, straightforward examination.”

The final extract we shall make is of an order so grave, that we would willingly suppress it, but that too much has been suppressed already in this case, that has been freely enough *talked* about in Calcutta:—

“A few weeks ago, when I wrote of my pain at the bad language used in the house, I had a suspicion that it was the least of the evils; now I hear that some of our teachers have been known to go out at night for improper purposes. This report was one of those that was taken to Miss Pigot, and which she would not enquire into. From the tone of the women, I was not surprised to hear it. And these are the Church messengers, whose feet ought to be “beautiful” as they carry the glad tidings of good to Hindoo homes!”<sup>481</sup>

Ferguson’s dilemma was that she could not simply dismiss Bengali teachers out of hand, and “start afresh” on new and better principles. She had to replace them with suitable staff, and how many changes she in fact made we do not know. Five women whom she named as particularly suspect she did not in fact dismiss. Our dilemma is that these few quotations tell us nothing that we do not know already. Mrs Wheeler had already condemned Bengali zenana visitors *en masse*, and some newspaper reports were scathing about zenana visits altogether;<sup>482</sup> the opinion of Ferguson’s old friends, especially as to Pigot’s “very free intercourse with native men,” echoes Lucinda Oliver and doubtless many others; the schools, if not the zenanas, had been examined by professors from the university here, and by Mrs Wheeler there, and opinion was divided; and the discovery that Ferguson has “heard” that unnamed women “have been known” to leave the house at night to make mischief is trumped by what we already know about Chunea, who did precisely that and who was, in our terms, a child. It may also have crossed our mind already that Pigot could be described as self-willed and obstinate.

These extracts from Ferguson’s three letters tell us nothing new, and it is entirely probable therefore that they told the Ladies’ Acting Committee nothing new. There are two other hints known to us as to Ferguson’s revelations, one describing “a statement of being horrified to

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481 *Statesman* for May 15 1885 page 2. Reprinted in the weekly *Indian Statesman* May 19<sup>th</sup> 1885 page 235.

482 European as well as Bengali zenana visitors are roughly handled in for instance the *Indian Mirror* of June 4<sup>th</sup> 1882 page 2 (“The gangs of Zenana teachers that infest these parts...”), and the *Bengal Times* of October 20<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 664 (quoting another unnamed newspaper: “stuck-up Misses in show conveyances and with bags of trashy leaflets”).

see a painted woman in a dashy phaeton and pair drive up to the mission,”<sup>483</sup> and another observation by John Steel’s wife, in committee, that “she had been present at the social meetings under Miss Pigot’s charge and had found them to be strictly religious gatherings.”<sup>484</sup> Ferguson then disapproved of women driving, and judged social gatherings none of which she had attended to be insufficiently Christian. Now either she gave facts to the ladies of which we know nothing, and which were subsequently suppressed, facts that convinced them that Pigot should lose her post, or she told them nothing they did not already know, the only new factor being her standing in missionary circles, the sheer authority of her voice. Robert Knight in his editorial assumed that Ferguson was sent out by the ladies to justify Pigot and prove Hastie wrong: but for all we know they might have decided months before that Pigot had to go. The Acting Committee’s dilemma was the greatest of the three, in that before they could replace her they needed to recruit another lady superintendent, and so far had failed to find so much as a single assistant: added to which the retirement, let alone the dismissal, of their much-vaunted heroine, the indefatigable woman whose administrative power and self-sacrificing zeal had brought them such success, would be a heavy defeat for the Ladies’ Association as a whole. Already they were saddled with a Consulting Committee of men, and already the General Assembly, that bearded battalion, was showing an unhealthy interest in the female mission. Their independence was at stake.

Pigot, according to James Wilson, “was excluded from the Orphanage, and the teachers and others were forbidden by Mrs. Ferguson to hold any communications with her.”<sup>485</sup> She was given bed and board by Mrs Wollen, Lizzie Tremearne’s mother, at her house in Serampore, and had rooms in British India Street for visits to solicitors. At the beginning of March her solicitor sent Hastie a demand for a retraction and an “ample public apology” and he wrote back refusing. Pigot copied both letters to Archibald Scott with a request that the Ladies’ Association set up an arbitration, and perhaps asking for legal advice. She appears also to have asked about Ferguson’s role in investigating the charges of personal immorality. They replied that they could have nothing to do with legal proceedings and refused to arbitrate: and explained that they had given no instructions to Ferguson to investigate the charges against her character, but that “they have instructed Mrs Ferguson carefully to investigate those made against the management of the Mission in recent years, and the present condition of the Orphanage; and they will be very sorry indeed if ... the result of Mrs Ferguson’s investigation should lead to the severing of their connection with you.” They added that they had “requested Mrs Ferguson to read over to you in the presence of two independent witnesses the points on which she would report on your management of the Female Mission, which would give you an opportunity of answering them.”<sup>486</sup>

At Calcutta strenuous efforts were made between March and May to avoid the looming scandal, and soon the whole town was agog with it. An arbitration was offered by James M. Thoburn of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, but who should arbitrate could not be agreed. The suit was filed with the High Court on March 21<sup>st</sup>. By that date Hastie was in search of evidence to defend himself, which indicates that he had taken legal advice and discovered that he would perforce have to defend himself.<sup>487</sup> Octavius Steel, who had ceased

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483 Read at the General Assembly in 1885. *Edinburgh Courant* May 29<sup>th</sup> 1885 page 3.

484 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association for May 1<sup>st</sup> 1883, when Ferguson’s final report was read.

485 Wilson’s letter of September 25<sup>th</sup> 1883 to Scott, reproduced in the *Statesman*, November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1883.

486 Minutes of the Ladies’ Association for April 4<sup>th</sup> 1883.

487 Wilson’s letter to Scott: “It is a great pity that Mr. Steel was not here himself to confirm my statement; but I saw a letter of his to Mr. Williamson (27<sup>th</sup> March 1883), in which he wrote that he had assured Mr.

to be the Corresponding Board's treasurer late in 1882 or early in 1883, was keeping the Foreign Mission Committee fully informed of developments. Hastie called on him at Old Court House Street during March to confirm what he might remember of a dinner party in 1879 to Pigot's disadvantage, and Steel assured him that he could remember nothing. This may have been the occasion on which Hastie remarked that Steel had "done everything in his power to assist this whore," and the story went round Calcutta that Steel had him thrown out of the house. James Wilson went to Serampore and begged Pigot to drop the suit: she replied "I am innocent in the sight of God, and I must be righted."<sup>488</sup>

In April Ferguson wrote up her final report and despatched it, without reading it to Pigot in the presence of witnesses: at much the same time Mary Weitbrecht and Elizabeth Sale, stars of the missionary firmament at least as bright as Ferguson, wrote to the Ladies' Committee letters "bearing favourable testimony to Miss Pigot's character and work." The ladies read the report and the two letters on May 1<sup>st</sup>, and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution drafted by the Consulting Committee that Pigot's services should, "reluctantly and with pain," be dispensed with. Their reason for so deciding was "because of the unsatisfactory management for some time past of the Institution arising ... in some measure from Miss Pigot's indifferent health and from her having undertaken too much work, the want of proper selection and control of the subordinate agents of the Mission, and a difficulty on Miss Pigot's part in co-operation with the others whose supervision the Committee deem essential to the proper administration of the mission."<sup>489</sup>

News of the decision will have reached Calcutta in hours.<sup>490</sup> Smail and Hastie had now won, the Ladies' Association and their pet lady superintendent were comprehensively routed. All that remained was to have the court case stopped. Hastie, accompanied by William Fish, had during April visited 125 Bow Bazar to gather evidence of Pigot's misdemeanours, and come away empty handed. Pigot's plaint had him sending to Scott "gross charges of immorality, unchastity, misconduct, and incapacity,"<sup>491</sup> and he was finding that there was precious little evidence to be got of any of them. Efforts to persuade her to call off the case had been intense towards the end of April.<sup>492</sup> She appears to have conditionally agreed to turn her guns away from Hastie and onto Walker and Smail, if he would sign a suitable retraction. The word *regret*, however, proved a stumbling block.

In the course of the discussion on this subject, the defendant wrote the draft of a letter to Mr. Gregory, in which he said:—"I am glad to hear for the sake of our Mission and all concerned, that Miss Pigot has agreed to withdraw her suit. I made no serious charge against her, and hope the whole matter will soon be forgotten. I have no ill-feeling against her but wish her well. She worked very hard in our Mission; and as I said in a document written a year ago, she has in her time done great and good work. Her health has not been good of late, and she ought to rest still for some time. She has claims upon our Mission, and has many warm friends in our Church. I shall be glad to be of any service to her in my power, I can never forget my obligations to her

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Hastie on his word of honor that he had no recollection of such things happening at his house, or being spoken about."

488 Katharine Wilson's letter, *Statesman* December 5<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3.

489 Minutes of the Ladies' Association for May 1<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 1883.

490 By 1882 a telegram via Teheran could go from Britain to India in an hour.

491 *The Pigot Case* page 5.

492 The dates are provided by Justice Wilson at the appeal: "The date is fixed by two letters from the defendant to Mr. Wilson, dated the 18<sup>th</sup> April and 4<sup>th</sup> May." *IDN* April 18<sup>th</sup> 1884 page 2. *The Pigot Case* after page 338 Judgments page lvi dates the two letters to April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup>.

for her attention to me in my illness immediately after my arrival in this country.” An addition was proposed to this draft, to the effect that the defendant regretted having trusted the truth of the statements. These words the defendant rejected, and naturally, for he has always thought, whether the charges of the defamatory letters were true or false, he did no more than his duty in forwarding them to Scotland.<sup>493</sup>

Warm words did not constitute a retraction, and Hastie was reduced to hoping that Pigot could be talked over. As late as the end of August, we are told, after the trial had started, he approached Wilson’s brother Bob to persuade her to stop the case.<sup>494</sup> It was first postponed for a month on May 27<sup>th</sup>. Ferguson left 125 Bow Bazar on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, leaving Mrs Ellis where she had found her, in charge of the female mission: James Wilson seems to have taken Gillan’s place as its “general secretary” at some point during the year.

The annual report in the *News of Female Missions* for July lists the same schools and the same number of zenanas as Pigot’s last report, and has Mrs Tremearne as busy among them as ever, although she was gone by June at the latest.<sup>495</sup> Three girls, thanks to Wilson’s teaching, have passed the Entrance examination; true the Upper Christian School has now been closed, but “The Committee think it might be made a powerful Missionary agency for the higher Christian education of females, as much so as the General Assembly’s Institution for males, and reserve to themselves power to re-open it whenever such a step may be deemed expedient.” These brave words are followed by the bad news, quoting the minute of the “Consulting Committee of gentlemen” word for word, “reluctantly and with pain” and “grieving” withal, and citing the self-same pretexts for Pigot’s dismissal, namely her unsatisfactory management, poor health and overwork, and inability to cooperate with the Corresponding Board. The report ends with hearty thanks to Alice Ferguson for her efforts, and the Acting Committee’s determination to recruit a lady superintendent “without delay.”

This reassuring narrative masked a knotted skein of facts. Already in June four members of the Acting Committee protested that Ferguson had neglected to show her report to Pigot, thereby denying her a chance of defending herself, and the same four had described the dismissal as “extreme.” Nor were readers aware that Ferguson and Hastie were at one, whereas the Acting Committee had the liveliest suspicions of him. The sceptical subscriber’s eye, moreover, will have lighted on the words “the committee ... reserve to themselves power” with some interest, and turning to the end of the report she will have found an appendix that offered the outlines of an explanation. The General Assembly had put the difficulties of the Ladies’ Association into the hands of the Foreign Mission Committee, who were “to deal with the matter as they shall see fit.”<sup>496</sup> The Rules and Regulations of 1878 were to be altered to ensure that members of the Foreign Mission Committee would sit on the Ladies’ Committee, the convener of both bodies would be the same man, the Ladies’ Committee would report to the Foreign Mission Committee, and the agents of the ladies would “occupy precisely the same relation to the corresponding boards in India as that occupied by the agents of the Foreign Mission Committee.” And for good measure the Ladies’ Association would now be known as the Church of Scotland’s Ladies’ Association. Ownership was no longer to be in doubt.

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493 Justice Wilson, *ibid.*, and *The Pigot Case* page 312.

494 Wilson’s letter to Scott: “On the 31st August, the fourth day of the trial, before breakfast, Mr. Hastie sent for my brother, and begged him to get me to induce Miss Pigot to stop the case, otherwise I should be brought in. He was placing the case in the hands of his agents, and he would not be responsible for what they might do. My brother replied, truly enough, that I could not control Miss Pigot.”

495 It is unclear when Tremearne left the mission, but it must have been during Ferguson’s tenure.

496 *NFM* July 1883 page 101.

Thus was spelled out the triumph of the belief that the female mission ought to be under the control of the men, and it marked neatly enough the circumstance that Pigot's and the ladies' defeat coincided, were in most ways one and the same defeat. Where she and they differed is a question not easily to be addressed. We can conclude with confidence that she wanted money and Scottish deputies from them, and got too little of the first and none of the second, and that they wanted discretion and prudence from her, the political skill to mollify the Monmohini Wheelers and bend with the wind blown up by the William Hasties, and got none of these. But their concurrence with her other ambitions, the social gatherings and parlour boarders, the extent to which her Calcutta Christianity meshed with their Presbyterianism, we are left to guess at. What is certain is that the ladies and Pigot were united in seeking to educate the women of India, and in wanting no man's permission to do so.

The trial came to court on August 28<sup>th</sup>. John Freeman Norris, the judge, was new to the bench and new to India. A successful barrister from the Western Circuit, he had contested a seat at Bristol for the Liberals and brought firm anti-imperialist views with him. Pigot hired Jackson, Trevelyan and O'Kinealy to represent her, and Hastie intended to defend himself. Pigot's advocate, Arthur Phillips, discovered that he was busy elsewhere, and had to hand the case to Jackson and Trevelyan, who were not prepared: Hastie told the court that he was appearing "on behalf of the mission," and although Norris politely pointed out that "it is your individual capacity as a defendant which excites my sympathies," a telegram was nevertheless despatched reporting Hastie's claim to an alarmed Foreign Mission Committee.<sup>497</sup> They had no more intention of paying his costs than the ladies had of paying Pigot's. Hastie wasted the court's time for the first day and a half trying to represent himself, and only after tiffin on the 29<sup>th</sup> did Malcolm Gasper, of Gasper and Pearson, appear for him. Each advocate was now as unprepared as the other.

Norris had defined the alleged crime as the sending of Annie Walker's three letters to Scotland. Hastie had not set out what exactly he proposed to defend, and Gasper was in no position, as yet, to do so. Norris indulged the omission. What followed was twelve days of alternate tedium and absurdity. Norris ruled on the 30<sup>th</sup> that the publishing of the letters to Archibald Scott was not privileged, which is to say that there was ample evidence that Hastie had entertained other motives than simple duty in sending them. Gasper nonetheless kept Hastie's plea of privilege alive for four more days, more than likely playing for time while witnesses were found to prove justification.<sup>498</sup> An exasperated Norris had heard enough after two days.

*His Lordship.* – When you speak of impropriety, do you mean to say that there was an improper intimacy between Miss Pigott and Mr Wilson?

*Mr Hastie.* – Far from it, my Lord.

*Mr Jackson.* – Then why inflict us with all this?

*His Lordship.* – Mr Hastie is now speaking of conduct inconsistent with external propriety.

*Mr Gasper.* – That is also an element in our case. Well, Mr Hastie, can you tell us the duration of these visits?

*Mr Jackson.* – You will be pleased also to give us the dates on which these

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497 Octavius Steel had returned to London. His associate WL Alston kept him fully informed of developments in Calcutta, and he passed the news on to Edinburgh. National Library of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee Secretary's Letter Book MSS 7546 September 18<sup>th</sup> 1883, folio 672.

498 Wilson's letter to Scott. "But while Mr. Gasper was gaining time over privilege, &c., Mrs. Walker was galloping up and down the town in search of evidence." How Wilson knew of Walker's movements he does not explain.

occurrences took place?

*His Lordship.* – A lady of that age visiting a person openly, you wish to know the duration of the visit? Where is the impropriety, I should like to know?

*Mr Gasper.* – Certainly, my Lord. I consider there is some impropriety. A woman visiting a single man (laughter).

*His Lordship.* – God knows what will happen to us if that is a disregard of all external propriety!

(Question put as to duration of the visits.)

*Mr Hastie.* – I can't say the duration of her visits on those occasions. I know she had remained for some time.

*His Lordship.* – What is Mr Wilson's Christian name?

*Mr Hastie.* – Mr James.

*His Lordship.* – Is that the same Mr James Wilson who voted that your defence should be paid out of the funds of the Society?

*Mr Hastie.* – Yes, my Lord.

*His Lordship.* – The same man!

*Mr Hastie.* – Yes, my Lord.

*Mr Hastie* continued. – I once dined with Miss Pigott in the house of a friend, and I thought her manner while there was unsatisfactory.

*His Lordship.* – Mr Gasper and Mr Jackson, will you come into my room for a minute?

The two learned Counsel having had an interview with his Lordship in his chambers, the hearing was resumed.<sup>499</sup>

Witnesses to prove justification were not to be found, alas, and after ten mortal days it was clear to the crowded court house and to all Calcutta that Hastie had lost. The 19 witnesses Gasper was able to bring to court testified to Pigot's having caned a handful of girls during fourteen years, spent too much time seeing her doctor, employed "the lowest class of natives" who dressed immodestly and had been dismissed from other missions for gross immorality; she allowed rubbish to lie on the steps of her mission house, placed James Wilson's hand on her thigh on one occasion and put her arm round Kalicharan Bannerjee's waist on another. Grace Gordon's story of Bannerjee spending the night with her evaporated under cross-examination, and she admitted to having seen "a figure" that might have been a man or a woman. Norris listened to all this with vocal impatience, occasionally tempered with contempt. Each witness told a story unsupported by any other, and much of the testimony was unrelated to the plaint. No attempt at all was made to justify the charge that 125 Bow Bazar had the reputation of a brothel.

Luckily for Hastie dramatic new evidence came to light on the eleventh day. William Fish was brought back to the witness box to tell the court that on one occasion Pigot had given Wilson so much beer at tiffin that he had confessed himself drunk, and that on another occasion, seated at a rectangular table in 125 Bow Bazar, he had seen "Miss Pigot's right hand on Mr Wilson's private parts. I observed the hand moving backwards and forwards."<sup>500</sup>

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499 *Englishman* for September 4<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3, cf *The Pigot Case* pages 56-7. The inference that Norris called Gasper and Jackson to his room to close the case then and there is drawn by the *Times of India* of September 18<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 2. See Appendix 9.

500 *The Pigot Case* page 146. The newspaper accounts either censor the offending words, or rephrase them: the *Englishman* supplement September 11<sup>th</sup> 1883 has "I observed Miss Pigott place her right hand in an indecent way on Mr. Wilson's person." Fish had told no one, certainly not Hastie, what he had seen, until Hastie's solicitors had summoned him on September 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> and wrung it out of him.

The guilty couple had then withdrawn to another room for 20 minutes, and returned as if nothing had happened, Wilson first and Pigot a little later.

The defence having stretched over eleven days, Pigot's prosecution took up three. Wilson was called and denied everything, pointing out that the table was round and, citing his scribbling diary, that a recent convert was present throughout. He dated Fish's story to March 21<sup>st</sup> 1882. Bannerjee, as we would expect from a *vakeel* of the court, gave exemplary evidence, added to which there was precious little for him to deny. Pigot's examination was split over two days, September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Gasper restricted himself on the 12<sup>th</sup> to Pigot's punishments of girls, starting at the Calcutta Girl's School, before moving to the sewing lessons at the Bethune in 1867, provoking Norris to say "I don't think that she thought that malice would have come even to this extent. I don't suppose that even she expected that the whole of her past life would be raked up in this way. If you fail to prove this, nothing could be more cogent evidence of malice." His Lordship's sympathies then seem to have changed. Gasper closed the day by asking Pigot if she had read Wilson's evidence in the newspapers, and if she had spoken to a journalist in the jury room. Fearing a trap, she became evasive, and that seems to have irritated Norris. On the following day Gasper produced a masterly demonstration of courtroom bullying,<sup>501</sup> with no further interruptions from the bench except to join him in pressing Pigot for answers. Her evidence ended abruptly.

Mr. Gasper. — Have you been to Keshub Chunder Sen's with Mr Wilson together? I cannot tell whether he was in the same carriage with me. We had a party going.

