

OUR INDIAN STATIONS.

Cocanada.

LUKSHMI.

I wish to write what follows now, believing it will be of special interest to our sisters who read the LINK, and also be an encouragement to those who send funds for the work for women and girls, as now carried on here.

Last Monday after a day's work that made my head ache, and my body sore and numb, I went away in the boat to Akidu, with Brother Craig, to assist in the ordination of PETER, the Catechist, who is supported by the Sabbath School of St. Catharines." We had a good time. I left Brother Craig on the ground where the new house is now about to be built, and hurried to get home for Sabbath, calling at Rajahmundry on my way back, to see about getting brick sent down to Brother Craig for his house. I reached home last evening at eight o'clock. Mrs. Timpany had to tell me, among other things, of a caste girl who had come to her and begged to be taken into our girls' school. She told her nothing could be done about it till I came back, as she expected me last evening, and to come to meeting to-day, when something further might be done.

Well, when we went into the chapel this morning at eight o'clock, for Sabbath School, Mrs. Timpany pointed out a strange young woman seated among the women, as the girl in question. During the Sabbath School and following service, I noticed that she gave the best attention. After service I stopped for half an hour to talk to some of the Christians about the due observance of the Sabbath or Lord's Day. As soon as our breakfast and worship were over, I told little Mary who has lots of interest in the school girls, to go to the girls' houses and bring the strange girl. She came, and the following is the story that I got from her, as I questioned her for two hours, Mrs. Timpany joining with me most of the time. We tried to find whether the girl was false or true, good or bad:—

"I am sixteen years old, and a widow. Belong to the 'Talaga Caste.' (This is high caste among the Sudras.) My father was employed, in the Government as a clerk at Rs. 25 per month. Was born and lived until a short time ago in Vizagapatam." When I told her that there had been missionaries like myself and native Christians there for a long time, she said, "I never saw or heard anything about Christianity in Vizagapatam. At the age of three, my mother died, having always been sick after my birth. I was her first and only child. At the age of five years I was married to my cousin, a boy who lived in the same house with my people. When I was eight years old my husband died. My father died about the same time. I then began to study with a master, and studied for two years; reading a number of books and doing something at Telugu Grammar. My grandmother who had kindly cared for me till then, died."

I asked her how it was that she, a widow, was put to learning, and had such kindness shown to her? To that she replied, "That is true, and the reason was that I was an only child, and my grandmother loved me much for my mother's sake. When my grandmother died my troubles began, my schooling was ended, and I did housework, cooking, &c., for my brother-in-law, whose wife turned out a bad woman, and left him. The family got into reduced circumstances and found me a burden, so put me in the care of a female servant and sent me to Cocanada to another brother-in-law. When I got to

Cocanada I found my brother-in-law and family had moved away. The servant woman left me among my caste people and went away—so here I was, a young woman, and alone in a wicked city, as I soon found. I was cooking for a woman of my caste. After a short time, one night I heard talking going on in one of the rooms, and then for the first time knew what kind of a house I had fallen into. The woman was the concubine of an English gentleman. She attempted to poison my mind, but I rebuked her and forbade her speaking to me on such a subject. I prayed God who made me, to save me from a life of shame, and to keep me from falling, and in some way deliver a poor orphan girl from such a hateful fate. After a time this woman wished me to become the mistress of an English gentleman. I refused to do so, and she sent me away. As I did not know what to do, or where to go, one of my servants, a sweeper woman, who worked also for us, said to me, 'Why not go to the missionary and his wife? They have a lot of girls, and may be will take you, and be like a father and mother to you.' On this I came, not doubting that the living God who made me, had shown me my way." I said to her, "You speak of the God who made you. What about *Vishnu* and *Siva* and the idols?" To this she replied, "All that is a lie, there is only one God who made all, and we are all his children. I found out that in my reading—caste is all wrong and false. I have no hesitation about breaking it." I asked her if she had ever seen and talked with English people before. "No," she said, "I was kept close at home." Then I said, "How is it that you came and talked to Mrs. Timpany so freely, and have talked so freely and confidently with me?" "When I first came, the school girls told me, to state everything just as it was, and cover up nothing, as you were like a father and mother; so I have had no fear." I pressed her closely to find out if she had been living a bad life. I could see that as the talk went on between her, Mrs. Timpany and myself, that she had strong hopes that we would take her—but I said, "Our girls' school here is for Christian girls and the daughters of Christians. You are a heathen girl, come we know not from where, only as we have your word for it. We know not whether you are a bad girl or a good one. 'Oh,' said she, 'had I been a bad girl I never would have come here, there would have been no need of that.' You should have seen her look as the hope died out of her that we would take her. I could see that she was ready to break down and cry.

Finally, I said, "This Christian faith is holy and good and merciful; Jesus, our Saviour, is merciful; I cannot send you away under the circumstances, and will take you. The money given for the support of that girls' school comes from women like Mrs. Timpany. They love you, though 10,000 miles away. Now, my child, how thankful you should be, and grateful. Remember that it is Jesus who has made this kindness possible, and love Him." "That I will," was her reply. "Hereafter, if you slip and sin, it will be like cutting my throat." "Have no fear, sir, God will keep me in the future as He has in the past." So I sent her to make one more among your girls. Did I do right, my sisters? I could not have sent her away though I had had to eat but one meal a day to give the other to her. Mrs. Timpany felt the same. There is one happy soul at least to-night in this compound, and that is Lukshmi. What the future may be God knows, but, sisters, you know particularly from this letter, how your money goes. I could write you a book covering case after case, not all like the above, but still such as should thrill your hearts, and warm them for