

SOME INCIDENTS OF MY FIRST TOUR.

Miss Katie H. Marsh.

I have wished many times during the last few days, that some of our Mission Band boys and girls could see what I was seeing, for I know it would have inspired them to become even better "Willing Workers" than they now are. So I will try to picture a little of what I saw and did on one or two days.

The first village we wanted to see was a mile and a half from the canal, so leaving the boat at 9.30 a.m., we walked on ridges through the rice fields, where numbers of men, women, and children were busy transplanting, that is, taking the young rice plants from the seed beds, and planting them four inches apart, in fields of water. What a time it takes! Some bright boy might make his fortune, if he were to invent an electric machine to do this work, but, I would advise that it be made of aluminum or something light, so that it would not sink too deeply in the mud and water. Several times during our walk, we had to be carried by two men across deep ditches, and at one place where a tank had overflowed (making almost a river), the men who carried us were wading in water above their waists, and trying their best to keep us out of the water. Wouldn't you like a snapshot? When we arrived at the caste village, Miss Selman learned that one family where she was always well received, had moved away, but by tact and persuasion, we were at last allowed to sit on one end of a verandah under shelter, and as we sang our first hymn, quite a few gathered and listened to the "Sweet story of old."

The next place we went to, they swept out a cow shed, and gave us a mat to sit on, and there gathered a much larger crowd than before. One

woman asked, "Is not Rama the same as Jesus Christ, only a different name?" In speaking about sin, one said, "God gave us the mind to sin, how can we help it?"

Being new, I caused several interruptions,—they wanted me to talk and sing in English; we told them we had not come for their amusement, but with the good news of salvation, but, if they would listen well, I would sing afterwards, and they did listen well. We stayed till they left to prepare their evening meal for the men, returning from work.

The walk back to the boat was even more exciting than going, the men being called to kill a cobra, which was by our path; it had turned, and raised its hood at us. We reached the boat about four-thirty, rather tired from the long walk, and unaccustomed mode of sitting, and with arms burning from sun and wind, the latter being so strong it made umbrellas impossible.

At one village a man tried hard to prevent our going to the women, said: "they could not understand," but we went notwithstanding, and in one courtyard a crowd numbering at least one hundred and fifty, were listening splendidly, when this same man we had escaped from, came rushing in talking at such a rate, it was impossible to do anything. He said, "What is the use of all this preaching, there is only one God and everybody knows it; if Jesus Christ is God, we want some proof of it." We waited till he had talked himself tired, and finally went away. In another courtyard, sitting on the ground in front of the steps of a large caste house, I was rather startled when a huge white ox came walking down the steps almost into my lap. This caused quite a lot of merriment. Brahman women, as well as others, were anxious to hear.

The long touring season has begun.