And how did you come back? In a carriage.

Were you with him in the same carriage with anybody else? I don't remember.

How often have you been in the same carriage with Mr. Wilson at night? Very rarely.

His Lordship, being dissatisfied with the nature and manner of the witness's replies, announced his intention of adjourning the Court, and calling the next case, in order to give the witness time to think.

Mr. Trevelyan. — Miss Pigot, do answer the questions correctly.

Mr. Gasper. — How often have you been in the same carriage with Mr. Wilson? After dark? Perhaps, three or four times.

Has Mr. Wilson ever dressed at your place? Once.

Put his evening dress clothes on? Yes.

What did he put his evening dress clothes on at your house for? I asked him to stay to help me with a letter. He had to go home to dress. I asked him to stay and help me with a letter to save time.

Have you been to Mr. Wilson's quarters alone? Only once.

When was that? On the occasion when I went to look at his room to be able to write to Mrs Wilson that I had just come from there.

How long were you there? Five minutes.

His Lordship. — Miss Pigot, did he ever kiss you? No.

You swear that? I swear that.<sup>502</sup>

The newspapers afterwards agreed that Pigot had "broken down" and that Norris had stopped the cross-examination, but the transcripts do not agree on where the questioning stopped, nor

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501 The *IDN* of September 18<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 2 reckoned 333 questions in two hours. "She was plied with questions without pause, and had scarcely time to draw her breath, let alone to think, or to get rid of the impression that she was to be attacked in some way for having been guilty of the grievous impropriety of speaking to a reporter!"

502 *IDN* supplement September 14<sup>th</sup> 1883. Cf *The Pigot Case* pages 220-221.

do they show in what way Pigot broke down. Norris gave his judgement two days later, deciding that Fish's story was too extraordinary to be untrue, that Wilson had falsified his scribbling diary and that Bannerjee had visited Bow Bazar too often: Bannerjee had impressed him, but the impression had faded with the "piteous spectacle" of Pigot in the witness-box.<sup>503</sup> He ruled that Hastie had assuredly defamed Pigot but that she had no character to lose, and awarded her one anna damages, the parties to pay their own costs.

The disaster was now complete. Bannerjee alone came away unscathed. The Free Church and the Bengali Christian Church instantly and publicly declared him innocent and the judgement wrong. Wilson did not attempt to go to the General Assembly's Institution on the following Monday, assuming correctly that Hastie would give his classes to someone else.<sup>504</sup> Both Pigot and Hastie began preparations to appeal against the verdict: Hastie had been found guilty and Pigot was publicly disgraced. There is no smoke without fire, and where men can be forgiven the odd indiscretion, no woman can. The press outside Calcutta showed her little sympathy, and there is no reason to suppose that public opinion was any more forgiving than the press.

The Calcutta newspapers differed. The four principal English-language dailies took her part without hesitation, as did a majority of the Bengali titles. The Christian papers were divided: Joygobind Shome's *Indian Christian Herald* was loud for Pigot, Thoburn's *Indian Witness* anathematized the Church of Scotland mission as a whole and accepted the court's ruling that she was a most immoral lady.<sup>505</sup> The *Indian Daily News*, the *Indian Mirror* and the *Statesman* set about re-assessing the evidence and finding fault with Norris's judgement, and filling many columns in the process: James Furrell of the *Englishman* was as laconic as he was indignant.

We abstained from commenting yesterday on the decision in the case of Pigot vs. Hastie, because we were anxious, before doing so, to give the most ample consideration to any fresh light the judgment might throw on it. We have now studied the judgment carefully, and the result has simply been to confirm the amazement with which we first heard of the decision.

We do not propose to enter into any elaborate analysis of the evidence. For, in the first place, it strikes us that, so far as it is relevant to the allegations in the libels, it is not worthy of any such analysis; and in the second, it is of a character which could not be adequately analysed in a newspaper without doing more harm than good. The value of evidence must in most cases be very much a matter of opinion. In our opinion, there is not a particle of credible testimony in this case that tends in the least degree to support the allegations contained in the libels. The only evidence which, if it were credible, would deprive the plaintiff of our sympathy, appears to us to be absolutely irrelevant. For it relates to an incident which, if it happened at all, was confessedly unknown to the defendant at the time when the alleged libels were perpetrated; and we are wholly unable to comprehend how a person can be justified in impugning another's character to-day by information which he obtains to-morrow. Not only, however, is this evidence irrelevant, but it is incredible; so incredible that to ask a man to believe it amounts to an outrage on his common sense. All that the rest of the evidence goes to

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503 Norris complained at the start of the trial that in England a jury would decide the case, and that he would have to hear the evidence as if he were a jurymen. This might explain his reference to an impression which then fades.

504 Wilson's letter to Scott.

505 *Opinions of the Indian Press on the Defamation Case*. The *Herald* editorial pages 49-50, the *Witness* page 31.



establish is a certain freedom of manner which we may approve of, or not, but which, when it once comes to be recognised as part of a person's general manner, ceases to justify any more injurious presumption. We do not know the plaintiff, and all we can say of her character is that, knowing nothing of it, we are bound to assume that it is beyond suspicion. Approaching the evidence in this frame of mind, the impression produced on us by it is that immense industry has been displayed in endeavouring to damage her reputation, and that beyond showing her to be a good-natured person, with a freedom of manner indicative rather of innocence and want of circumspection than guilt, the result has been only to prove how easy lying is even in the face of overwhelming probabilities. In the case of Kali Charan Banerji, there was an incident which, to a Judge unacquainted with Indian habits and feelings, may have possessed but little significance, but which, to any one acquainted with those habits and feelings, will appear absolutely inconsistent with the relations insinuated by the defence. We refer to the letter written to Miss Pigot in England. No Native of India would have written that sentence, "Can a mother forget her child?" to a woman who stood to him in the relation in question.

We could say very much more as to both the facts of the case and the manner in which it was conducted. But it is best, on the whole, that it should remain unsaid.

Only this we will add, that, while we have no words to express the indignation created in our minds by the conduct of some of the persons connected with the case, we believe that the defendant, however much biased his judgment may have been by other considerations, was mainly actuated in what he did by a sense of duty.<sup>506</sup>

The other Calcutta newspapers, having different scruples and no concern for Hastie's sense of duty, belaboured him with vigour. Worse was in store. Kenneth Macdonald of the Free Church Mission, who preached regularly with Kalicharan Bannerjee in Beadon Square and who edited the *Indian Evangelical Review*, produced in October a condemnation of Hastie of startling ferocity.<sup>507</sup> He berated the Ladies' Association, the Foreign Mission Committee and Hastie for ignoring the Church Form of Process; but having warmed up his pen with that, he turned to Hastie's failings "as a gentleman and a man of honor" in conducting a case that had been "neither Christian nor just." After some observations about the trial which anticipated the analysis of the Appeal Court, and a summary of Pigot's responsibilities in the Upper Christian School, the orphanage, the zenana mission and the Hindu girls' schools, he went on to say of 125 Bow Bazar that

The house was indeed noted for its hospitality. Friends from the mofussil<sup>508</sup> frequently put up there for days and weeks. The female members of Hindu families, in the transition state, giving up native and learning European habits, also lived there. Miss Pigot could not have a moment to herself from sunrise to 9 or 10 o'clock at night, nor could she call one room in the house her own. Her bed-room was often a dormitory for teachers and pupils at night and as often during the day a class room, an examination hall, an ante-room for gentlemen attending the social gatherings, &c.; in

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506 *Englishman* September 18<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 2.

507 *Indian Evangelical Review* October 1883 article viii page 114 ff. Jane Macdonald ran the Free Church female orphanage in the mid-1860s, and from 1879 until at least 1888.

508 "... the country stations and districts... Thus if, in Calcutta, one talks of the Mofussil, he means anywhere in Bengal out of Calcutta." *Hobson-Jobson*.

fact anything for which it might be found useful. When therefore Mr. Bipro Churn Chuckrobatty, Rev W. R. James, Pundit Mohesh Chunder Nyaratna, Principal of the Sanskrit College, the Rev Messrs Gillan and Macalister Thomson and a score of other gentlemen are said to have been there, we are not to imagine anything affecting the purity of their character. It was the fashion of the house and in accord with the unselfish hospitable nature of the lady of the house. Miss Pigot was careless of the small conventionalities of society, if not defiant of them—and was, shall we say therefore, not at all popular with her own sex—having large parties or social gatherings in her own house, but accepting of no invitations, or scarcely any, to parties given by other people.

We cannot say we approved much of Miss Pigot's way; possibly as having a great deal to do with our Orphanage, our Higher Christian School, our Zenanas and our Hindu Schools, running exactly parallel to hers and appealing to two rival sections of the Scotch community, we were not the party most likely to sympathise with her in her multifarious labours. Still, as having exactly the same kind of work immediately under our own eyes, in the crowded building in which we live, we may be most likely to understand what is meant when it is said that from morning to night she had not an hour to herself during which she was not liable to any number of interruptions, nor a room that she could call her own, but which she might be asked to give up for this, that, or the other kind of purpose.

Macdonald, of course, was a colleague of Kalicharan Bannerjee who in turn was a close friend of Pigot, and it is equally true that in hosting the Bengali Christian Conference she had cooperated with the Free Church where Hastie had quarrelled with it. But for all that his judgement of her, and of Hastie, was that of a close neighbour. Octavius Steel was still keeping the Foreign Mission Committee fully informed of events in Calcutta, including press comment, and Macdonald's article will have weighed with them. Hastie at the same time was launching at them letters, some of them relating to the lawsuit, so intemperate in their language that they were not deemed printable for the General Assembly of 1884.<sup>509</sup> Although he retained the loyalty of the Corresponding Board and a circle of staunch friends, his standing in a large part of Calcutta opinion was very low, and the patience of his employers in Edinburgh was at breaking point. During October they suspended Wilson and Fish, the first because he had been found guilty of adultery, the second because his hiding his knowledge of that adultery, and his tackling neither Hastie nor Wilson about it, amounted to gross professional misconduct. On November 6<sup>th</sup> they dismissed Hastie, having considered his recent letters and made "a calm survey of the whole actings of Mr Hastie towards this Committee."<sup>510</sup> William Macfarlane's furlough was at an end, and it was decided that he should proceed to Calcutta to fill Hastie's shoes. He and his sister Margaret had sailed from Liverpool and reached Calcutta on November 25<sup>th</sup>.

The Ladies' Committee in July had advertised for a young lady to replace Georgiana Smail.<sup>511</sup> Mary Ellis meanwhile could not function as acting lady superintendent indefinitely: she had cut her zenana visits down from about 100 houses to 80, making "only 217" visits to

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509 One of them accused the Foreign Mission Committee of "practically" sending "this whore" out to oppose and humiliate him. Another letter dated March 27<sup>th</sup> 1883 urged the Committee to make the ladies recall Pigot in order to stop the court case. *Scotsman* for May 31<sup>st</sup> 1884 page 8.

510 FMC minutes for November 6<sup>th</sup> 1883. Scott tabled all of Hastie's letters except "a parcel of letters he had declined to receive."

511 *Record* July 1883 page 658, and again October 1883 page 754.

them, and the Gillans had moved into Bow Bazar, so that Mrs Gillan was probably of some assistance, but Ellis was increasingly drawn to Barisal, where her late husband had been stationed, and quit on December 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>512</sup> Margaret Macfarlane having arrived, she had handed the work over to her during November: Emily Bernard, who was in Scotland on furlough, had some months earlier agreed to stand in from January, but not indefinitely since her work was at Poona.<sup>513</sup> Through all the changes—Ellis, Ferguson, Ellis again, Macfarlane—125 Bow Bazar functioned, and apparently normally. Mrs Gillan, in an undated letter, remarked “I had thought that, on account of the sad troubles, the work of the Ladies’ Mission would be much broken here, but we are rejoiced to find that it is not so.”<sup>514</sup> On January 14<sup>th</sup> Miss Macfarlane wrote “I have now gone over all the schools in succession, and have got a pretty fair idea of the work done. The schools that are regularly inspected are in a good condition, and excellent work is being done; while those in outlying places are what one would expect when natives are left to themselves . . . I am now all alone . . .”<sup>515</sup>

William Macfarlane was presumably installed at 125 Bow Bazar with his sister, and certainly aware, via the telegraph, of the resolution of the Foreign Mission Committee dismissing Hastie. On December 1<sup>st</sup> he went to the General Assembly’s Institution and demanded the keys, which Hastie refused. Octavius Steel meanwhile had come with the mail steamer from London and reached Bombay on November 28<sup>th</sup>. The mails arrived at Calcutta on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and on that day Macfarlane and Steel called on Hastie and handed him his dismissal. According to Hastie one of them was less than polite when doing so, and the finger of suspicion for that lapse can only point at Steel.<sup>516</sup>

George Gillan was thunderstruck by the turn of events, unable to understand what the Foreign Mission Committee was about. Six members of the Corresponding Board resigned during January, by which time the congregation of St Andrew’s was split into two opposed camps, one supporting Hastie and the other Macfarlane. Pigot’s movements in all this are unknown. With Ferguson gone and Ellis in charge she had been free to call at 125 Bow Bazar as a visitor, but nothing is recorded. The installation of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar had been formally celebrated in early November, and despite her close connection with the Sen family it is highly unlikely that she was invited to that, or the festivities associated with it. Again in November the monthly missionary conference dealt with “the public ministry of women,” a lively debate was reported, and normally Pigot would have been there, but her membership will have been cancelled in the wake of Norris’s verdict.<sup>517</sup> Since September the *Statesman* had been collecting contributions from the public to fund her appeal, and the necessary money must have come in: she filed it on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. But the extent to which she was seeing Steel, or the Macfarlanes, or for that matter Wilson, is not known. John Murray

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512 Ellis’s sojourn at Barisal, if indeed she went, was brief. She was by the summer of 1884 and for some time afterwards assisting with Bible lessons in some of the Calcutta zenanas, see *NFM* July 1884 page 101.

513 *NFM* October 1883 page 159 is vague: Bernard has agreed to go “for a time at all events.”

514 *NFM* January 1884 page 7.

515 *NFM* July 1884 page 99.

516 The *Indian Mirror* of December 18<sup>th</sup> reprints on page 3 an article from the *Indian Christian Herald* published during the previous week and telling us that the handover coincided with a meeting of the students to bid farewell to Hastie. That meeting was held on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>, the day that the mails arrived.

517 Kalicharan Bannerjee was invited to resume his membership in the second week of December: *Liberal* December 16<sup>th</sup> page 2. A reference by Kenneth Phin, at the 1885 General Assembly, to “the ladies’ conference” might point to the November 1883 meeting: “He read one passage to the effect that not one lady in Calcutta befriended Miss Pigot in Calcutta, although since that was written he said she had been kindly received at the ladies’ conference” (*Edinburgh Courant* May 1885 page 3). If so, Pigot attended the November meeting, or tried to.

Mitchell, who had opened the Free Church Mission normal class early in 1871, a good three years before Pigot's "upper or normal Orphanage" is mentioned, wrote to her in December a letter of warm support.<sup>518</sup> The Free Church was firmly on her side and the Established Church was in confusion. In January an editorial in the *Glasgow Herald* gave vent to a degree of exasperation: "The root of the whole mischief has been that unhappy Miss Pigot, who was so stoutly championed by certain reverend divines in last General Assembly. She has been dismissed from her post of head of the Orphanage and Zenana Mission in Calcutta; but why she was dismissed no mortal knows."<sup>519</sup>

The appeal was heard in March by Richard Garth, the Chief Justice, and Justice A Wilson, the only remarkable feature of the hearings being that Hastie tried to argue his case after his counsel had closed it, and was told to desist.<sup>520</sup> Judgement was delivered on April 16<sup>th</sup>, both justices vivisectioning Hastie's case without mercy and awarding Pigot Rs 3,000 damages and costs in both courts. The sum involved, Rs 15,000, was far beyond Hastie's means, and he was declared bankrupt in due course, the assumption at the time being that Pigot would get not a penny of it.<sup>521</sup> The further adventures of William Hastie can be followed in instalments, up to the end of the decade, in the newspapers, but they tell us nothing new about Pigot, and for that reason they must be forgone here. He appealed to the House of Lords (funded again, presumably, by well-wishers) in London and they ruled in December 1884 that the Norris trial was a miscarriage of justice and that Garth's and Wilson's verdict was correct.<sup>522</sup>

On April 16<sup>th</sup> William Macfarlane telegraphed Edinburgh "Appeal successful gross imputation removed damages 3000". His thoughts in doing so were not exclusively on Pigot, since Wilson, dismissed from the General Assembly's service since mid-January, was said to have joined the staff of the Albert College,<sup>523</sup> the Brahma boys' school. Losing Wilson to a rival operation would have been a severe blow to the General Assembly's Institution, and the very rumour of it will have concentrated minds in Edinburgh and Calcutta. He was in fact reinstated in early June. The notion that Pigot might be put back into 125 Bow Bazar was in the air for some months, perhaps kept alive by queries from concerned supporters and subscribers, and the *News of Female Missions* announced more than once that her dismissal was final. The references to her that we have, if they are to be believed, indicate a breakdown in health and morale that more or less prostrated her. Keshub Chunder Sen had died on January 8<sup>th</sup> in the bosom of his family and friends, and been cremated on the 13<sup>th</sup>. A memorial meeting in the Town Hall had drawn over 2,000 people. Pigot's cup of woes now surely ran over, and the *Liberal* in April assured readers that "her condition every time that we saw her was pitiable to behold."<sup>524</sup> The following week the newspaper quoted the *Indian*

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518 Mentioned on page 2 of the *Statesman* of December 14<sup>th</sup> and in the *Liberal* of the 16<sup>th</sup>.

519 January 12<sup>th</sup> 1884 page 4.

520 The *IDN* from March 4<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> 1884, and judgement in the supplement of April 17<sup>th</sup> and on page 2 of April 18<sup>th</sup> 1884. The judgement is printed in *The Pigot Case* after page 338.

521 Hastie's total debt was assessed at Rs 18,850 in April 1885, 3,000 of which to Pigot and 12,000 in costs: Indian Law Reports, Calcutta Series, volume 11 1885 page 451 ff. He was released on April 29<sup>th</sup> after a third of the debt had been repaid, *Englishman* April 30<sup>th</sup> 1885 page 3. Pigot may or may not have got Rs 1,000 from the Official Assignee.

522 See Appendix 10. The first uses of the word *miscarriage* to describe the trial are in the *Arya Darpan* of September 21<sup>st</sup> 1883 (IOLR *Indian Newspaper Reports Bengal* 1883 page 630 paragraph 30) and the *Statesman* of the 22<sup>nd</sup>, page 2.

523 The *Liberal*, March 30<sup>th</sup> 1884 page 1. The newspaper "understood" that he had joined the staff, yet a Brahma editor would surely have known about an appointment to a Brahma school.

524 *Liberal* April 20<sup>th</sup> 1884 page 4. The editor of the paper, Krishna Behari Sen (Keshub Chunder's brother), claims here to have met Pigot more than once. James Wilson's letter to Scott of September 25<sup>th</sup> 1883

*Christian Herald* to the effect that “some leading members of the community contemplate holding what we may regard as a meeting of welcome and sympathy for Miss Pigot,” but the report smacks of wishful thinking and certainly nothing more was heard of any such proposal. As late as October 1885 the *News of Female Missions* was telling readers that “she is still quite unable for work:” after which Pigot fades out of sight for ten years.

Emily Bernard took up residence at 125 Bow Bazar on January 17<sup>th</sup> 1884, her sister Amy and two others joined her on February 11<sup>th</sup>, encouraging reports began once again to flow from Calcutta to Edinburgh, and the demand for dolls resumed its prominent place in those reports.<sup>525</sup> Bernard’s Bengali was better than that of the other three, who had none at all, but was hardly adequate for the task in hand, and by July she was lamenting “the lack of Eurasian teachers, who would know Bengali.” She forbore to name any Eurasian teachers in particular, but went on to observe that “in all our schools, our best teachers are the girls who have been trained in our Orphanage,” and “much credit is due to the body of native Christian schoolmistresses, and to the training they received in past years,” pressing her point without spelling out who had done the training. Ferguson and Ellis both knew Bengali, and had managed to run the female mission single-handed; Miss Macfarlane knew no Bengali to speak of but had run it single-handed too, at least passed it to the Bernard sisters in working order; and the three new arrivals did little other than learn the language for the rest of the year. Now here was an explanation on offer, by implication at least, for this smooth transfer from one lady superintendent to another: to a large extent the mission was running itself. Bernard’s hints were not coincidental. With the connivance of the Ladies’ Acting Committee, she was preparing the ground for the restoration of Pigot’s reputation.

