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In the second half of the nineteenth century, the notion of Christ as the 'Great Physician' became increasingly prominent in missionary discourse and its iconic representations. As Western medicine, supposedly emblematic of the onward march of the rational, aspired to ever higher status, missionaries increasingly saw themselves as healers of bodies as well as savers of souls. David Livingstone was one of the most notable precursors in this: many missionaries (perhaps particularly Scottish ones) subsequently sought to combine medical with theological qualifications, ambitiously pursuing a sort of parallel ordination in both spheres. Nevertheless, attitudes towards the role of medicine in missionary endeavour were complex and dynamic, as David Hardiman demonstrates here.

This study examines a relatively long period in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in a restricted geographical sphere in India. It also analyses the reactions of one so-called 'tribal' people, the Bhils, to the missionary and medical ambitions of the Church Missionary Society in their land. This approach offers highly rewarding results: we are able to follow the intertwining of missionary and medical, administrative and military developments in this region of the subcontinent. We are also given the opportunity to consider in detail the ways in which the Bhils responded to, resisted, or sought relief in these religious, medical and imperial phenomena appearing in their area. All of this is charted through the period of the so-called high noon of empire, the emergence of nationalist resistance, violent and non-violent, the era of imperial weakening induced by European warfare, and the post-independence years. We follow the mission and its hospital through a process of rise and fall, indigenisation and dispersal. Ironically, early medical arrangements were primitive and expertise was often slight; but as professionalisation increased (along with the significant role of women), political and social weakness became more pronounced.

Many other issues are illuminated through this useful focus: the incorporation of the Bhils into the imperial military establishment through the formation of the Bhil Corps and the manner in which this could both help and hinder missionary objectives; the foundation of schools and the development of education as another 'social' arm of missionary ambitions; the articulation of complex gendered relationships between traditional and mission societies; and the role of missionaries in famine relief. Missionaries were of course confronting

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indigenous belief systems and concepts of illness and cure. They often saw these as inimical to their 'modern' methods, yet they invariably placed as much reliance on the 'supernatural' as their 'charges' and patients did. Pre-operative prayers were common; praying for 'miracle cures' sometimes seemed to have effect. Bhils often found missionary doctors' activities appealing precisely because they seemed to have a comprehensible spiritual content. Far from the missionaries counterposing two Manichaeic systems, as they usually imagined they were doing, the fact was that a greater degree of syncretism was occurring than they would have been prepared to acknowledge. The Bhils were often responding to Western medicine and the religious message that lay behind it in this context by indigenising it and consequently rendering it more comprehensible.

In these and in many other ways, David Hardiman's book offers insights into issues of imperial and missionary activity that are applicable to many other parts of India and elsewhere in the world. We are given opportunities to consider the relationship between missionaries and imperialism, the interaction of recruitment and fundraising in the imperial metropole and activities in the Indian 'empire', the changing educational attainments and roles of missionaries and medics, the significance of women, married and single, and their increasingly significant instrumentality. We are also presented with the realities of social, economic and political hierarchies in India and the ways in which the British sought to modify these. And all of this is related to theoretical positions and a wider historiography. This constitutes a rewarding study for all those interested in the relationships among missionary endeavour, indigenous responses and imperial rule.

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