Not only was all well at Calcutta, but the Ladies’ Association was also flourishing generally. In the wake of Norris’s verdict as much pessimism as blame had been broadcast, but in the event contributions rose in 1884, and the circulation of the *News of Female Missions* reached new heights. As we have seen, young Scottish ladies had come forward to serve in India where there had been none for years. The Acting Committee had thought in 1879 that support for their Calcutta station depended critically on Pigot’s being there, but now they had discarded her and business was thriving. The last thing needful was to set the history on its feet, and in so doing not leave in the subscriber’s mind the image of a weak, vacillating and deceived Acting Committee. They had praised her to the heavens for years, and they had not been wrong. On top of that the assault on Pigot, and therefore on themselves, had not yet subsided.

The Foreign Mission Committee in May had confirmed Pigot’s dismissal, but not without misgivings.<sup>526</sup> The *News of Female Missions* in July pronounced itself “gratified” that she had won the appeal and added that she would not be reinstated.<sup>527</sup> By the end of May the three letters from Alice Ferguson to the Ladies’ Committee that had been printed by Hastie began to circulate, and the ladies that summer were writing to Ferguson enquiring about this “breach of confidence.” The answer seems to have been that Hastie had been shown the letters, not given permission to publish them. In mid-September came an 80-page rebuttal from Pigot “to letters published by William Hastie in Mrs Ferguson’s name” with a request

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stresses Pigot’s “present feeble health” during the trial. Such statements are no more credible than the “doctor’s report” adduced by the Ladies’ Acting Committee in October 1882.

525 We now learn that dolls which could be undressed were needed only for the top prizes, dolls with sewn-on dresses being quite acceptable for those with lower marks. *NFM* July 1884 page 102.

526 FMC minutes for May 13<sup>th</sup> 1884. Two members argued inter alia that aspects of Pigot’s management of 125 Bow Bazar condemned by Ferguson had been “especially praised” by the Macfarlanes.

527 Page 118.

that the ladies print and circulate a statement reflecting her position. The Foreign Mission Committee advised the ladies to publish both their correspondence with Ferguson and Pigot's reply. They discussed the matter in October and decided to do nothing. One of their reasons may have been that they had no intention of joining the public post mortem examination of the Calcutta Mission Scandal: another might have been a desire not meekly to comply with everything the gentlemen said.<sup>528</sup>

At the beginning of December three "commissioners" were named by the Foreign Mission Committee, their task being to inspect and report upon the whole of the India mission of the Church of Scotland. The ladies asked them in particular to investigate the state of their Calcutta operation, to interview Ferguson and Pigot, and Mary Ellis, and Margaret Macfarlane, and they "were left in no doubt as to the wishes of the Foreign Mission Committee and the Ladies' Association in this respect."<sup>529</sup> Among the mass of documents available to them were Pigot's 80 pages, now printed. They did as they were bid, seeing Pigot at great length "in India," as well as Smail in Ceylon, Emily Bernard, Ferguson (who was in Scotland), Gillan, Monmohini Wheeler and all, and by early May their draft report was in the hands of the Foreign Mission Committee. Its conclusions on the Calcutta female mission were calculated to placate all parties, perhaps to put the story to rest once and for all. The Ladies' Committee had been at fault, not in dismissing Pigot, but in the manner and timing of her dismissal, and the lady superintendent herself had done wrong on three counts. In the "latter years of Miss Pigot's rule" there had been "a want of order in the general arrangements of the Orphanage," by which they meant the whole of 125 Bow Bazar; secondly she was "undoubtedly at fault in the case of the Roman Catholic matron Mrs. Piggott;" thirdly in "one or two cases" she had ignored advice "which might have guided her choice" in taking on Bengali zenana teachers; and the rest of the indictment was trifling, unproved or disproved. They then levelled a fourth charge, which must have echoed the feeling of a good many men in both Calcutta and Edinburgh.

It must, however, be admitted that there is evidence throughout these unhappy proceedings of an unwillingness on Miss Pigot's part to be controlled in her management of the Mission—to have 'bit and bridle' laid upon her—and this impatience of control, strengthened by the fact that after the difference with the Corresponding Board in 1879 she was left without any supervision at all, probably rendered it impossible that she should remain in the service of the Mission; and, further, we feel that Miss Pigot must bear a considerable share of the blame of the alienation between the two branches of our Church Mission, which has caused so great trouble and scandal both in Scotland and India. On the other hand, we feel bound to say that most, if not all, of Miss Pigot's faults of management which have come under our notice, were the result of her having far more to do than any one should have been allowed to attempt. Mrs. Ferguson, Miss Macfarlane, the Consulting Committee, all unite in expressing their opinion that Miss Pigot was completely overworked,—as Miss Bernard has put it, she attempted the 'work of four.'

Here, then, is the meat of the matter. The woman refused to work with the team, was "impatient of control," and she (doubtless from the same weakness) largely caused the conflict with the Corresponding Board and hence the Calcutta Mission Scandal. The ladies in

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528 Minutes of the Ladies' Association for October 21<sup>st</sup> 1884. On the 31<sup>st</sup> a member of committee was given permission to print, but not publish, Pigot's 80 pages. They were printed, along with all relevant correspondence, reports and minutes, for the use of the Foreign Mission Committee, under the resolution of November 17<sup>th</sup>, *q.v.* And have of course since disappeared without trace.

529 *NFM* July 1885 page 111.

consequence were justified in dispensing with her services, their mistake being that they dismissed her without hearing her defence, after having ruled that she was to be heard. That, said the commissioners, was “an act of injustice.”

The General Assembly debated the report and accepted it, not without accusations of bias from supporters of Hastie. The Commissioners had adopted a suggestion of Emily Bernard’s that Pigot should be given a small pension, the ladies endorsed it, and an appeal was launched for the “Miss Pigot Pension Fund.” The initial target was £40 a year, but various voices (among them Archibald Scott) pressed for £60 and made correspondingly generous donations. In July 1888 Pigot is shown to have received £160 covering four years, and the surplus in the fund was invested as the capital of an Invalid and Retiring Fund for lady missionaries generally.<sup>530</sup> In later years Pigot was paid £60 a year.

The Commissioners’ report then was acceptable, man to man, to the General Assembly, and the ladies graciously let it pass with not a hint of “impatience of control” on their part. Yet the three undoubted faults of which Pigot was found guilty—the disorderly house at 125 Bow Bazar, the employment of a Catholic matron, and the hiring of one or two inadequate and insufficiently Christian native teachers—will not do. Georgiana Smail had graphically described the first two in private letters to the ladies, and the doubts about Bengali zenana visitors had not at that date been restricted to one or two, whereupon the authorities in Edinburgh, even after the circulation of Annie Walker’s leaflet, had decided to discipline, for all we know reprimand, but not dismiss Pigot. The commissioners themselves disposed of Ferguson’s teachers “going out at night for immoral purposes” as gossip at third and fourth hand. Their fourth discovery, that she was not broken to the saddle, begs a number of questions, first and foremost as to whether the saddle fitted, and who was proposing to strap it on. They tactfully failed to notice that she had been in harness with Macalister Thomson and Wilson for nine years before kicking over the traces with Hastie and Gillan. Their conclusions merely rehearsed the ladies’ reasons of May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1883 for parting company with Pigot, reasons drafted for them by the gentlemen of the Consulting Committee, and which all could now see were sufficient reasons, since here were the commissioners repeating them.

If the report is evasive, the possibility cannot be banished of misdemeanours by Pigot so grave that the Church of Scotland and the Ladies’ Association suppressed them out of sheer embarrassment. If the report is equivocal, then the “want of order” at Bow Bazar might allude to the social gatherings and the lavish entertainments, goings-on bound to provoke the narrow bigotry and inordinate pride of race of some, of course very few, contributors and subscribers in Scotland. If the report is defensive, we are left free to suppose that Pigot’s dismissal was expedient, the consequence of the bad publicity that was now swirling around her, Ferguson’s reports being a third instalment which would inevitably get into the grapevine and on top of that an unprecedented trial about to come to court.<sup>531</sup> The Ladies’ assiduously constructed image of Pigot was being blown down in a gale of name-calling that was threatening the well-being of the Association as a whole. Whereas her resignation in 1879 had seemed to aim a serious blow at the Association, in 1883 it was her continuing in post that menaced them. But that is guesswork: the truth is that the comment of the *Glasgow Herald* still stands—why she was dismissed no mortal knows.

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530 *NFM* July 1888 page 129.

531 The letter to Hastie from Pigot’s solicitor was considered by the Acting Committee on April 4<sup>th</sup> 1883; they replied that they would be “very sorry indeed” if Ferguson’s investigation led to “the severing of their connection” with Pigot; they dismissed her on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, a few days before the case was due to start. Ante hoc, ergo propter hoc. The prospect of the head of the female mission suing the head of the male mission was dreadful in itself.

The ladies published extracts from the commissioners' report in *News of Female Missions* for July 1885,<sup>532</sup> introducing them with a lengthy annual report from Emily Bernard which reminded readers that the better teachers at 125 Bow Bazar were those trained by Pigot: in the October number<sup>533</sup> the Miss Pigot Pension Fund was launched on a torrent of praise for her achievements, quoting Emily Bernard again:

The orphans and widows, and other women, trained by Miss Pigot, I find to be our only effective teachers, and I have been unable to supply the place of those married last year with any satisfaction to myself ... These women and girls whom Miss Pigot has trained are different. I can only account for it by supposing that they must have been taught a higher ideal of duty than ordinary, and trained by one who forgot herself in her work and in her God.

Pigot was now back on her pedestal. When Emily returned to Poona her sister Amy stayed behind, and in September 1886<sup>534</sup> "I have been wanting to write and tell you of one or two old girls of Miss Pigot's Upper School that seem to have turned out so well ... At Benares I saw another who was educated by Miss Pigot, and is most grateful to her. She says she owes everything to her."

The real Miss Pigot had meanwhile disappeared. The directories locate her from 1895 at Darjeeling, but for the ten years before that it is not clear that she was even in India. Our only source for what she might have been doing is best characterized as family legend, committed to paper as late as 1971. Srimati Sushama Bose was a daughter of Kamala Devi and Pranatha Nath Bose, and she gathered from her mother tales of her early days as a parlour boarder in the Upper Circular Road. From her husband, Prosanto Kumar Sen, as well as from her mother, Sushama heard of the origins of the Victoria College,<sup>535</sup> and in her *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* she runs Sen's college and Pigot's mission house together to make a neatly garbled whole.

About this time a large-hearted Christian missionary lady Miss Pigot who already had an Orphanage boarding school was attracted by Keshub Chunder's scheme of education. The Victoria College was amalgamated with Miss Pigot's school, and it was located at the large house on Upper Circular Road, which was later named 'Lily Cottage.' She converted the commodious first floor into a comfortable boarding for some England-returned gentlemen, who wanted to put their wives and daughters for advanced studies. Amongst them was my grandfather Romesh Chunder Dutt, who entrusted his wife Mohini Devi and young daughters Kamala (my mother) and Bimala (my aunt), later also his infant daughters Amala and Sarala to Miss Pigot's care.

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532 *NFM* July 1885 pages 110-117.

533 Page 157 ff.

534 *NFM* January 1887 page 2. In the July number on page 122 James Herdman calls Pigot "ardent and able."

535 When Pigot left Calcutta in May 1882 attendance at the Upper Christian School immediately began to fall. The Indian Reform Association proposed an Institution for the Higher Education of Women in April and had it up and running by June at number 10 Upper Circular Road. The Free Church of Scotland lent support in the persons of Kalicharan Bannerjee and A Thomson. An advertisement (in the *New Dispensation* for June 25th 1882) pointedly invited "ladies of the Christian denomination, as well as those who belong to other sections of the Brahmo community to attend the weekly lectures" at the new school. Just as Mary Leslie's school at Entally had migrated into Pigot's hands, so now her ex-pupils were being wooed by the Brahmos. By the end of the year the amalgamation of the Native Ladies' Institution, as the new school was called for short, with the Association's Metropolitan Female School (founded 1879) had been organized and the Victoria College opened at the start of 1883. Sushama retained a memory that two schools had been merged.



The ground floor was the College, Keshub Chunder himself used to bring from Colootola his ancestral residence his daughters Suniti Devi (later Maharani of Cooch Behar) and Savitri Devi (later Mrs. Gajendra Narain), in the mornings and took them back in the evenings. My mother Kamala Devi wrote in her autobiography that Sunity Devi was her “best friend” . . .<sup>536</sup>

Mrs Baring, wife of the government financial adviser, Miss Gibbs<sup>537</sup> and the Maharani of Cooch Behar made up the Victoria College ladies’ committee, and there was a syndicate of Brahma gentlemen to complement them. The government in London, however, was in touch with Evelyn Baring about its difficulties in Egypt: he was called away in August, and Lady Baring, as she now was, sailed in October for Suez. The directories from 1884 to 1888 show the ladies’ committee as “ —, and the Maharani of Cooch Behar,” showing that Miss Gibbs had also fallen away. During 1885 land was purchased, still on the Upper Circular Road, for a new building, capital was invested, the new premises were ready by 1887 and some parents now moved their girls from the Bethune to Victoria College.<sup>538</sup> In 1889 the Junior Department placed an advertisement in the *Liberal* throughout the year: and in 1890 the directories announced that the lady superintendent was Miss A Paul.<sup>539</sup>

In 1894 the venture ran out of money.<sup>540</sup> The *Liberal* announced the closure: “The Victoria College was established in the year 1882 by our Minister and it had enlisted the services of some of the most efficient lady teachers on its staff, but, unfortunately, as is so often the case with institutions of a similar nature, the Victoria College has succumbed to its inexorable fate for want of support and encouragement from the public. This College has all along been supported and maintained chiefly through the liberality of HH the Maharaja and Maharani of Cooch-Bihar to whom it owes a debt of gratitude.”<sup>541</sup> The college re-opened probably in 1897 and has not closed since.

Sushama, having run together Victoria College at number 10, and Pigot’s previous mission house at number 72 on the Upper Circular Road, now tackles the move to Bow Bazar.

This commodious house on Upper Circular Road was bought by Keshub Chunder Sen in 1877 for his family residence and named it “Lily Cottage.” He arranged for Miss Pigot a commodious house in Bow Bazar Street, and the Victoria College was removed there.

...After the demise of Keshub Chunder Sen in 1884, his daughter Maharani Sunity Devi looked after the Victoria College, with the help of the Missionaries. Miss Pigot now grown in years after giving her best services and having put the College in a good working order, retired in 1890. Maharani arranged a handsome pension for her, and also a snug cottage—“Rook's Nest” belonging to the Cooch Behar State, where

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536 *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* New Delhi 1971 page 10.

537 James Gibbs was a member of the supreme council of India, and a friend of Major Baring. Both showed interest in the Native Ladies’ Institution, and Baring chaired the Annual Meeting of the Indian Reform Association in March 1882 when Gibbs was indisposed.

538 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal* for 1886-7 page 75.

539 Perhaps the Miss A Pal of the Free Church of Scotland listed in Thacker’s Directory of 1883.

540 *General Report on Public Instruction in Bengal* for 1893-94 page 117: “the Victoria College, which also used to teach up to the Entrance standard, but which never furnished returns to the Department, is said to have suspended operations for want of funds.”

541 July 8<sup>th</sup> 1894 page 3.

she spent her last days, doing good charitable work. The Victoria College passed through many phases . . .<sup>542</sup>

Now why does Sushama suppose that Pigot retired in 1890, the very year that Victoria College acquired for the first time a lady superintendent, Miss A Paul? In that year Sushama was a year old: she can correctly place the purchase of Lily Cottage in 1877 and Keshub Chunder's death in 1884, but can she be trusted with Pigot's retirement? We are left with the tantalizing possibility that Pigot assisted, in a most discreet way, at Victoria College after 1885, and the ladies' committee of "—, and the Maharani of Cooch Behar" would in that case have to be reinterpreted.

Rook's Nest was one of several properties at Darjeeling built or bought by the Cooch Behar Raj, a good investment in an increasingly popular resort. Pigot in her will<sup>543</sup> makes clear that the house was placed at her disposal for the term of her natural life. Pranatha Nath Bose and his family stayed at Darjeeling in 1895 and 1896, when Sushama was six and seven years old, and

Miss Pigot . . . loved us dearly, especially her pupil, my mother, and came daily to our house. She must have been quite ninety years old then, but walked straight, and her mind was wonderfully clear, and had rosy cheeks. She had about a dozen dogs who used to sleep on her bed and sit and eat with her . . . Her Sunday School was a great attraction for us. We learnt the Bible, history and all the lovely hymns she taught us, which to this day gives me much joy and comfort. Alope (Bhaiya) was Miss Pigot's favourite, and he topped us all in the Sunday School lessons. He was deeply religious . . .<sup>544</sup>

Sushama here is remembering, or believes she is remembering, what she saw as a little girl, doubtless improved by older members of her family telling her in later years what she surely saw and what she surely must remember. That Pigot, at almost 60 years, had rosy cheeks shows that she was fair-skinned all her life: a handful of dogs can easily become a dozen, but memory cannot so easily make dark cheeks rosy.

In 1895 Pigot sent a letter of condolence to Margaret Stevenson on the loss of her son, and received an answer<sup>545</sup> which provides a hard fact.

Some little time ago I had a visit from Mrs Sutherland & Miss Mackintosh<sup>546</sup> and we had a talk about you. It was pleasant to see someone who had come from you so recently. By last mail I sent off a copy of "the Vailima Letters" to you as I thought you would be interested in seeing a little more of our life there and some of my dear boy's last written words.

William Sutherland had returned to the Kalimpong Mission after spending the first four months of 1884 teaching at the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta under Macfarlane. During May the four young ladies at 125 Bow Bazar had visited Kalimpong, Augusta Reid and Miss Niven for the first two weeks and the Misses Bernard for the second two, and Sutherland had shown them the locality and the conditions of work. In 1885 Miss Reid again

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542 *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* page 11. To be fair to Sushama's memory, the Victoria Institution had in fact by 1917 moved to number 159-1 Bow Bazar Street.

543 *IOLR Bengal Wills and Administrations* (1909-1938) volume 167, third season 1923 pages 124-5.

544 *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* pages 82-3.

545 National Library of Scotland MS 6295 folios 122-124.

546 LA Mackintosh, assistant missionary, Darjeeling: Thacker 1890. Gillan had married Sutherland and Isabel Slessor at St Andrew's at the end of October 1882.

spent time at Darjeeling and Kalimpong, and at the start of 1886 Archibald Turnbull was writing to the Ladies' Committee in Edinburgh pressing them for a mission to women at Darjeeling:<sup>547</sup> in April Miss Reid was made the first female missionary there. By 1890 there were three. Mrs Stevenson's letter of 1895 shows that Rook's Nest figured on the Church of Scotland's missionary map of Darjeeling.

It would be surprising had it not. Pigot's mission house at Calcutta had provided bed and board to Europeans passing through, Dr Valentine of Agra, Dr Roy of Beerbohm and Dr Bose of Serampore<sup>548</sup> being three names we hear, as well as Church of Scotland agents, and before that the Robsons had boarded with her for three years at the Bethune School. She built two properties on freehold land at Darjeeling, calling them Vailima and Vailima Cottage,<sup>549</sup> either to let for short periods or for rent, and they may well have added to her capacity as a hostess. Three images of her are permissible in the years around the turn of the century: conducting a Sunday School (complete with hymns and examinations), taking tea and swapping news and gossip with Isabel Sutherland, and boarding Church of Scotland agents, and others, in need of a roof.<sup>550</sup> At the same time she kept in touch with the Sens.<sup>551</sup> Sushama was back at Darjeeling in 1905, recovering from the loss of a new-born son.

"Rook's Nest",

Darjeeling, 21st July, 1905.

My Darling Sushoma,

I have longed naturally to say how much I love you, and, how much I have grieved at your painful illness. We thank God, dear, for taking care of you in it and restoring your health, though only in a measure, yet you are on the mend. We hope to see you strong and well soon. Your heart has passed through a crisis of sorrow and grave disappointment, and my heart ached for you and dear Prosanto. God loves us more than we know how to love. He did not send the pure spirit to stay with us, but kept that dear one among the brightest of His angels. It is hard for the expectant mother to resign her treasure at the very threshold of joy. These mysteries will be clear when less<sup>552</sup> shall be our gain. Dear Sushoma when God sends other dear babes you will link them as they come with the Angel first born. And this will sanctify your sweet Motherhood. In the ages to come this babe may be your chief rejoicing—say "Thy will be done."

Yours very affectionate,

M. Pigot.<sup>553</sup>

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547 National Library of Scotland MS 7629 Chairwomen's Letter Book 1885-1920 folio 46, dated February 11<sup>th</sup> 1886 and in reply to Turnbull's of January 6<sup>th</sup>. Reid's move is decided in *NFM* April 1886 page 47 and reported in *NFM* July 1886 page 85.

548 Mentioned at the 1883 trial: *IDN* supplement 14th September 1883, *The Pigot Case* page 212.

549 Mentioned in her will. When she built them might most easily be established from the pages of the Darjeeling newspaper.

550 Macfarlane in early 1886 was put up in a bungalow belonging to the conservator of forests at Kalimpong, and later that year in a rented house at Darjeeling. *Record* May 1886 page 419, July page 501. He died in February 1887 at the age of 47. Margaret Macfarlane, herself unwell, remained in India for a time.

551 Suniti Devi spent the summer of 1894 at Darjeeling, while the Maharajah was in Britain: *Liberal* April 1<sup>st</sup> 1894 page 5, May 27<sup>th</sup> page 10.

552 Presumably "loss" in the original.

553 *Memoirs of an Octogenarian* page 603.

A footnote adds “The above letter written when she was almost a century old<sup>554</sup>—on the passing away soon after birth of our first issue—a boy, at Ruby Ville, Darjeeling, when I went to stay with my mother.”

Number 125 Bow Bazar, and before that 78 Upper Circular Road, had under Pigot been in a sense neutral ground, something of a no-man’s-land between the manners and *mores* of the drawing room on the one side and the *boitakhana* on the other. It could not of course be both at once. We might suppose that most of the time it was an untidier version of an Anglo-Indian residence, to which visiting Bengali men and women would accommodate themselves: on the other hand the teacher seen in the street by Monmohini Wheeler leaning over a box-wallah, and the “torrent of native abuse” that shocked Alice Ferguson, do not fit that picture. It was a house full of women and girls, a female house, yet men could gain access to certain parts, the verandah and drawing room and on occasion the teacher’s dining room, so that they were neither free to move about nor confined by some sort of male purdah. The place cannot have been a zone of familiar comfort to either Scottish or Bengali visitors of either sex. Some, as we have seen, were delighted with the place, others horrified, depending doubtless on what their expectations and preconceptions were. But in the sense that India and Europe met, to a degree, in Pigot herself, in what she did and who she was, so to a degree did they meet in her house. There is no evidence that she continued at Darjeeling, in a more modest way, to bring the two ways of life under her roof and expect them to mingle, but it may well be that the necessary conditions were in place.

In 1910 her memoir of Keshub Chunder Sen was published at Calcutta: in 1913 John Archibald Glover Thomson, the son of James and Annie, wrote to her from Howick, evidently in pursuit of memories and memorabilia of Robert Louis Stevenson. Her reply survives.

Your request regarding RLS is somewhat difficult. I wish I may some day be able to recall what may be of interest, mental effort is a strain except when memory revives spontaneously as it sometimes does. Alas! About any letters. At the early stage of my troubles I did once put together a big box of letters & papers and asked my brother to keep it until I could send for it, & when I did so, I found he had burnt the whole of it that I might have nothing of the Court case. And since then I have felt it the better way to keep nothing & yearly I make a blaze of letters that I felt would be cast into the dust bin with strangers to bury me at death.<sup>555</sup>

She signed her will on August 10<sup>th</sup> 1921, leaving three quarters of her estate to the children of her brother Edmund, an eighth to William Sutherland, and the other eighth divided between one of her younger sister’s daughters and Kathleen Alleard, the wife of the manager of the Min tea estate. Her sweeper and her maid both received three months’ wages, and her maid Rs 300 in addition. She died on February 7<sup>th</sup> 1922<sup>556</sup>, and was buried in the Old Cemetery, Darjeeling.

Pigot’s only surviving letter reveals who it was that started the destruction of the Pigot archive, namely her older brother and herself: and if proof were needed that Providence has a sense of humour this letter provides it. But the loss of so many handwritten documents leaves us with precious few facts. The shabby way in which the printed sources treat us is

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554 In July 1905 Pigot was 67. In September of that year her own mother, Desire Field, died at Dacca.

555 National Library of Scotland MS 6295 folios 125-127. Margaret Stevenson’s letter to Pigot of 1895 chanced not to be burned and she enclosed it to Thomson.

556 *Englishman* February 23<sup>rd</sup> 1922 page 1. The copy of her will in *Bengal Wills and Administrations* dates her death to March 7<sup>th</sup>.

deplorable: from 1870 to 1881 they offer us Pigot the stock missionary heroine, English, energetic, pious and resourceful, in 1882-3 they reduce her to the lowest social rank, a woman of no breeding infected by all the vices of her class; and thereafter she is apotheosized as one of the minor stars among the founding mothers of the female mission. The real woman thus misrepresented is quite invisible. That she was able and driven, or in Herdman's words, "able and ardent" is hard to deny. One or two other aspects of her trajectory can perhaps be taken as fact. She was no innovator – zenana teaching, turning orphanages into normal schools, social gatherings, higher education for girls, she took them up early but she was in no case the first. By all accounts, including those of her detractors, she was a remarkable teacher, not of grammar or mathematics or history, but in herself. She must have had that quality that lifts some teachers into a sphere of their own, that gives rise to fond memories among former pupils decades later. Her social skills were clearly not perfect: others around her could manage, or tolerate, William Hastie where she could not. There is no evidence that her views on a woman's role in society were anything other than conventional. The houses on the Upper Circular Road and Bow Bazar were hers to manage: men ran around outside the home doing manly things, but within the mistress ruled, and it was inappropriate for any man, let alone any panel of men, to interfere. Her differences with the Calcutta Corresponding Board can be matched wherever women's missions were to be found. Her career, finally, ran along well worn ruts. When the Bethune School found itself in difficulties in 1867 it was discovered that the superintendent was failing in her duties. When the Ladies' Committee in Edinburgh found that their indispensable agent was under personal attack all over Scotland, they dispensed with her services. Miss Pigot was an early instance of a professional woman, and how she fared has been relived by many others since. What is not commonplace is that she was one of the products of, and agents of, the commerce in ideas and perceptions, the culture drift perhaps,<sup>557</sup> that goes on out of sight beneath the breaking waves of history. She did not simply function at the margin, she was an integral part of it, a component of it. And that aspect, of her and of those like her, deserves further investigation.

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557 Fritz Schachermeyr coined the term *culture drift* in the context of Mediterranean prehistory, but it warrants a wider application.

## Appendix

1.

The account that follows was written in 1866 by Robert Kerr, a sub-editor of the *Bengal Hurkaru*, and reprinted in 1884<sup>558</sup> with the remark that his observations were as true as ever. The truth or otherwise of the account is for the social historians to assess: its value here is as an example of the tone and the scope of public discourse in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. As the articles show, the attitudes, prejudices and illusions of a century or so ago are instantly recognisable today. It is subtleties and nuances that are different. The first topic addressed by Kerr, omitted here, was the problem of lower-class Europeans polluting the image of the sahibs. As time went by, and especially after 1857, India was increasingly exposed to regiments of the less than polished footsoldiers of the British Army, and the threat to the national image was keenly felt and openly discussed. In his second and third articles, Kerr turned his attention to the “Portuguese” population of the Calcutta slums.

Kerr’s perspective, his attitudes and his vocabulary are not far removed from those of the Christian missions in Calcutta, nor, conceivably, from those of Miss Pigot herself.

*Indian Daily News* May 1<sup>st</sup> 1884

### OUTCAST CALCUTTA.

#### LIFE IN THE QUINTALS.

[REPRINTED FROM *THE BENGAL HURKARU AND INDIA GAZETTE* OF SEPTEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>, 1866.]

We alluded yesterday to the adage that half of Calcutta does not know how the other half lives, and we venture to think that the information we are about to submit to the public will throw a light on some of the dark places of this large city, so that the upper half shall know a little more of the lower half than it does at present. There are doubtless many persons to whom the word “Kinthal” is no stranger, but we are afraid that there are few who care to learn its precise signification. The generality of people take it to mean a sort of habitation, tenanted by the lower classes of Christians, who are vulgarly called “Portuguese.” Of this class – and it is a very large one – very little is really known, for how few of us are there that are familiar with their peculiar mode of living, their social customs, and the degree of morality they practise. “Kinthal” then is a Portuguese word signifying “compound;” the place consists generally of ranges of huts, forming three sides of a square, and these are divided into compartments of one or two rooms, each such compartment being tenanted by a distinct family, the rent varying from 12 annas to Rs. 5 per month. Let us enter one of these – not one of the worst – a cabin of reeds and mats overlaid with mud. Is it really so much better than a lair that one can easily recognise the difference? Is it possible that the tendrils of those gentle feelings that cluster round a home can cling to those dingy walls? It is not that the place is

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558 *IDN*, 30<sup>th</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1884.

poor, but because its character is one of abandoned squalor. A Swiss *chalet*, built from the forest hard by, would probably cost less; but compare the two – the former with its attempt at carvings, its little plot of hardy flowers, and its inscription that all who dwell therein may reach the “grand salut eternal,” and the “Kinthal” cabin, with its mud wall, its unpainted door, fastened, like that of a cowshed, with a padlock, its dark chambers, its squalid furniture, its dirt and confusion. The compartment nearest the entrance is in most cases occupied by the landlady, who is generally a sour-tempered old woman of questionable reputation, the sworn foe of everything in the shape of poverty, and who passes her time in praying to the saints, cooking her victuals, quarrelling with her neighbours, or bullying such ill-starred tenants as have allowed their rent to fall into arrears. The day is ushered in by violent quarrel, the cause of contention being, whose turn it is to sweep out the yard. One would fancy there could be little difficulty in adjusting this question, but it is not so in practice, as each one endeavours to shirk the unpleasant task. The storm is dissipated at last by the interposition of the landlady, who only effects her purpose by creating a tempest still more violent. The language and gesticulations used on such occasions are of the most indelicate and coarse description, and as the children of these people are present at the time, they are made familiar at a very early age with oaths, execrations, and indecency of shockingly foul character. The matutinal row being over, the breakfast is prepared, and after this is discussed, the men set off for their various offices. The wives then start for the market, armed with a towel, not particularly clean, and, as a general rule, bring home for dinner pork, small fish, and third-rate vegetables. These are the cheapest articles of food, and the most unwholesome. The rest of the day is divided by the elders between scandal, needlework, cookery, and sleep, and by the daughters in castle-building, as to the possibility of being settled in a handsome way, so as to be placed above the necessity of cooking. They are considered marriageable at thirteen, but should any one of them reach her eighteenth year, without securing a husband or a protector, she is regarded as “unlucky,” and is held up to other young girls as an awful warning of the results that attend want of energy and promptitude in securing a settlement. Under such teaching, young girls learn to regard it as a solemn duty which they owe to their parents and guardians, to the society they live in, and to themselves, to afford encouragement to every eligible young man who may present himself. The consequence is that ill-assorted unions and unholy connections are painfully common, and it is only occasionally that they continue for any length of time.

Before many weeks have passed, decided symptoms of discontent and unhappiness are evinced. If affection existed at any time, it rapidly decays; bickerings are succeeded by violence and abuse, and then comes the separation which might have been foretold. Each seeks another companion, and as neither can be married to those they seek, it can only be a mistress on the one hand, and a protector on the other that are required. Nor is it difficult to secure either of these, if the man holds a “decent situation,” and the girl is possessed of personal charms, – a gift which is by no means uncommon among the women of this class. As there cannot be a marriage, a system is adopted which goes by the name of “passing paper.” A sheet of stamped paper is procured, and on it is engrossed an agreement, by which the man binds himself to be a husband to the woman as long as she conducts herself as a wife, he, of course, being the sole judge in the case. The document is utterly worthless; yet such is human nature, that a rotten covenant like this will really exercise a more powerful influence on the contracting parties than the laws of God himself. After the document has been duly signed, there is a convivial gathering, of which licentiousness and intemperance are the distinguishing characteristics.

But to complete the picture, it is necessary that we show our readers the peculiar features of Sunday life among these people. The majority of them are Roman Catholics, and it is, therefore, considered essential to go to chapel to hear Mass. This done, the rest of the day is

devoted to amusement. This consists of drinking and singing amorous and decidedly indelicate songs in the vernacular Bengalee to the accompaniment of a native drum. Men and women, old and young, boys and girls, assemble together in the courtyard, or in one of the compartments, and a scene shortly afterwards ensues which baffles all description,—music, conviviality, and the completest good fellowship give way in process of time to brawls and fights, and in these the females invariably take an active share. Fierce execrations and shockingly obscene abuse are profusely expended, and the young children are witnesses of this edifying exhibition; they drink the moral poison with every breath. Then, perhaps, one or another will start from the crowd and act the peace-maker. Peace is restored, more rum is drunk, more songs sung, the conversation and the ditties assume a more intensely filthy character,—more fights ensue, more cursing, swearing, and abuse, and quiet is only restored when the parties, overpowered by liquor, either stagger away to their respective quarters, or lie on the floor in heavy intoxication.

It is almost superfluous to say that such an atmosphere is destructive of that ready perception of guilt, that prompt and decisive resolution against it, which constitutes a virtuous character. It prepares an easy admission for every sin that seeks it and, in short, exercises a peculiarly hardening and demoralising influence. The vice of intemperance is by no means confined to the men; and, although it may not be so extensively indulged in by the women, their share in it is not very limited. So far, then, as morality is concerned a more depraved class, viewing it as a whole, it would be difficult to find. Connections are found of the most hateful and revolting character, and are not only looked upon with indifference, but in many instances positively encouraged. We know of a man in Entally, who has his aunt under his protection; we know of two brothers in Goomghur, who have their own two sisters as their lemans, all four being the children of the same parents. We know of a woman in the same locality who lives by the prostitution of her daughter, that daughter being the result of an incestuous intercourse with her own nephew. A man takes his step-daughter as his leman, and nothing is thought of it; half-brothers beget offspring by half-sisters, and nothing is thought of it. A man's mistress carries on an intrigue with his own son, and nothing is thought of it. But why dwell longer on the horrid picture;—suffice it that parents and children, men and women, youth and age, live together, and mingle together in one mass of iniquity. We must not, however, be understood to mean that every feature of a spectacle so horrid is to be seen in any one Kinthal. A charge so broad and indiscriminating must be unjust, and carries its own refutation with it. To secure substantial equity, it would be necessary to secure data by the examination of every Kinthal in Calcutta; and as this is not practicable, we deem it better to take up the general position we have assumed, about the truth of which there can be no question. If these places were visited by parties whose purposes were not suspected, we are perfectly certain that they would find the case to be as we have stated it, *viz.*, that there prevails in those localities to a greater or less degree a melancholy amount of the pollution which we have endeavoured to describe, and that promiscuous assemblage of both sexes which tends to the production of immorality, licentiousness, concubinage, and final prostitution.



**OUTCAST CALCUTTA.**

LIFE IN THE QUINTALS.

[REPRINTED FROM *THE BENGAL HURKARU AND INDIA GAZETTE* OF SEPTEMBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 1866.]

We desire to say a few more last words on the subject which we lately discussed, *viz.*, the social customs and domestic habits of that class of the Christian community by which the Kinthals are tenanted. We make no apology for doing so, as the importance of the question is a sufficient plea. The fact that we have in our midst a huge sloughing gangrene ought surely to awaken painful misgivings. Studied from any point of view, the result must be the same, and if by lifting up the curtain which concealed a dark scene, we shall be the means of rousing philanthropy and religion to the work of reformation, we shall be more than repaid. That the prospect is not a very inviting one we admit, that it is not an encouraging one we also allow, and yet we are not disposed to take a very gloomy view of it. Our last article had not been more than a few hours in the hands of our readers when we were waited upon by one of those about whom we had written. He expressed his desire to thank us for what we had done, and his hope, nay almost assurance, that it would be productive of good even among the class to which he belonged. He was certainly more sanguine of results than we are, but the interview itself induces us to be more hopeful than we were at the time we penned the article.

We will not conceal the fact which has come to our knowledge that our remarks have caused considerable irritation in some quarters, but for this we were prepared. From the remotest age, there have been men who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, and the sudden revelation which we made of the secrets of their prison house, could not but prove exceedingly unpleasant. This is perfectly natural and we therefore quietly accept the fact. Indeed, we are somewhat disposed to look upon this irritation as a good and hopeful sign. It is, at all events, an evidence of life and vitality, and anything is better than moral and spiritual paralysis. It ought not to be forgotten that the condition of these people is the direct and legitimate result of the merciless neglect to which they and their fathers have been always exposed. It is difficult to say whether they are contemned and despised more by those classes of the Christian community which are better off than they, or by the natives in the midst of whom they dwell. Ignorant and unlettered they are, unable to rise above the condition in which they were born, whilst of the purifying influences of true religion they know nothing. And yet, according to their own ideas of the fitness of things, these people are exceedingly religious. No compartment in a Kinthal is without its Crucifix, its candles, and its pictures of saints and martyrs attached to the wall. If any room were without them, it would be considered a fit tenement for the spirits of darkness. At the same time the presence of these pictures and crosses is not allowed to exercise the faintest influence in deterring from vice or dissuading from crime. They look down from those walls disregarded and unfeared, whilst every portion of the Decalogue is being deliberately shattered to pieces. Flowers and incense are duly offered, and if we mistake not, daily offered. Their good offices are solicited whenever any object deemed desirable, is to be secured, and vows are made for the performance of certain deeds in the event of success, by way of expediting the operations of

these saints. Matters go on in this way for some time, till it becomes apparent that the saints are unpropitious, inasmuch as the coveted end has not been accomplished. Then, perhaps, more offerings of incense and flowers are made, and more vows muttered by the unhappy creatures in the hope of ultimate success. If, however, there remains no further doubt that the saints and martyrs are not disposed to grant the indulgence, these people are not at all prepared to acquiesce in the propriety of that decision. They are evidently of opinion that they are better able to judge of what is good for themselves than those can be whom they have been endeavouring to propitiate, and therefore, they do not hesitate a moment to transfer their allegiance elsewhere. If Catholic saints and martyrs prove inexorable, they proceed at once to try the efficiency of offerings and vows to Mahomedan saints (*peers*), in the evident hope that the influence of these gentlemen may be equally efficacious, and the gentlemen themselves somewhat more obliging and beneficent. Instructions are taken as to the most approved method to be observed in such cases, and these are of course rigidly adhered to, lest by some unfortunate oversight, a well-devised scheme may be deflected a little too much to the right or to the left. But let us suppose that in this direction also, nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit are to be found. Then there is a last resource, and a darker one still, and that is to propitiate in the usual way, one or more of the Hindoo *debtas* and secure their influence on the side of the applicant. The most deplorable feature in all this is, that those who thus endeavour to gain their ends and secure some coveted object do not really possess the faintest idea of the hideous impropriety of their conduct. They see nothing incongruous in the resort to Mahomedan saints and Hindoo *debtas* by one professing to believe a purer creed, a holier faith. The thing is done as a matter of course; their fathers did it before them, and their children will do it by-and-bye. The question will naturally suggest itself, are not these men and women visited and taught and trained by their priests? To point to the profligacy and vice so rampant among them is a sufficient answer to the question. Could there be such frightful results, if this class of the community were brought systematically under religious influence? The thing is absurd. We have carefully enquired into this subject, and we are constrained to confess that, with one or two exceptions they are only visited by their priests when *in extremis*, on which occasion, the sacraments of the Church are duly administered. But when these people are in the enjoyment of health and strength, and wildly indulge in their freedom from all restraining moral influences, it is rarely that their thresholds are darkened by the figure of the priest. We have invariably received the same answer to our question, whether the priest is regular or tolerably frequent in his visits to his flock? "No, sir, he only comes when we send for him." In every direction we receive the same stereotyped reply. It can no longer be a matter of surprise then, that the condition of these men and women should be so terribly dark and deplorable. Practically there are no schools for their children. We are, of course, aware of the existence of certain Catholic seminaries in Calcutta, to say nothing of St. Xavier's College and the Bengal Academy, but these do not bring education within the reach of the class of which we write. They learn to read and write after a fashion peculiarly their own. The language they use among themselves is Bengali; and their dress at home, is a convenient mixture of male and female attire, the former covering the nether extremities, and the latter the upper. It looks airy and light enough, we admit, but we cannot say that it is very graceful. While then, on the one hand, the offspring of these unfortunate people are never allowed the opportunity of benefiting by a plain sound English education, the polluted moral atmosphere which they breathe is destructive of every good feeling. That they should grow up with coarse appetites, vicious inclinations, and superstitious ideas, is under the circumstances perfectly natural. We leave our readers to conjecture the result to which these lead in the young females of this class. We have said at the commencement of this article that a condition of things such as this should not be allowed to exist. The class in question is a large class, and we are inclined to think that it is one which is steadily increasing. It requires

no great penetration to discern that, politically and morally, the existence of so large a cancer must, at some time or other, prove dangerous. Yet it is difficult to lay one's hands on the remedy. Scripture-readers and missionary pastors are alike powerless in this direction, since the great majority of the Kinthalies are Roman Catholics of a peculiarly bigoted stamp. They will not grant a hearing to their teachers. Free schools, or cheap schools, for boys and girls may possibly answer, but we are not very sanguine on this point. If those who established them were Protestants, as they must be, if any real good is to be accomplished, that fact would militate against the success of the institutions. We, however, have done our duty in bringing the upper-half of Calcutta face to face with a portion of the other half; it remains to be seen what the former will do for its neighbour.

2.

The *Friend of India* January 9<sup>th</sup> 1868

### NATIVE FEMALE EDUCATION AND THE BETHUNE SCHOOL.

A stranger visiting Calcutta beholds to his surprise a magnificent building, with beautiful Corinthian columns on all sides, in the heart of the Native quarter. This, he is told, is the Bethune School for the education of Hindoo girls. Should he have the curiosity to walk through the building, he will find that the entire northern wing, consisting of three large rooms, is lying waste without a vestige of furniture, and that the magnificent hall fronting the east contains, besides the picture and bust of the founder, only a diminutive gallery at one end and a few articles of school furniture at the other. In the southern wing he will observe three or four little antique, semi-circular desks with seats attached, at which he may find about twenty-five little girls from five to nine years of age. A few old chairs complete the contents of the building. He cannot but be struck with the strange contrast between the magnificence of the building and the meanness of its contents. This school has a remarkable history. Its founder, the Hon'ble Drinkwater Bethune, was one of the most zealous friends of education that ever came to India. It is said that, on landing, he resolved to spend all his official income for the good of its people. He built this school at an expense of Rs. 60,000, and supported it as long as he lived at a monthly expense of above Rs. 600. It was opened in May 1849. After Mr. Bethune's death in 1851 it was found that he had bequeathed the school to Government. Pending the approval of the Court of Directors, Lord and Lady Dalhousie announced their intention of supplying the necessary funds for its support from their private purse so long as they should remain in India. Since the departure of Lord Dalhousie in 1856 the school has been carried on at the public expense. Nearly nineteen years have now passed since its establishment in 1849. It has cost during that time Rs. 1,42,776 in addition to the founder's munificent donation of Rs. 60,000, and exclusive of the sums spent on the triennial repairs.

In no other school has more been attempted by the influence of members of the Government. Notwithstanding the lavish expenditure of public money in its support, in no case has the failure of benevolent efforts been more complete. It has been a well-meant and long continued, but withal a very costly experiment which deserved a better fate. In the year 1855 the school was put under the present native committee of management with Sir Cecil Beadon as president. Under this management, or mis-management, it has at length collapsed and a crisis has arrived when Government must either abolish or remodel the Institution. This committee had for its president a tried friend of native education, its secretary, Pundit Ishwar Chunder Vidyasaugor, was understood to be a zealous and successful promoter of the same cause. The funds at its disposal were ample, no less than Rs. 617 a month. Every concession was made to Hindoo prejudices, no pupil being admitted whose family could not show blameless respectability according to native ideas of that quality, while the utmost privacy was secured by exclusion of all visitors without special consent obtained from the Committee. In constituting this Committee its authors seem to have imagined that Hindoo female education requires, like the operations of the photographer, a darkened chamber for its development. In other schools Government insist that, where public funds are expended, periodical inspection shall be allowed as a matter of course. In the Bethune School, however, no regular inspection has been permitted, and consequently it has no place in the Report on Public Instruction. Mr. Woodrow, the Inspector of the Central Division, has no right to enter its gates. It does not belong to the Educational Department at all, but is in fact a department

by itself. The Director of Public Instruction has, out of compliment to his office, the privilege of being an ordinary member of the Committee.

In the numerous schools throughout Bengal one leading principle of the State educational policy is to help those who are willing to help themselves. The Bethune School was intended for the wealthy and respectable natives of Calcutta<sup>559</sup>, the class who from their enlightenment and means might have been expected to co-operate with Government in attaining the object aimed at by the founder. They were expected at the very least to send their daughters to school in palanquins or carriages. This, however, they have not done. The pupils have all along been brought to school and taken home again in omnibuses maintained at the expense of Government. In all other female schools Government gives grants-in-aid equal in amount to the private contributions, but in the case of the Bethune School there is a startling departure from this wise policy. There are here no annual subscriptions from the native managers or from other friends of education. Government pays everything, the Native community pays nothing. It would be absurd to say that Bengalee gentlemen are so indifferent to the cause of female education, or so niggardly that they will not contribute for its support. In how many parts of the Mofussil, where prejudice is stronger and education less advanced than in Calcutta, are female schools supported through their influence and at their expense? The large fees which many native gentlemen of Calcutta pay to European ladies who teach the inmates of their zenanas, prove that they are far from indifferent to the progress of female education. Since the Bethune School receives no support and commands no sympathy, it is evident that there must be some grand defects in its constitution or grievous faults in its management.

After looking carefully into the matter we are convinced that the native Committee have proved themselves altogether unworthy of the trust reposed in them. It might be even plausibly argued that they have of late set themselves with deliberate purpose to bring the school to an untimely end. We understand that, since July 1865, neither secretary nor member of Committee has visited the school, and that the ordinary monthly meetings of the Committee ceased from the same date,<sup>560</sup> while all other inspection or superintendence was excluded by the constitution of the school. About the same time the present assistant secretary was appointed.<sup>561</sup> His chief duties are understood to be to visit the parents of the girls and to enquire into their respectability. For this he receives forty rupees a month. In making this appointment the Committee seem to have intended to shock the prejudices and rouse the suspicions of the orthodox community, for they appointed one who had put himself beyond the pale of Hindoo society by marrying a widow.<sup>562</sup> Then, again, since March 1865 there has been no public examination or distribution of prizes. Those who take an interest in education are well aware how essential the latter is to a Hindoo girl's school. In the returns sent in to Government there is a sum of ten rupees a month allotted for this very purpose. Since March 1865, when the last distribution took place, this must have accumulated to more

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559 Woodrow reported in 1864 that "the Pundits of the School repeatedly assured me that there were very few rich children in the School. The *Bhadra lok* (the respectable), not the *Dhoni lok* (the rich), send their children to the Bethune School." Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department, for the month of July 1864. Number 17 page 19.

560 In August 1865 the Lieutenant-Governor "requested" that the committee resume its monthly meetings: Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department for the month of August 1865 number 59, page 36.

561 Mudunmohun Bose.

562 Vidyasagar was a committed advocate of widow re-marriage. In the summer of 1867 the story went round Calcutta that the debts he had run up in advocating it amounted to Rs 45,000. The true figure was less than half as much.

than 300 Rs. The present Head Mistress, who is now most unjustly blamed by the Committee for that collapse of the school which their mismanagement has brought about, states in her reply to their charges, that her predecessor had a regular allowance of ten rupees a month for the purchase of materials for needlework which, though still an item in the school returns, has been withheld from her since her appointment in April 1865; and that it was only after repeated applications, generally treated with silence, that she got small sums at long intervals for this purpose. Notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, the attendance of the school was greater during the year 1866 than since its establishment. The girls and their parents were of course looking forward to the distribution of prizes at the end of the year. Not only did the Committee omit this, but as if to secure the extinction of the school they announced that in future a fee of one rupee a month would be exacted from each pupil. Little wonder if, after having waited in vain for nearly two years for the longed-for distribution of prizes, this announcement caused many to withdraw their girls. In other circumstances the imposition of the fee would have been a trifle, and ultimately an advantage, but as matters stood it was ruinous.

The absence of Government inspection, the neglect and mismanagement of the committee, the paucity of work materials, the want of prizes crowned by the imposition of a fee, have produced their inevitable results. The school is ruined. Roused at last by the prospect of an enquiry the Committee, feeling the need of blaming somebody, have fixed upon Miss Pigot, the Head Mistress, as the cause of the decline and fall of the school. We trust that the Lieutenant Governor, whose conscientiousness and rigorous justice are conspicuous in all his proceedings, will see that no wrong is done to her. Here, then, is the breaking down of an experiment in female education, which has been carried on for nineteen years at a cost of two lacs of rupees. But what is now to be done? Since experience has made it evident that the better classes in Calcutta decline to have their daughters educated in a charity school, shall this profuse and now purposeless expenditure be further continued by Government? Miss Carpenter's visit to India has drawn public attention to the need of establishing Normal Schools for the training of female teachers for the numerous girls' schools springing up everywhere in Bengal. The real originator of this movement is Miss Pigot, who is understood to have incurred the displeasure of the Committee for having submitted a proposal to Government for the establishment of such an institution in connection with the Bethune School nearly two years ago.<sup>563</sup> Many native gentlemen interested in female education entertain no doubt of the success of a female Normal School under competent management. The want is widely felt and a trial should be made without delay. The funds now wasted on the Bethune School might be devoted to that purpose, and its magnificent building would afford ample accommodation. Thus reformed the Bethune School may see better days, and may yet greatly contribute to the advancement of that cause which its benevolent founder and generous supporter, Mr. Bethune and Lord Dalhousie, had so much at heart.

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563 If true, this dates Pigot's proposal to the first quarter of 1866.

3.

The two letters here, from the early days of Miss Pigot's service with the Scottish Ladies' Association, are representative of the tone and the content of the *News of Female Missions* throughout its existence. It hardly needs stressing that the magazine was a fund-raising enterprise, a monthly appeal for cash as sophisticated, in its day, as any put out since. The slightly artless account from Mrs Thomson, amused and amazed by what she sees in the zenana, and the businesslike report from Miss Pigot, by turns realistic assessment and devout hope, only prove that both women knew what they were about. For an example of careful wording, note Mrs Thomson's remark that Miss Pigot "has two European teachers besides herself." If the chaplain's wife, on the spot, sees Europeans, who are we to quibble?

*Home and Foreign News of Female Missions in connection with the Church of Scotland.*

January 1871 page 6.

#### INDIAN INTELLIGENCE.

CALCUTTA. —LETTER FROM MRS THOMSON.

2 PARK STREET, CALCUTTA, Nov.2, 1870.

I am sure you will be glad to hear that the Scottish Ladies' Zenana Mission is now in a fair way, and I trust ere long it will become one of the most prosperous in Calcutta. Miss Pigot entered fully on her duties yesterday, but since the beginning of last month has been preparing the way for her work. She, I am sure, will write to you very soon, giving you a report of her prospects, but, in the meantime, I will write you a few lines.

I visited some of our houses with Mrs Ewart before she gave over charge. They are the first fruits of our mission, therefore I think it will interest you to hear something about them. We, of course, had to go into the very heart of the native town to reach the houses, and it sometimes tries weak nerves to drive through lanes barely wide enough to allow a carriage to pass along; if two carriages should happen to meet, I do not know what the result would be. The native houses are very well suited to the native mode of life. On entering an outer court, you find that to reach the women you have to ascend a very narrow flight of stairs, which leads into an open gallery, running round an inner court. This court is quite shut in, from the outer world, and one feels on entering it, that there might be wars and rumours of wars and yet no sound disturb the quiet. The stillness is very pleasant for a time, but these poor women, I fear, have too much of it. They welcome the visitor from the outer world, and shake hands in a very hearty manner. The time is not far past when these very women would not touch a European lady. Even when a zenana visitor had to explain a piece of work, it had to be laid on the ground, and pointed to, with a long knitting needle! This is a sign of the times, surely; their prejudices are fast crumbling into dust. Mrs Ewart had told some of the women that I would accompany her on the day I went, so they were prepared to receive us, and dressed for the occasion. Some of the neighbours had also slipped in to see the stranger, and evidently I was the subject of great curiosity to them. The questions that had to be answered were endless. Was I married? How many sons? (the daughters do not count.) What was inside a locket I wore? How was my hair done? &c. I have no doubt my visit afforded food for thought for some days. Some of the women are exceedingly pretty, and quite unlike the low caste people seen out of doors. Those in the zenanas are in colour more a warm yellow than black, and to improve their beauty they edge their lips, fingers, and toes with red. One long

piece of muslin wrapped round the waist, and thrown over the head and one shoulder and across the breast, is all they wear, and I am sure it must be a most comfortable style of dress in the hot season. It is surprising to find how quickly they learn, but as they have so much spare time this may account for it. In the first house we went to, the younger woman (about eighteen years old) had only been learning English a fortnight, and could read easy sentences very fairly. The primer they use is a very nice one; on one page they have English and on the other Bengali, the latter of which, as a written language, is quite unknown to them; thus they learn the two languages side by side. There are two women learning in this house, but the elder, who is the mother of a large family, prefers being taught to knit, so her reading does not get on very fast. It is a great mistake to suppose that the Hindoos, as a rule, have more than one wife. If a wife has no son, her husband is obliged to marry a second wife, otherwise his funeral rites cannot be properly performed, so you can imagine how earnestly a son is desired by these poor women. In one house my heart bled for the poor woman. Her only son, a boy of two years of age, died some years since, and the sad grief has quite ruined mind and body. Seeing her look so pale, I asked her if she was ill, she said, "I am always sick," meaning, of grief. She sometimes cries out in the middle of her lessons, when the remembrance of her sorrow forces itself upon her. The poor creature has not the comfort we have when our little ones go from us; but who can tell whether she may not yet be comforted by Him who is the Life? The hopeless expression of her face still haunts me. She is not left childless, but the rest are daughters, and will marry and go into their husbands' homes, only paying an occasional visit to their parents. In this house sweetmeats were pressed upon us, and to avoid hurting their feelings we were obliged to stay to eat some. I must confess that I availed myself of the first favourable opportunity to slip mine into my pocket, at great peril to my dress, from the syrup and grease composing them. The husbands in almost all the houses we visited belong to the Brahma Somaj, one of the leaders of which is Keshub Chunder Sen.

Before I bring this long letter to a close, I must tell you about one other house I went to. The woman was so pretty and interesting, and though only about eighteen, the mother of four sons; the youngest a baby of about two months old. The mother has hardly recovered her looks yet after all the hardships she had to undergo at the birth of the baby. As women at these times are considered unclean for about a month, they are cast out into a little shed, hardly fit for a cow, and there they must remain until the orthodox time has arrived, when, after going through some ceremonies, they are pronounced fit to be admitted into their own apartments again. During this time, however ill a poor woman may be, even her own mother dare not go near her. An old woman, who acts as nurse, pays her a visit now and then, to see if anything is required, and the rest of the time the mother and baby must take care of themselves. A large fire is lighted in the shed, however hot the weather may be. The baby was brought and placed on my knee, and of course I had to admire him, and indeed he was a very fine, fat little fellow; the grilling in the out-house had not done him any harm; he looked up in my face with his large black eyes, but was too young to be astonished at the white face. The young mother in the meantime had got out her books and began reading the Bible. Her lesson was in the Gospel of St Luke, the miracle of the five loaves. The mother, who is visiting her at present, is one of the old school, and objects to her reading the Bible; but the daughter will not be prevented, and says, that as her husband and brothers read it, she does not see why she should not do so too; the old mother replies, "Oh! they go to college, and must read it, but it is different with the women." Notwithstanding her objections, she sat down on the floor with the baby on her knee and listened, carrying on a quiet conversation with him now and then. I heard her ask him if he would learn too. I hope he will, in due time.



I cannot tell you how interesting zenana visiting is. If the good people at home could only realize how much good must be done, there would be no lack of funds. I hope to see a good deal of the work before I go home in spring, so as to be able to tell you something about it. We are to have a prayer meeting this evening in connection with our Zenana Mission. We need prayer as well as money; I trust you will give us both. There will be a good deal of outlay at first, as the Orphanage, which is to be the zenana teacher's home, needs to be re-furnished, everything having worn out; and then we have to buy carriages and horses, as keeping our own is cheaper than hiring. Miss Pigot has about twenty-five zenanas now, and she thinks if the mission can afford to support more teachers, she will have no difficulty in getting many more houses. She has two European teachers besides herself just now, and would require several more if the mission is to become a large one. The orphan girls are to be taken out to the zenanas by the ladies, and so trained to become teachers themselves when they marry. No unmarried girl should be allowed to visit zenanas alone, in the present state of native society; it is not fair to the girl to allow her to go. Miss Pigot has begun something quite new in zenana teaching, and those who know about it think it a very good plan. She is to give lectures once a week at a particular house, on religious and moral subjects. The women of several families are to meet in this house; already upwards of twenty women have enrolled themselves as pupils to be lectured to. This plan will suit those women who consider themselves either too old or too busy to learn from books, but who can still have their minds opened up in this way.

We need worsted-work patterns very much; old ones will do quite well, and I am sure there are many ladies who could help us in this way. If you can get some for us, please send them by pattern post. Slippers, caps, chair-cushions, in fact any kind of pattern will be most acceptable.

July 1871.

REPORT FOR 1870-71.

page 65 *Miss Pigot's Report of the Zenana Work at Calcutta.*

Miss Macnamara (my assistant) began work on the 15th October, at first with only three families. On the 1<sup>st</sup> November we opened an adult class, which began with twelve zenana ladies and rose to thirty. This class was brought together chiefly through Baboo Protap Chunder Mozumdar, and entrusted to me, in full recognition of my principles as a Christian teacher. The formation of such a class is a most hopeful circumstance, but I felt it a special sign of higher favour that so excellent a means of work should have come so easily into our hands. Nothing can exceed the interest of such a class. In a country where a daughter may not visit her own mother without the formality of an invitation, it is a feature of much moment that fourteen distinct families should have put aside the claims of children and the call of household duties, and entered a strange house for their own improvement. The fact of young wives, and wives of maturer years, giving up two full days in each week to instruction, and bravely plodding through the dry paths of elementary knowledge, indicates a future for the women of India of such a nature as their best friends would desire. But no good cause can exist without its element of trial and difficulty; so it has been with us. The class has been suspended for the past few weeks. The originators, wishing to secure such pecuniary assistance as would further the views they had for it, handed it over to the new Social Reform Association. I debated whether the character this new connection might give my work, might

not interfere with our main object, and at once determined what course to pursue. I heard various rumours as to the intentions of the Association, so that, rather than wait for the action of others, I explained to my chief friends that the Association should be distinctly informed of my principle of Christian teaching. I then ceased to attend the class, and have been waiting the issue of my avowal. The question seemed to be overlooked at first, and my conduct was quietly accepted, until the tenderness of the women began to assert itself over this indifference. Many old friends of mine in the native community formed this class, and the sympathy existing between us has been clearing the way again for me. Every time I heard of it, the class was mentioned as missing me greatly; and I was repeatedly told that the request had been made to revive it. The most significant indication occurred the other day, in the case of an old lady connected with one of my Adult Class pupils. When about to enter the house opposite to where this old lady lives, I was startled by the rapid jerking open of her upper window. In her eagerness to catch me in time, she forgot the publicity of her position. With her arms extended, holding wide the window, she hailed me, calling out loudly:—"It was you who gave up the class; they tell me it was all your own doing!" and so she continued, until a scene so unusual attracted the notice of the passers-by. I had to set aside the visit intended, and make a quick entrance into her house to explain matters to my warm-hearted friend. These demonstrations have resulted in my being invited to resume the class: upon the distinct understanding on their part that I should have unlimited freedom in religious teaching. I hope, therefore, to set to work again before many days. Irrespective of the Class, we have thirty houses in which we are doing actual work. I visit extensively besides, and have several houses in waiting until I can make arrangements for them. The thirty houses number 131 pupils. To this, if we add the thirty that came during the course of the class, we show a number of 161 pupils.

Our figures, I fear, are better than the worth of the work that is being done. Of those who assist me, Miss Macnamara alone is able to speak the language, and the leading houses in our list have been assigned to her. Whatever work she does I know is thorough, and I am thankful to have even one such helper. We have four other teachers who are being trained for the work. They are yet at the elementary stages of Bengali. In the endeavour to utilize them for the zenana, each teacher is allowed a girl from the Orphanage as assistant. Neither teachers nor assistants are felt to be yet fully qualified, —one from wanting that knowledge of the language which is an indispensable necessity to the work; and the other from youth and inexperience. The deep-rooted prejudice existing towards native Christians also acts as a hindrance. Little influence compared with what we should wish can be brought to bear from such agencies. The work overtaken by these four teachers is to teach, (1) in the Orphanage; (2) at the Hindu School at Kidderpore; (3) at a Little Girl's School at the house of Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen; and (4) in twenty-one of our zenanas. The task of leading the minds of the Hindu ladies in the houses thus visited to higher things devolves mainly upon me in my occasional visits. The want of a sufficient number of qualified teachers is the one painful circumstance of our work. But as God has thus opened these doors of entrance to us, we wait in hope that He will gradually open the doors of utterance also. Much prudence and patience are needed in every step we take. Our blessed Redeemer, before whom every knee should bow, is here emphatically the Nazarene of old. At first the name of Christ is hardly tolerated, yet as God enables us to persevere, I trust the ground of prejudice and opposition will begin to break, and the good seed find entrance. And yet we go not altogether uncomforted in the way. Slight incidents, fitted to encourage, show themselves sometimes. Recently, on the occasion of the worship of the goddess of Wisdom in our zenana houses, as one of our teachers went to a young wife of fifteen, she missed the geography and history books of her pupil. On inquiry she was laughingly told by the wife that her mother-in-law placed them before the goddess for her favour; for did not the teacher remember telling the mother of her

deficiency in those subjects. When questioned whether she believed in the efficacy of this offering, she composed herself and readily said, "No! I cannot believe these things after reading 'Peep of Day.'" She has now begun the Bible. This same young wife has paid us three visits, spending several hours of the afternoon with us. She was present when our Orphanage children assembled for prayers, and naturally took her place among the elder ones; and as they read the usual chapter, verse by verse, she quietly took her turn and read a verse too. In her successive visits she has quite looked forward to this hour of prayer, and has always joined in it of her own accord. One interesting incident of a little boy in one of our zenanas I cannot refrain from adding, though it may not be quite within the scope of the Mission. I have been reading the Bible with two sisters, and I have admitted the younger brother too. I had just been teaching the young people the little prayer in verse of "Gentle Jesus," when the youngest child of the family unexpectedly died. The event gave them a great shock, and as they assembled, all bowed with grief, the little brother of ten rushed to his father, and, falling on his knees, began to repeat aloud, "Gentle Jesus;" and at short intervals through the day he continued to repeat it. The father has an intellectual appreciation of our holy faith. There is little dignity, however, attaching to the name of "convert," by which believers in India are known; and many that are weak in faith, I fear, are from this cause kept back. Such as are dependent upon their professional success, and possess a reputation among their people, often shrink from obeying their convictions. But God's Word must ever accomplish His own purposes. In the instance of this family, though the father is not himself a convert, or perhaps likely to become such, he is anxious that his children should some day openly belong to the Lord Christ; and for the little boy of whom I have written, his hope is that he should advance, and become even a minister of the Word of God.

In her report to the *News of Female Missions* reproduced in Appendix 3, Pigot relates that “on the 1<sup>st</sup> November we opened an adult class, which began with twelve zenana ladies and rose to thirty. This class was brought together chiefly through Baboo Protap Chunder Mozumdar.” After a time however “the originators ... handed it over to the new Social Reform Association,” and Pigot’s involvement ceased, at first for the time being and later for good. The origin of this adult class, then, as far as readers in Scotland were concerned, was a scheme got up by Protap Babu and other Brahmos, and it was then adopted by the Indian Reform Association which balked at Pigot’s Christian teaching.

Three articles in *Bamabodhini Patrika* make passing mention of this short-lived “adult class.” The first, printed in late 1870, shows us the Bamabodhini Sabha germinating the idea of a women’s society, and the third, which came out in the following April, reports the realization of the plan. In so doing they put Pigot’s “adult class” into a quite different context.

This monograph is concerned with sources, not translations of sources, and what follows ought to be an accurate text of the original Bengali. As it is we must make shift with an English version. We owe our understanding of the text to the great kindness of Joya and Lionel Knight, without which there would be nothing here at all: the wording however, and any mistakes, are ours.

*Bamabodhini Patrika* volume 6 number 87 Kartik 1277 (October-November 1870) pages 200-202.

#### EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE BAMABODHINI

On Wednesday 13th Ashwin<sup>564</sup> a special meeting of the Bamabodhini Sabha was held at the Bamabodhini premises. Babu Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, the President, took the chair. There were three proposals.

1. How to award prizes to those who had taken the examination in the current year of our Antahpur Shiksa course.<sup>565</sup> Some answers by the women who had been examined were read out, and the members present undertook to donate towards prizes. It was decided that the Sabha’s patron, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen would, when he returned from England, perform the task of giving out the prizes.

2. How can we liaise with the normal class that has opened at the Bethune Girls’ School? The rules and regulations communicated to us at the meeting with the Head of the Bethune were read out. Widows of good family can enroll by getting a scholarship to cover travelling costs and Rs 6 per month. Married women will receive training if they are able to attend the School. It was proposed that we publish this in the *Bamabodhini Patrika*, but then it was decided that

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564 28<sup>th</sup> September.

565 The Antahpur Shiksa was a correspondence course run by the Bamabodhini through the pages of the *Patrika*: see Murshid, *Reluctant Debutante* Appendix 2 page 61.

after speaking with Woodrow Sahib, an extraordinary meeting to consider the matter would be called. In the meantime this is a favourable opportunity for widows, and all present were asked to try and recruit widow students.

3. To establish a female association. In the last issue of *Bamabodhini* a proposal<sup>566</sup> was put forward under the title of “A Bengali women’s association” directed towards exploring how the women of this country could achieve self-reliance and act together by their own efforts for the betterment of society; and what methods to adopt. In this matter many different sorts of opinion were expressed. But in the end all came to agree for the moment that Brahma folk together may be able to help in this matter, and for that there was widespread support. After a count, it was found that twenty-five women may be able to join. It was therefore decided that a trial meeting should be called without delay, in the inner courtyard of the Bamabodhini premises, and that other rules could be decided afterwards. There could be much help from Miss Pigot in this matter of education; so that we need to know in what way she might agree to help. There will be a subscription for the hire of carriages and palkis to bring the women on the days of their meeting, and on the days of this Society’s meeting carriages and palkis will be engaged from the ordinary fund, so that all will be able to travel in comfort. Babu Sashipada Bandjopadhyaya is the manager of this section and Mr. Haranath Basu was appointed to assist him. Protap Babu took the responsibility for discussing the matter with Miss Pigot.

*Cash contributions were then discussed, and*

It was decided to hold regular monthly meetings of the Bamabodhini Sabha on the third Saturday of every Bengali month at four in the afternoon, at the Bamabodhini premises.

*Bamabodhini Patrika* volume 7 number 93 Boishakh 1278 (April-May 1871) pages 392-393.

### **THE BAMAHAISHINI SABHA**

In the *Bamabodhini* of last Ashwin there was a proposal to establish a ladies’ society. Following that, on a few occasions in Calcutta, there was a meeting of ladies and Miss Pigot presided. We have informed the readers<sup>567</sup> that these meetings, afterwards under the auspices of the Indian Reform Association, took the form of a school, and from there a Normal school has been created. From all this progress we derived much hope and pleasure. However, our proposed aim had not yet been fulfilled, and in that regard we have been deprived of that pleasure. Now, as it happens, we have to say with gratification that from that same Normal school a ladies’ society has been established. The work of the school will continue as before and yet through a separate society with the means of accomplishing all manner of progress for ladies. What better news could there be than this?

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566 *Bamabodhini Patrika* volume 6 number 86 Ashwin 1277 (September-October 1870) page 149.

567 *Bamabodhini Patrika* volume 6 number 88 Agrahayan 1277 (November-December 1870) page 223. The article, on “Learning at Home”, points out that Pigot’s class sat only once a week. Her account has it meeting twice.

The society has been established through the care of the reformer Babu Keshub Chunder Sen and the enthusiasm of the students of the Normal school. Its name is Bamahitaishini Sabha. Its aim is to achieve the all-round welfare of the members. There will be a Friday session twice a month. Ladies of all castes and religions can be members of this society. The pundits of the school are also included in the membership. An address for the benefit of the ladies will be read, and speeches and discussion will take place. At the second meeting nearly thirty Hindu ladies attended. The wife of Justice Phear came as a spectator. The president Babu Keshub Chunder Sen directed the proceedings. Firstly, Babu Bijoykrishna Goswami gave a lecture on Real Progress for Women – body, mind, and soul<sup>568</sup> – with three themes, to wit good health, education and religion. Unless these are fulfilled, there will be no full progress, as was admirably shown. After that, four students read an address on this topic. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen having explained all this in English to Mrs Phear, she was extremely satisfied and asked for her name to be added to the society's list. Miss Pigot, the wives of barristers Babu Monomohan Ghosh and Babu Umeshchandra Bandyopadhyay<sup>569</sup> and of *vakeel* Babu Durgamohan Das, and other ladies who were present at the meeting, all became members. With the ladies' joining this auspicious Sabha, everyone's pleasure and hope was boundless. May God by making the Sabha permanent, open a new path of progress for the country.

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568 Badly smudged print makes this corner of the page all but unreadable.

569 In the English of the day, W. C. Bonnerjee.

5.

*Indian Daily News* February 7<sup>th</sup> 1880

**Official Paper.**

ZENANA MISSIONS.

To the Hon'ble Sir Ashley Eden, K. C. S. I., C. I. E., Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal—

The Memorial of the Members of the Calcutta Missionary Conference.

Humbly Sheweth, —

1.—That your Memorialists are deeply interested in the work of female education in Bengal particularly in and round Calcutta.

2. —That this work, in and around Calcutta, is largely carried on by your Memorialists, and that it was, to a great extent, organised and developed by their predecessors.

3.—That, although the work of your Memorialists for many years not only enjoyed the fostering care, but also commanded the confidence of Government, for some years past they have observed, with growing concern, various indications that this confidence has been withdrawn.

4.—That your Memorialists have been specially concerned to read the following passages in the Report of the Director of Public Instruction for 1877-78, and in the Resolution of Government thereon : —

“Of the teachers employed only a few are Europeans, and of these again few are so familiar with the Vernacular that they can dispense with interpreters in their intercourse with the pupils. The chief part of the teaching is, therefore, done by native teachers, who are ill-educated and often indifferent, and who being little supervised are consequently irregular in their work.” (*Report, para. 268.*)

“It is easy to understand the temptation to which the Mission agencies have been exposed by the necessity of shewing an improvement in their figures year by year. The several agencies are in the keenest competition, not for the approval of Government in this country, but for that of the Home Societies which support them. The consequence of this is the extension of their work at all costs; and to this end almost any Native Christian woman, professing to have had an education, is enlisted and set to work as a teacher, without, it is to be feared, in all cases, complete guarantees either of ability or of good conduct.” (*Report, para. 269*)

“It is found that the zenana teachers employed by the Missionary agencies are very frequently quite unfit for their work, and that the great majority of the pupils have had none of that preliminary instruction in school, to complete which is the object of the Government grants-in-aid of zenana missions. The time given by the teachers to each house averages, moreover, only two hours a week, including the time devoted to Bible stories and needlework. Much of the unfavourable result appears to be due to the pressure brought to bear upon the missions from home to show increasing numbers under instruction year by year .... At present there is much connected with this work which is not real and genuine.” (*Resolution, para. 31.*)

5.—That your Memorialists, after careful enquiry, have found that upwards of forty European and Eurasian ladies are engaged in zenana teaching in and around Calcutta, and that of these only four systematically employ interpreters or require their aid.

6.—That while your Memorialists cannot but regret that so many of the Native Christian teachers are but poorly qualified, and that some cases of serious misconduct have occurred, they beg leave to state that all reasonable guarantees of good character have been required, that a large majority of those employed are fairly competent to discharge the duties assigned to them, and that the work of supervision has been carefully carried out by the various missions; and your Memorialists would respectfully submit that exceptional cases of inefficiency and misconduct cannot fairly be made the basis of general statements.

7.—That, while your Memorialists are sensible of the evils attending too rapid extension of their work, they have been guided in their action by a desire to meet and foster, as far as they could, the demand for education as it arose, that they have for many years been endeavouring to provide a larger and better qualified staff of native teachers; and that they shall gladly welcome any measures that Government may propose to secure this—particularly public examinations and certificates for teachers.

8.—That your Memorialists respectfully submit that no pressure whatever is “brought to bear on the missions from home to show increasing numbers under instruction year by year;” and that, although it has not yet been found practicable to adopt a uniform plan, the various missions co-operate, as far as possible, and carefully avoid all interference with the work of each other: and your Memorialists would respectfully deprecate the use of language that seems to impute to them motives of which they entirely disapprove.

9. —That your Memorialists have never been informed that the Government grants-in-aid of zenana missions were intended to complete the preliminary instruction received by the pupils in school, and that, as a matter of fact, zenana work and school work have hitherto been, for the most part, quite independent of each other; and your Memorialists respectfully submit that, while it may be desirable that zenana work, as aided by Government, should complete the education begun in schools, it should, as at present carried on, be regarded as taking the place of schools.

10. —That your Memorialists frankly admit “the very meagre character of the instruction given to the bulk of the zenana pupils,” and regret that they have not been able to attain greater efficiency, but they respectfully submit that, in forming such an estimate of the progress that has been made as should be an index of the true value of zenana education, full account should be taken of the length of time during which each pupil has been under instruction, of the want of preliminary instruction in school, and of the serious difficulties arising from the customs and habits of the people; and they venture to believe that their work, when so tested, will be found, as pioneer-work, to merit the confidence of Government, and to contain the promise of far greater results than are at present attainable.

11.—That the tests of proficiency prescribed by Government are ambiguous, and that owing to the difficulty of applying them mistakes have been made by the Mission agencies in reporting on their work; but your Memorialists respectfully submit that they have had no intention of “presenting their results in too favorable a light,” and that the view given of their work in the Report of the Director of Public Instruction is more favourable than the facts of the case justify.

12. —That, while the views of Government as to zenana work have been formed mainly on the report of Mrs. Monmohini Wheeler, the Inspectress of Schools, your Memorialists are reluctantly constrained to state that complaints have been made by the members of most of



the Mission agencies as to the method and manner of her examination, such as that the examinations did not fairly represent the work professed by the pupils, that the books read by the pupils were in some cases set aside, and others substituted for the purposes of examination, that the pupils were in many cases rendered nervous, and excited by the manner of the Inspectress, that her questions were often couched in language unintelligible to the pupils, and they respectfully submit that the interests involved, together with the peculiar circumstances of zenana education, suggest the necessity of greater experience in educational matter[s] on the part of the representative of Government. And your Memorialists beg to add that in several cases the work reported on by Mrs. Wheeler has been inspected by gentlemen of great educational experience, and that their reports have been much more favourable than those submitted by the Inspectress.

13.—That in the judgment of your Memorialists, female education stands peculiarly in need of the support and fostering care of Government, and that, in view of the large sums spent in educating males, the amount devoted to it is proportionally very small; and your Memorialists would respectfully urge the necessity of increasing the grants so as to enable them to train and pay a better qualified staff of teachers.

14.—That, while your Memorialists are ready to co-operate in any plan that shall make female education, whether in school or zenana, more efficient, they respectfully submit that, until the desire for such education is far more general than at present, and until a better qualified staff of teachers is procured, grant-in-aid should be given for pupils at all stages of progress, and definite standards should be laid down similar to those of the English Educational Code.

15.—That, while your Memorialists look forward to the time when zenana tuition shall give place to schools, they do not think that matters are by any means ripe for such a step, and they beg respectfully to suggest that any attempt to carry this proposal into effect should be limited to pupils under 10 years of age.

And your Memorialists, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

On behalf of the Calcutta Missionary Conference.

(Signed) JOHN HECTOR,

Secretary.

14th April, 1879.

*IDN* February 9<sup>th</sup> 1880

### **Official Papers.**

#### ZENANA MISSIONS.

From A. W. Croft, Esq., M. A., Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, to the Rev John Hector, Secretary to the Calcutta Missionary Conference, —dated Darjeeling, the 30<sup>th</sup> May, 1879.

Sir, —In reference to the Memorial, dated the 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1879, which was addressed by the Calcutta Missionary Conference to His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, and which has been transferred to me by the Government of Bengal, I have the honor to offer the following observations: —

2. —The Members of the Conference contest, in the first place, the accuracy of certain statements made with regard to zenana mission work either by myself in the Report of Public Instruction for the year 1877-78, or by the Government in its Resolution on that report. They demur, secondly, to the view which I have taken of the object which the Government desires to promote in supporting zenana missions by grants-in-aid. They take exception, thirdly, to the manner in which Mrs. Wheeler, the Inspectress of Schools, performs her duties, and to the fairness and correctness of her reports. And, lastly, they profess their readiness to accept certain changes which have been proposed with the object of securing greater efficiency in the teachers, and a closer conformity between the educational results achieved by the missions, and the payments made by Government in their support.

3. —It is evident from the statement made in the 5th paragraph of the Memorial that the European teachers employed in zenana work are not now open, as a general rule, to the charge of ignorance of the language of those whom they are engaged to teach. I am not sure what stress is intended to be laid on the word which I have underlined in the following statement of the Memorialists, that only four of the teachers *systematically* require the aid of interpreters, but from the general connexion of the passage, I assume that, with the exceptions noted, the European teachers have a competent knowledge of the Bengali language as spoken in the zenanas. During the year 1877-78 I had the advantage of several conversations on the subject of zenana work with Miss Brittan, the Superintendent of the American Mission, which has, I believe, the largest field of operations of all those that are engaged in the same work. Miss Brittan fully admitted that the ladies who had been brought over from America were generally unfamiliar with the Vernacular; but urged that their incessant duties left them no time to acquire it, and also that (as in her own case) ignorance of the Vernacular was no serious bar to the efficient discharge of those duties. The information which I received from other sources did not lead me to believe that the circumstances of the American Mission were exceptional; and it is with much satisfaction that I learn that the foreign teachers of the various missions have now qualified themselves much more fully for the important duties which they are called on to discharge.

4. —The Memorialists admit that many of the Native Christian teachers are poorly qualified for their work, and that some cases of serious misconduct have occurred among them. The Report, and the Resolution thereon, state that the Native teachers are “very frequently quite unfitted for their work,” and that “in all cases complete guarantees either of ability or of good conduct” are not secured. There does not appear to be any wide difference of opinion between the Memorialists and the Government on this point.

5.—The Memorialists state (para. 7) that the rapid extension of their work has been due to “a desire to meet and foster, as far as they could, the demand for education as it arose.” If such be indeed the conditions which have led to the employment, in numbers admitted to be considerable, of inferior and ill-qualified teachers, the effort to meet a growing demand for education, however unsuccessful, would deserve generous sympathy and support. But circumstances which the Inspectress of Schools has brought to my notice have led me to believe that the demand is not in all cases a natural and genuine one; that pupils are sought out and induced to admit teachers to their houses, without any demand, and often indeed with reluctance on the part of the former; in many cases, moreover, under circumstances which make it unreasonable to expect that any permanent good will result. If this be so, it is to the premature extension of zenana missionary work, in cases where the demand has not been imperious, and before adequate means of efficient instruction have existed, that its failures and shortcomings must be ascribed. And it will not have escaped the notice of the Missionary Conference that even a few instances of misconduct on the part of Native teachers, such as those which have lately come before the public, are calculated to degrade [the] general

character of zenana work in the public view, and to discourage the advocates of female education, in a degree quite out of proportion to any benefits that are likely to arise from its extension under such condition[s].

6.—Memorialists submit that no pressure is brought to bear on the Missions from home to show increasing numbers under instruction year by year. Believing, as the Government of Bengal does, the present extension of zenana work is not justified either by the present demand for education, or by the present means of supplying the demand which is said to exist, the Government could reasonably explain the existence of facts which it deplored only by the assumption of external pressure, whether of a direct or of an indirect kind. That assumption, it now appears, is unfounded; and indeed gratuitous, if the extension of zenana work is determined, as the Conference believes, solely by the legitimate demand for it. But if the Memorialists are mistaken with regard to the extent and character of that demand, as the Government believes them to be, the responsibility for whatever preventable defects may be admitted to exist is shifted from the Home Missionary Societies to their representatives in Calcutta; and it still remains true, as stated in the Government Resolution, that there is much connected with zenana work which is not real and genuine, even though the natural desire of the Home Missionary Societies to see their work extended has not contributed to bring about this result.

7.—With regard to the second contention of the Memorialists, that zenana instruction should be regarded, not necessarily as supplementary to the instruction given in girls' schools, but as taking its place, I may observe that it is not the desire of Government that the Societies should confine their efforts absolutely to those who have received some preliminary instruction in schools. At the same time, pupils of that class obviously supply the most promising materials for useful zenana work; and it is a source of surprise and concern that the number of such pupils is comparatively small. If teachers exist, who are competent to carry on to a higher stage the elementary instruction received by pupils before their confinement to the zenana, their continued instruction within the zenana would go far to justify the large expenditure now incurred by Government in aiding Missionary Work. But I believe I am justified in stating that the circumstances of the great majority of zenana pupils are such that they are either unable or unwilling to carry their instruction to a standard even approaching that which is attainable in good girls' schools. Allowing full weight to the consideration that girls or women cannot but benefit from imbibing, in however limited a measure, an intellectual atmosphere, and that the fact of being educated, as well as the standard of education attained, is a circumstance of value, the Government cannot be expected to look with favour on a system which, while demanding large sums of money in its support, is forced to content itself as regards the great majority of its pupils, with a standard no higher than that of an elementary primer. To such results little educational value can be attached.

8. —Complaints of the same character as those which the Memorialists, in the third place, make against the manner in which Mrs. Wheeler conducts her examination of the pupils, as well as others which have latterly been abandoned, have before now reached me. I have on such occasions asked the Inspectress to explain or justify the charges made, and I have sought for collateral information; and I am bound to state that the inquiries which I have made, and the explanations furnished to me, have led me to believe that no unreasonable strictness is used by the Inspectress in her examination. It is no doubt difficult to arrive at a perfectly satisfactory conclusion between the conflicting statements. Neither the members of the Conference nor myself are in a position to test, by personal examination, the progress made in the zenanas. I would only observe that zenana teachers would naturally be disposed to look with a more lenient eye than professional critics upon the work to which they have devoted

their lives: while, on the other hand, I can discover no probable cause for the display of undue bias on the part of the Inspectress.

9. —The Memorialists lastly express their approval of certain proposals made by the Government for securing greater efficiency in their work. These proposals are, firstly, that certificates of fitness, tested by public examinations, should be required from zenana teachers; and, secondly, that graduated standards should be laid down for the examination of pupils, and that the Government grants should be determined by the result of these examinations. On both these points I proposed to address you shortly, with certain suggestions which I desire to offer for the consideration of the Missionary Conference.

10—In conclusion, I would remark that Government in the Education Department is by no means indifferent, as the Memorialists appear to suppose, to the value of the educational work which the Missionary Societies have undertaken, and is fully aware of the great opportunities which their organisation gives them for advancing the cause of female progress in India; and that, in its comments on that work, the Government has been actuated by the sole desire of improving its character and increasing its efficiency.

I have the honor to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

A. W. CROFT,

Director of the Public Instruction.

6.

*News of Female Missions* January 1881 page 10

### LETTER FROM MRS THOMSON

GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S INSTITUTION,  
18 CORNWALLIS SQUARE, CALCUTTA,

November 24, 1880.

Although we are personally unacquainted with each other, I daresay you will like to hear something of the late doings in our Mission from me. Miss Pigot, who is very busy this week, and may not be able to write you, has asked me to do so instead. I hope what I send will be of interest.

Although not actively engaged in the work of the Mission, I have a warm interest in all that is being done in it, and am glad when my services can be of use to Miss Pigot in any way. Since my husband and I arrived in India two years ago, our connection with the Mission has gone on without interruption, and we greatly value Miss Pigot's friendship. I stayed at the Mission House for a month in the hot-weather holidays, when Mr Thomson was at Darjeeling, and had an opportunity then of seeing the daily life of the household, and knowing the teachers and their work far better than I could ever have done by any number of occasional visits. Indeed I look upon Miss Pigot's as a second home.

Of the Zenana work proper I have not much knowledge, except what is to be gathered from an occasional visit to the houses with Miss Pigot or Mrs Tremearne. What takes place is pretty much the same on all occasions. After being put through the usual catechism of such questions as—Are you married? Have you any children? How many sons? Do you dye your lips? Is your hair long? Will you take it down? and replying by smiles which Miss Pigot interprets, I examine their ornaments while the lessons are proceeded with, after which we are generally asked to go to another room and partake of some native sweets, what we are not able to eat being put in the *gharry* to be taken home.

I am brought most closely in contact with the Orphanage girls and the daughters of the native Christians by my class in the Sabbath-school. Every Sunday for an hour we meet in the native church. Mrs Edwards and I take the eldest girls, and we enjoy our teaching very much. We begin with a hymn in Bengali. I cannot read it, I am sorry to say, but I can generally join in the tune, as we often sing—'Onward, Christians, onward go,' or some other of the hymns we used to sing in Scotland. The girls sing very vigorously, and lead the singing at the church service. After the hymn comes a prayer, then we begin our lessons,—Mrs Edwards and I in English, the rest in Bengali. We finish with another hymn and prayer. Everything is pretty much the same as in a Sabbath-school at home. I hope and believe our efforts will be blessed; meanwhile it is a good way of bringing us together and begetting mutual affection.

The social gatherings of native and European Christians are another means of great good. As you probably know, the Committee of Management is composed of all the native pastors of the different congregations in Calcutta, who invite their own people, and in this way have

each a personal interest in the success of the meetings. The last gathering we had was the largest (there were, as near as we could guess, about 600), as well as the most interesting and delightful of any I have been at. It was on Friday evening the 15th October. A large conference of native Christians had been going on all the week, and it was arranged that after their own meeting was over, they should all come along, have something to eat, and join our social gathering. As many of them were from country villages around Calcutta, and had never been so far from home before, Miss Pigot and the members of Committee were anxious to have something both entertaining and instructive; and after a little trouble, they succeeded in getting a splendid magic-lantern with a set of beautiful dissolving views. When we arrived at the Mission-house, the whole place seemed full, but still the friends came pouring in. About 200 of the men were squatted on the terrace, busily engaged eating from the plantain-leaves before them; in another part, a number of native musicians were singing hymns and playing on their peculiar instruments. In the long verandah the women were sitting patiently waiting until the drawing-room was ready for their reception. All the ladies were then got into the darkened room, and the children made to sit on the floor in front of the screen; the doorways and verandah and side-rooms were filled up with men. The dissolving views proved a great success, evoking many a "Bah!" of delight, especially from the juveniles. At nine o'clock the exhibition was over, the room was lighted, and the ladies now had to get tea and native sweets; and for another hour we had Hindustani, Bengali, and English hymns, and then we finished the evening by prayers in Bengali. The more educated men had been entertaining themselves during the evening by stirring extempore speeches, which the Bengali excels in making, as well as delights in listening to. There was a large attendance of European missionaries and friends, and I think everybody enjoyed themselves.

About six weeks ago I went along with Miss Pigot and Mrs Tremearne to the Brahma Somaj Mandir (church), to witness the concluding ceremony of the wedding of the Maharajah of Couch Behar and the daughter of Keshub Chunder Sen. The bride had formerly been taught by Miss Pigot. We were greatly interested with the interior arrangements of the building, especially with the part allotted to the women—a small gallery at the end of the church, jealously screened off with curtains and gauze. There was an altar surrounded by a railing, decorated for the occasion with flowers and evergreens, and inside the railing the floor was of white marble. We, as privileged people, were seated close to the rails, the bride and bridegroom occupying seats inside. The ceremony was half Hindoo, half English, and was performed both in Bengali and English. Keshub Chunder Sen first read over a formula of the Brahma faith which the bride and bridegroom had to acquiesce in; then the bride's mother came and marked her forehead with red—the sign of marriage among the Hindoos. The rest of the ceremony was principally taken from the English Prayer-book. When the ring was put on, their hands were joined and bound by chains of flowers. The choral part of the service was rather amusing and excruciating, but the prayers of the eloquent minister and leader of this strange creed for the blessing of God upon his daughter were the most solemn and impressive I ever heard.

I have occupied so much space with these details, that I must now come to an end. I cannot do so, however, without mentioning the boxes that come from home. I look forward to the opening of them with great interest, and as one of the pleasures of the cold season. On the last Hindoo holiday, about a fortnight ago, Mr Thomson went along to examine the senior classes of the Upper Christian School, which he does periodically, while Mrs Edwards and I usually take the junior classes; but this time there was a much more congenial occupation. We got the cases opened, and amid many exclamations of delight, displayed the things on the table. To me it is like a bit of home to see the different parcels, as I know so many of the places from which they come. After gazing and exclaiming, we put them all back again to their respective

boxes, to be kept there till nearer the time of the distribution. How many hearts these presents make glad!

7.

Georgiana Smail's "Vindication" was printed as a leaflet and distributed in Scotland late in December 1882, and Mary Pigot, sailing from London to Bombay for most of January, had no access to it. James Thomson, now at home after his two years in India, here sends a copy to James Wilson in Calcutta. When the court case opened in 1883 Pigot's lawyers put it in as evidence, with James Thomson's letter attached to it. The editors of *The Pigot Case* in 1884, Hastie zealots without a doubt, saw fit to print both. Other documents put in, such as the printed correspondence between Hastie and Kalicharan Bannerjee of 1881, they omitted.

*The Pigot Case* page 332 ff.

Sanquhar Manse,  
Dumfriesshire,  
31st January 1883.

My Dear Wilson,—I have been asked to forward the enclosed to Miss Pigot after perusal. You will probably have seen it. It is evidently all over Scotland. Mrs. Thomson and I have had great laughing over some bits in it, not excepting the paragraph about myself. I have no recollection of the incidents referred to. They are manifestly exaggerated and in one point inaccurate; the "boarders" were not present, could not have been present. Mr. Robert<sup>570</sup> had better take care of how he laughs at Gillan's tears over "the white horse," or the "rams of Nebaioth,"<sup>571</sup> for I suppose I must have been speaking of some of these things.

You will have seen Miss Pigot by the time this reaches you. Poor creature, I am very sorry for her, and sincerely hope she will bring her false accusers to their knees. The enclosed involves Miss Smail, who was otherwise free of complicity in the more serious charges. What is poor Kaly thinking of it all? Unless the whole affair collapses under threats of legal proceedings, it will lead to a *cause célèbre*. What a fool Hastie was to embellish Mrs. Walker's letter with his remarks. If his comments had been written on a separate sheet, I do not think the Committee would have given them; but they could scarcely help themselves under the circumstances. It is the unanimous belief and wish of the Edinburgh leaders that all this leads to his resignation. Mrs. Thomson and I are in a state of feverish excitement to hear what is going on. Take pity on us, or tell Mr. Robert to take pity on us, and write us at length. How does his lordship take it? Dr. Scott, I believe, went to his brother in Edinburgh, and he looked very pale when he heard the scrape into which William had got himself.

I should have sent the enclosure direct to Miss Pigot, but I do not know where she is to be found. It was forwarded from Edinburgh to me, and is intended to be an official document in the case.

With kindest regards to yourself and Coco Bob.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
James Thomson.

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570 Bob Wilson, James's brother.

571 The rams are sacrificial beasts in Isaiah 60.7. The white horse is the regular mount for the heavenly host in Revelation.



*A VINDICATION, in reply to the "Report" (without date) to the Committee of the Scottish Ladies' Association, by Miss G. Smail, late Assistant Superintendent, Scottish Ladies' Association, Calcutta.*

Seeing by accident a Report (no copy of which had been sent to me) on certain charges against Miss Pigot, and finding that my name figures largely in it, I deem it incumbent on me that I should vindicate my truthfulness; and I here state that I am prepared to stand any enquiry, and that all my statements are founded on fact, and that I have not exaggerated a single charge.

Since making my charges, other evidence of a most revolting character but of undeniable truthfulness has come to light; and this was formally sent to Dr. Scott, of St. George's, Edinburgh, by the consent of the Rev Mr. Gillan, on the 14th November 1882, copies of which the subscribers may obtain from Dr. Scott. I have no wish to injure any one, and am only grieved that the Committee in Edinburgh has forced me to reply to it publicly. If harm comes to the Mission from this public exposure, the members of the Foreign and Ladies' Committees are alone to blame for it, who, in rejecting the recommendations of the Calcutta Corresponding Board, have lost the services of the only body of men capable, *from practical experience*, of helping them in this case. Four of the gentlemen who signed the Report have never been in India! It is nearly twenty years since the fifth left India, and the sixth was in Calcutta for too short a time to enable him to penetrate the veil which Miss Pigot throws over her work.

An anonymous circular from "a Member of St. Andrew's, Calcutta," is apparently attributed to me, but I can only say I never wrote one word of it, although to my knowledge it is absolutely true.

Sometime ago my thoughts were turned to Mission work, and last year I was told that the Scottish Ladies' Association were looking for a lady to send out as Assistant Superintendent to Miss Pigot. I felt that a door was plainly opened to me. Mrs. Macalister Thomson, one of their Committee, pressed me hard and said— "The Committee are anxious to secure a lady. They do not want a mere governess; a lady of position would have an immense influence among the zenanas." Being in independent circumstances I was able to relieve the Committee of all expenses as to passage and outfit. I came out from pure motives and a desire to devote my life to the cause of Christ.

Before I left Edinburgh, several of the ladies of the Committee requested me verbally to send them a full and free account of the state of the Mission in Bow Bazar, as they were not satisfied with the very meagre reports they received from Miss Pigot. This I did to the best of my ability with great care and truthfulness. For this faithful service my statements are discredited, and I am publicly branded all over Scotland as a liar.

Miss Gordon (of Madras,) was also asked by letter to give her opinion on the Calcutta Mission, as she found it; and her report, being a true one, gave great offence to the Ladies' Committee, who wished to hear nothing unfavorable to Miss Pigot, and who really do not seem to have wished for the *truth*. Miss Gordon wrote to me thus :—

"My letter to the Committee may give offence, but the more sensible part of the Committee cannot fail to see there is truth in my statements. I wrote that I thought it out of place to have

a Eurasian at the head of our Mission, especially one who insists on absenting herself from the Church.” After more personal details she ends by “my letter will corroborate the statements you have made” (March 11th, 1882, Madras.) On the 2nd of April she wrote again— “I am sure the place (125, Bow Bazar) will be filthy, because, look what it was in the cold season, and now in the heat what will it be?” Certainly our reports to the Home Committee have borne fruit. Since Miss Pigot left Calcutta, large sums have been spent on cleansing, white-washing and sanitary reforms, and 125 Bow Bazar, is as different to the place I knew a year ago as light is to darkness.

I came out to India prepared to be Miss Pigot’s friend, and was so for a time, until I found that things were not right. I saw the enemies of our Church and disestablishers made welcome in our Mission, whilst the true friends and loyal supporters of our beloved National Church were kept at a distance. I found Christian work neglected, the orphans dirty, and swarming with vermin, the teachers all belonging to other Churches than our own, with the exception of Mrs. Miller, an American Presbyterian, who has since left the Mission, our National Church held up to scorn by Miss Pigot, our Clergyman laughed at and mimicked before the boarders and teachers, pianos and harmoniums abounded in the Mission House, and dirt and disorder reigned everywhere.

The Matron in the Orphanage told me with her own lips that her name was *Pigot*, I am thus able to corroborate the statement made in the “leaflet.”

Miss Pigot's explanation as to this woman's religion being “nominal” will not bear scrutiny. How is it that the Matron never entered the Protestant Church with the orphans whom she accompanied, but always crossed the street to the Roman Catholic Church? As long as Mrs. Pigot’s husband lived, her elder children were brought up as Protestants, but at his death she kept the youngest one with her, and was bringing her up as a Roman Catholic in your Orphanage.

Miss Pigot told me herself that Mrs. Tremearne, one of the principal teachers, had paid money to a Roman Catholic Church for Masses to be said for the recovery of her sore leg! Mrs. Ellis, on another occasion, told me the same story, and I believed that both were telling the truth.

On one occasion the Rev James Thomson caused great merriment at the breakfast table at 125 Bow Bazar, by his mimicry of the Rev Mr. Gillan’s manner in one of his sermons, and this levity was unchecked by Miss Pigot, who seemed to enjoy it as much as any of her boarders. I was present when this happened. On another occasion Mr. James Thomson, Missionary, read out an official communication from the Ladies’ Committee to Miss Pigot before the boarders and Miss Gordon, and mocked and jeered at both the Committee and Church, until Miss Gordon said: “What Church do you belong to, Miss Pigot?” to which she promptly replied, “The Church of England,” and Miss Luce and the other sub-teachers present, all said in a sort of chorus “so do we.” I was not present, but this is exactly as Miss Gordon related the circumstance to me, and of her truthfulness there can be no question. Miss Pigot herself told me that she was the very last to receive the Communion from the Rev Mr. Vaughan, an English Church Clergyman, the last time he officiated before his death which took place suddenly, soon after last Christmas, so that her assertion, that for the last fourteen “years,” she has attended the Church of Scotland, only falls to the ground. Mrs. Tremearne was desirous of taking the Communion last Christmas in Mr. Jackson’s Church (he is an ultra-ritualist), but he told her he could not give it to her as long as she was working in a

Presbyterian Mission. I was present at this conversation. I have often heard the sub-teachers say they belonged to the Church of England, and Mrs. Tremearne took Miss Pigot's nieces to Mr. Jackson's Church whilst I was living in the Mission. I have often heard Mrs. Tremearne praising Convent-training for girls to Mrs. Ellis. With my own eyes I saw the picture of the "Sacred heart of Jesus" hanging in Mrs. Tremearne's room, and Mrs. Miller saw her exhibiting it to the pupils. I was present when the deputation of Native Roman Catholics came to Miss Pigot for advice. They wanted to leave the Church of Rome, and I was horrified at hearing them told to return "to their Priests." It is well known all over Calcutta that Miss Pigot received the thanks of the head of the Jesuits for this.

With reference to Mr. Lillie's report on the state of the Mission, the place was cleaner and the drains in better order than when Miss Pigot was in Calcutta. As to "the singularly good state of health" of the orphans, when I was in the house, there were always some of the children in Hospital, and in the hot weather it culminated in a sort of palsy epidemic.

Mr. Wetherill's minute examination of Miss Pigot's accounts does not go for much, when it is taken along with the fact that he admitted to three members of St. Andrew's that he had received *no* proper vouchers with them. I consider it scarcely justifiable to use Mission funds to feast hundreds of Baboos, none of them so poor as are many of the subscribers, and the frequency and extent of these feasts quite preclude the idea that the salary of the Lady Superintendent paid for them.

On "the case of Rhoda," I will not enter, only remarking that there is more than one girl in the Orphanage of that name, and I have been told that Dr. Anderson is a Roman Catholic.

Dr. Charles' evidence refers to a visit to the Orphanage on a state occasion in 1872; since then I have been told he has only been in the Mission House once for a few minutes in the drawing-room only, and it is some years since he left India, so that to outsiders his testimony is rather misleading, and not to be compared to that of an eye-witness who has lived in the house.

From what I know now I shudder to think I was ever connected with such a Mission, and nothing would induce me to return to it. The gentlemen who signed the "Report" have been entirely misled. They have put the accused into the witness box, and have believed implicitly the word of a clever woman. How they could do so is a marvel, with the strength and quantity of unbiassed evidence laid before them. Mr. Gillan telegraphed on the 13th November: "Smail, Lillie, Hastie, Board entirely right." With this telegram in their possession how could they circulate their Report! To many, who know the facts, it might seem like a skilful attempt to persuade the subscribers that wrong is right.

It has been brought to my notice that a report has been circulated that I joined the Scottish Ladies' Association from purely mercenary motives. This is untrue. The few rupees that I have received during my stay in the Mission, I offered to refund, but my offer was not accepted; I now renew it, and have directed my agents to pay the same on demand.

(Sd.) Georgiana F. D. C. Smail

Dum-Dum ;  
19th *December* 1882.

8.

Miss Pigot's last report is a précis of what George Green Gillan read out to the assembled guests at the distribution of prizes on April 1<sup>st</sup> 1882. Quite how much of a disaster the prize day was cannot be assessed, since it was reported in neither the newspapers nor the *News of Female Missions*. We do not even know who the guest speaker was. The brief summary reproduced here, drafted ostensibly by Pigot herself, was sent to the newspapers, and the *Englishman* found room for it a fortnight after the event. The report makes the most of Priotama Dutt's matriculation, bringing her in a second time by way of the table of the previous year's inspection results. On top of that Monmohini Wheeler had ridiculed Pigot's efforts, and quoting Wheeler's words here is perhaps as close to having the last laugh as Pigot could get. It should be noted that the competition between the Calcutta girls' schools, and between the missionary agencies, deplored by the Department of Public Instruction, is as evident as ever.

*Englishman* April 18<sup>th</sup> 1882 page 3

**CHURCH OF SCOTLAND LADIES ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE PROMOTION OF FEMALE EDUCATION IN INDIA.**

We have been favoured with the following extracts from Miss Pigot's report of this Mission for 1881-82 :—

In order to show clearly the various departments of the Mission work of the Association, I shall first enumerate them, briefly describing their character, and stating the number of pupils belonging to each.

I. *The Upper Christian School at 125 Bowbazaar.*—

This school was opened in 1878. It contains at present 84 pupils (against 66 on 31st March, 1881), of whom 28 are boarders. One girl passed the University Entrance Examination in December, taking Sanskrit for her second language, and has since had a Government Scholarship of Rs. 10 a month awarded to her. She is preparing for the first Examination in Arts of 1883. There are 10 girls preparing for the Entrance Examination of 1882. There are 24 girls studying Sanskrit. Among the pupils are 17 Non-Christian children. The fees realised during the year ending 31st March were Rs. 4,744.

II. The Orphanage is divided into the Upper and Lower departments. In the Upper there are 18 pupils, and in the Lower 29. The pupils of the Upper department receive a practical training for teaching in our Hindu Girls' School. Their knowledge of Bengali was lately tested by the Principal of the Government Sanskrit College, and the marks gained by some of them were very high, while 13 of the 18 were declared as "passed."

III. *The Hindu Girls School.* —Of these we have 12 (one of them, a "ragged school") scattered over the town and suburbs, containing 834 pupils. Their studies are graduated according to "six standards" as laid down by the Government educational authorities. The more advanced of these pupils, to the number of 250, were collected on one day in the Mission House, and were examined by the Principal of the Sanskrit College, assisted by

twelve recognised Sanskritists from that College. Of the 250 examined, 222 were declared to have “passed,” while quite a number obtained very nearly full marks.

In the following tabular statement, I give the results of the examination held by Mrs. Wheeler for the different Missions, as given by the Director of Public Instruction in the Annual Report. These figures really belong to the year 1880-81; but they are the latest available. I may explain that only a small portion of our work is aided by Government, so as to come under Government inspection. This accounts for the small number examined, which does not include our best schools. After defining the standards referred to, the Director adds, Mrs. Wheeler reports, “the single pupil in the Upper stage of progress was in a school belonging to the Church of Scotland Agency”:

Name of Mission.	Total number examined.	Upper.	Middle.	Higher Primary.	Lower Primary.
Church of Scotland ...	241	1	24	26	190
American Mission Schools	559	0	11	64	484
Do. Zenanas ...	83	0	11	29	43
Free Church of Scotland	241	0	5	29	207
Society for Propagation of Gospel ...	270	0	0	19	251
Church Mission ...	269	0	3	33	233

IV. —*Zenanas*. —We visit 157 *Zenanas*, in which there are altogether 453 pupils, the fees ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 30. To summarise: —We have altogether 14 schools and 157 *Zenanas*, with 1,418 pupils, taught by 47 female teachers, all Christians, and by 10 male teachers, of whom 4 are Christians and 6 are not. These include a Professor of Mathematics, and one of Sanskrit for the Upper Christian School.

9.

The press outside Calcutta was unanimous in damning Norris for the contempt that he had shown for Hastie's witnesses. Its second most prominent characteristic is its leaning towards Hastie rather than Pigot, or failing that its conclusion that Norris's verdict was just. The correspondent of the Allahabad *Pioneer* here manages to give a false impression of Lucinda Oliver's evidence on Kalicharan Bannerjee while admitting that it was inaudible. It is to be hoped that his impression of Pigot's appearance is not equally misleading, since no other description of her, let alone photograph, has so far come to light. The editorial from the Bombay *Times of India* is typical in its outrage at Norris's interventions in the trial, and noteworthy for its assertion that the charge of gross misconduct between Pigot and Bannerjee had been proved "up to the hilt."

The *Pioneer* September 14<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 3.

#### CALCUTTA.

[FROM AN OCCASIONAL CORRESPONDENT.]

CALCUTTA, 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER.

An unusual amount of interest continues to be taken by the outside public here in the legal proceedings in connection with the destined-to-be-famous Pigot *versus* Hastie suit; judging from the general conversation which is to be heard everywhere in town regarding the scandal, and from the numbers of people who frequent Mr. Justice Norris's present court-room in the High Court daily. Yesterday being Saturday, notwithstanding its being mail-day, seemed to have been seized upon as a half-holiday by many business men, to be present at the hearing of the suit, and everyone in court appeared to take the keenest interest in the proceedings. So crowded has been the court-room every day during the past week, that yesterday, for the convenience of parties and counsel, and to preserve a free passage for them, the great majority of strangers present were excluded to the western half of the court-room, behind the barrier running across the court-room, and behind the dock used for prisoners in criminal cases. The result of this necessary arrangement was that a number of deeply interested individuals severely strained the muscles of their necks, craning their heads in the direction of the counsel and witnesses striving in vain to hear the evidence. The acoustic properties of the court-room where the suit is being tried are of the worst, and it remains a wonder how even the reporters can contrive to get a correct idea of what the witnesses say. Yesterday a Mrs. Oliver, one of Mr. Hastie's witnesses, was under cross-examination by Mr. Jackson whilst I was in court, and her replies to the cross-examining counsel were totally inaudible to the great majority of persons present. Mrs. Oliver is an important witness for the defence; and she gave yesterday certain direct evidence of conduct lacking in propriety on the part of Miss Pigot towards Babu Kali Churn Banerjee, a Native Christian pleader of the High Court, who is alleged to have been mixed up in some of the irregular "goings-on" at the Zenana Mission which Mr. Hastie lays at Miss Pigot's door. As this suit is still, and is likely to be, *sub judice* for some time to come, I cannot make any direct comments on it at present. I may, however, with due discretion, tell your readers (who have not had the opportunity of visiting the court since the commencement of the suit) that Miss Pigot is a lady-like-looking Eurasian, not giving one the impression from her looks of anything but strict propriety; indeed with the

profoundest respect to the lady, it seems difficult to conceive any man conducting himself towards so respectable and rather interesting-looking a person otherwise than with rigid decorum. Miss Pigot's appearance would certainly not be denominated attractive by a romance writer. The defendant, the Revd. W. Hastie, is a hard-featured, canny-looking north country man, wearing a close dark beard, moustache, and whiskers. He and the plaintiff impress one as being of about the same (anything but frivolous) age, say 40 to 42. For Miss Pigot appear Messrs. Jackson, Trevelyan, and O'Kinealy (instructed by Mr. Carruthers); and for the defendant are Messrs. Gasper and Pearson. Mrs. Oliver, the witness under examination yesterday, comes from Dinapore. She was formerly matron [at] the Scottish Ladies' Zenana Mission in Dhurumtollah under Miss Pigot. The suit which has elicited such interest, and which, if I am not mistaken, in several points (which can hardly now be referred to directly) will lead to great and serious comment hereafter, is expected to last a long time, possibly over the Durga Puja holidays; some people say Mr. Justice Norris's month's leave (gazetted in yesterday's *Gazette of India*) therefore seems likely to be considerably postponed. His lordship, however, sat yesterday until 7-30 P.M. hearing the suit, and proposes to do the same, I believe, each day this week, with a view to its early termination.

The *Times of India* September 18<sup>th</sup> 1883 page 2

The Calcutta Defamation Case has ended in a satisfactory manner. Everybody is punished all round, and everybody gets, we think, what he deserves. The conduct of the Judge who tried the case has still to be examined, and here again the public verdict is not likely to be in his favour. We have no intention of recapitulating the evidence. It was enough to have to publish such nauseous details in our columns devoted to the law reports. But to understand the judgment it will be necessary to understand the original plaint. Miss Pigot, the plaintiff, an educated Eurasian woman of forty-six years of age, and till lately Lady Superintendent of the Scottish Ladies' Association in Calcutta, brought an action against Mr. Hastie, Principal of the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta. Mr. Hastie had made a series of formal charges against her, which were examined by the Ladies' Association in Scotland, who exonerated Miss Pigot from all blame. He then forwarded a number of letters received from various parties and endorsed by his own remarks. The charges contained in these letters were of so grave a nature that Miss Pigot was informed that unless she could disprove them she would be deprived of her situation in the school. Accordingly she brought this action for libel against Mr. Hastie, who had made himself responsible for the documents he forwarded to Scotland; and the damages were laid at Rs. 20,000. The letters contained charges of the grossest immorality against Miss Pigot, especially in connection with a Baboo named Kali Churn Bannerjee, and also charged her with beating and maltreating the school girls. The first series of charges have been proved up to the hilt, and so far as they are concerned Mr. Hastie was justified in the publication of the letters. Mr. Justice Norris found that Miss Pigot had been guilty of criminal impropriety, not with Baboo Kali Churn Bannerjee alone, but also with Mr. Wilson, a Scotch missionary, and Mr. Chunder Coomar Dey, a native doctor. There was, however, a want of proof in reference to the charges of ill-treating the school-girls, and that, said Mr. Norris, would in itself be sufficient to entitle the plaintiff to a verdict. She gets the verdict and one anna for damages, instead of the Rs. 20,000 she claimed; and she and Mr. Hastie will each have to pay their own costs. As it is impossible to have any sympathy for either of them, and as each will now be punished, the decision of the learned Judge will be received with general satisfaction by all who have followed the disgusting and wearisome details of the last ten days.

The charges brought against a person of Miss Pigot's age and position were so astounding, and the opening portion of Mr. Hastie's defence so weak, that it must, we own, have been very difficult to avoid a mental bias against him. He began by being his own lawyer, and was something more than the proverbial fool for his pains. Even after he had obtained proper legal assistance he betrayed so much animus and spoke with such unctuous satisfaction of the failings of his wretched antagonist, that the sympathies of all who heard him were probably aroused against him. A Judge should, however, be able to control his feelings sufficiently to speak with becoming impartiality from the Bench. Here Mr. Justice Norris completely broke down. Indignant with the whole tenor of Mr. Hastie's line of defence, he so far identified himself with the prosecution as to adopt the tone of a sympathetic counsel, compelled in the interests of truth and his client to expose the motives of Mr. Hastie's attacks in their worst light. As a man his words may perhaps find an echo in the breasts of many who read the evidence at the earlier stages of the trial, but as a Judge he has set the most extraordinary example of partizanship ever witnessed on the Indian Bench: and as he is new to India, it is well that an emphatic protest against such a betrayal of judicial dignity should be entered while the details of the trial are still fresh in the public memory. We need only recapitulate a few of the extraordinary things he said. Mr. Gasper, Mr. Hastie's Counsel, protested in the earlier stage of the proceedings against the use of the word "libels." "Very well," said his lordship, "those exceedingly kind anonymous communications to Mr. Hastie respecting Miss Pigot." He then suggested that the case would probably break down, and that it might not become necessary for the plaintiff to go into the witness-box at all, and shortly afterwards requested the counsel to retire with him for fifteen minutes, apparently with a view to the settlement of the case. The attempt, if such it was, was unsuccessful, and Mr. Hastie's cross-examination was continued, Mr. Justice Norris saying from time to time ironically "You don't suggest anything?"

*The editorial continues to belabour Norris for another paragraph, and ends*

Those who have the management of the Scottish Ladies' Association would have acted more wisely if they had kept the matter out of court, whilst those who supplied the original letters and the evidence at the trial must be sorry that they ever meddled with such an abominable story. The revelations will, however, now that they are made, compel a complete change in the organization of the Scottish Ladies' Association in Calcutta. They may probably do much more than this, and we commend the trial to the notice of the *Scotsman*, the *Glasgow Herald*, and other exponents of public opinion in Scotland. It has long been a complaint with those behind the scenes that the Scotch people should be heavily taxed in the name of Indian Mission work for establishments that are purely educational.

Even when the establishments do good educational work it is not fair that money should be collected for them from church-goers and school children at home on the distinct understanding that it will be expended on another purpose altogether. When, however, the establishments reach the low level of Miss Pigot's Association, it is high time that the subscribers in Scotland should learn how their hard-earned money has been expended.



10.

It is all but impossible to form an opinion on any aspect of Miss Pigot's career, let alone make a judgement, from the available sources. Oddly enough the trial of 1883, the most prominent event in those sources and doubtless the crisis of her life, can very easily be judged. The conclusions reached in 1883 by James Furrell of the *Englishman* are reinforced by the judgement of the Law Lords a year later. His perspective differs from theirs, and of course their language must differ from his, but they are in agreement. The judgement is printed on page 9 of the *Times* for December 18<sup>th</sup> 1884. The almost identical text reproduced here was kindly provided by the Privy Council Office.

**JUDGEMENT OF THE LORDS** of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the Petition for special leave to appeal of *Hastie v. Pigot*, from the High Court of Calcutta; delivered December 17th, 1884.

Present:

Lord FITZGERALD.

Sir BARNES PEACOCK.

Sir ROBERT COLLIER.

Sir RICHARD COUCH.

Sir ARTHUR HOBHOUSE.

THIS is an application upon behalf of the Defendant in an action of libel for leave to appeal from the decision of the High Court at Calcutta to Her Majesty in Council. An application had been made to a Judge of the High Court for leave to appeal, which was refused.

The action is for Libel. The Defendant put in the usual defences in a very general way; still he got the full benefit of them. There can be no doubt that the publications in question were of a libellous character, but their Lordships abstain from entering on or criticising them except so far as to say that, if unprotected by absolute privilege and unjustified in fact, the libel was a most cruel one. The High Court increased the damages to Rs. 3,000, and upon that question of damages their Lordships would, if it had been necessary to decide it, have come to the conclusion that if the libel was not justified in fact the damages are moderate.

Their Lordships have to deal with three questions; first, was the occasion on which this libel was published a privileged occasion? Next, if the occasion was privileged, has that privilege been lost by any evidence in the case of express malice or ill-will, or indirect or wrong motive on the part of the Defendant? and the third and more important question is, whether the plea of justification had been in fact satisfactorily proved? The Judges of both Courts held that the occasion was not privileged. Their Lordships do not now propose to enter into that question. They assume, for the purposes of this Petition, in favour of the Petitioner, and without pronouncing any judgement upon it, that the occasion was privileged. The case was not in the Court below or before their Lordships put so high as a case of absolute privilege, but rather of that qualified privilege which may be displaced by proof that the occasion was used for an indirect and wrong purpose. It is in that light their Lordships deal with the case.

Their Lordships have then to consider whether there was sufficient evidence of malice, that is to say of ill-will, on which the Court below might reasonably act as displacing the alleged qualified privilege. If the libel was published by the Defendant from a sense of duty, in the honest belief of the truth of the matter contained in the libel, and without any sinister or indirect motive, he is entitled to protection. Their Lordships have, however, come to the conclusion, that there was evidence of ill-will or indirect motive upon the part of the Defendant sufficient to be considered by the Judges in both Courts below, and on this evidence the Judges came to the conclusion that there was proof of malice in fact.

Having thus disposed of the questions arising on privilege, their Lordships have to consider whether the justification put forward on the part of the Defendant was proved in its substantial particulars. Upon that matter there was a difference in the two Courts. Mr. Justice Norris, who presided in the Primary Court, and who heard the witnesses, came to the conclusion that the justification, though not proved in all its parts, had been substantially proved, and he awarded to the Plaintiff nominal damages only. No doubt the decision of that learned Judge, who saw and heard the witnesses, is entitled to great weight. But their Lordships, upon carefully examining the course of the trial and the evidence before Mr. Justice Norris, have not failed to perceive that there was much to detract from the value which their Lordships usually give to the view of the Primary Judge on the evidence before him. There was, for instance, great hardship to the Plaintiff in permitting matters not in issue to be put forward at the very close of the trial. Mr. Fish, who was one of the first witnesses examined, but examined merely as to some formal and documentary matters, is allowed to be re-produced at the eleventh hour to spring a mine upon the Plaintiff as to an important charge which was not at all the subject of the libel or of the defence. There was such a miscarriage in the admission of this and some other evidence, and in not noticing the failure on the part of the Defendant to substantiate some other material allegations contained in the libel and justification, that if their Lordships adopted the conclusion generally which Mr. Justice Norris arrived at, it would be their duty, if they heard the Appeal, to send the case to a new trial on the ground of this miscarriage. Their Lordships abstain from making any unnecessary observations on the evidence in the cause. It is enough to say that they see no sufficient reason for questioning the finding on the facts by the High Court.

Their Lordships therefore are unable to advise Her Majesty to give the Defendant leave to appeal to Her Majesty in Council.

COMMITTEES (in Edinburgh) AND BOARDS (in Calcutta)

*In Edinburgh*

General Assembly  
of the  
Church of Scotland

Ladies' Association  
for the Advancement  
of Female Education in India  
in connection with  
the Church of Scotland

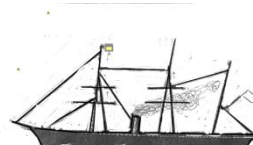
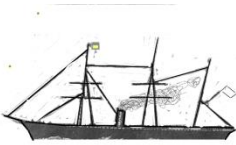
FOREIGN MISSION  
COMMITTEE

Consulting Committee  
(1882-3)

ACTING COMMITTEE

(Calcutta correspondent)

(Calcutta sub-committee)



*In Calcutta*

CORRESPONDING BOARD

“consulting board”  
(proposed 1879 & 1882)

Lady  
Superintendent

## ABBREVIATIONS

- IOLR India Office Library and Records. Now held by the British Library at St Pancras.
- BER Bengal Ecclesiastical Returns, in the IOLR.
- FMC The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland. The minutes of the FMC, and of the Ladies' Association for the Advancement of Female Education in India, can be found in Deposit 298 of the National Library of Scotland Manuscripts Division. The FMC minutes 1877-82 make up volume 7, 1882-83 vol 8, 1882-86 vol 9, and the Ladies' minutes 1875-83 are in vol 31, 1883-87 vol 32.
- NFM *News of Female Missions in Connection with the Church of Scotland*.  
Published in Edinburgh by the Ladies' Association from 1862 to 1897. Thereafter bound in first with the Church of Scotland's *Record* and then with *Life and Work*, the title changing to *News of Women's Missions*.
- Record *The Home and Foreign Missionary Record for the Church of Scotland*. Published in Edinburgh from 1851 until 1900, with slight variations of title.
- Englishman *The Englishman*. Newspaper published at Calcutta throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The IOLR have substantial holdings of this and other contemporary Indian newspapers, some of which are cited in the footnotes.
- IDN *The Indian Daily News*. Calcutta newspaper published between 1864 and 1924. Described in *Reis & Rayyet*, a rival journal, in January 1883 as "founded in the interests of the European shopocracy." Its reports of the 1883 trial were generally regarded as the fullest.
- The Pigot Case *The Pigot Case*. Report of the Case Pigot vs. Hastie as Before the High Court Calcutta. Calcutta 1884. The National Library of Scotland has a copy, and the Harvard Law School copy can be had from the Gale Making of Modern Law print editions. The *IDN* for 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1884 reports the appearance of a "pamphlet" called "The Pigot Case" which is "cowardly and unjust," but the 400-page book at Edinburgh and Harvard is hardly a pamphlet. Its failings are that the barristers' questions and statements, and the judge's remarks, are omitted, and the chronology of the trial is compromised by printing all of the witnesses' statements under their first appearance. Thus the evidence of William Fish of August 29<sup>th</sup> is on page 143, and his sensational testimony of September 10<sup>th</sup> is on page 144.
- Hobson-Jobson *Hobson-Jobson*. The Anglo-Indian Dictionary. Henry Yule and AC Burnell, 1886, new edition William Crooke 1903.
- CMS Archive Archive of the Church Missionary Society, now at Birmingham University Library, Selly Oak, and published by Adam Matthew Publications.

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