

VUYURU.

KISTNA DISTRICT, INDIA, 17th Feb., 1896.

DEAR LINK,—An account of my first tour alone may not be uninteresting to your readers. A week ago last Wednesday, accompanied by my Bible-woman, Verrama, I left Vuyuru for a village some eight or ten miles distant, where I intended making my headquarters for a week or ten days, while I visited the surrounding villages. Owing to my stopping to greet the Christians in a village by the way, it was quite 12 o'clock ere I alighted from my pony at the door of the chapel that was to be my home, and I was obliged to wait another two hours for my breakfast as my baggage coolies failed to put in an appearance. As the water of a cocoanut was all I had had to relieve my hunger and thirst by the way, I did ample justice to the meal when it was ready.

A word about my lodging—the chapel. The first thing that attracted my attention was “Christmas” in colored Telugu letters on the outside, and upon entering the building, which was built of mud, and thatched with a coarse river grass, I found that the same instinct that decorated the churches in Christian lands with holly and evergreen at Christmas time, had prompted this little band of Christians to seek to beautify their humble house of prayer for this occasion. The mud floor had been nicely washed, the walls whitewashed and decorated with chains of colored paper, and also a text which the teacher had given them as a year text. Christmas Day had been spent in festivities and devotional exercises, nor were they selfish but entering somewhat into the spirit of the One who so many years ago gave us His only begotten Son, they invited their heathen neighbors to share their feast, and later in the day to attend their thanksgiving service in the chapel. In passing through the little “gudem,” as the Madaga quarter is called, and in which the Christians had received their share of attention, and in honor of the day, had been freshly washed and decorated with little patterns in lime.

It gave me great pleasure to join with these brethren and sisters each evening in their evening worship, for although both men and women had worked in the harvest fields all day, after the evening meal all met for a short service. The Spirit was in our midst and gave me messages for them.

The inhabitants of the village of Sreerigapurmas, as this village is called, are, with the exception of four or five houses, all Brahmans, who, about four or five years ago when the Christians, under the leadership of Jacob, the teacher, began to make preparations to build this chapel, put forth most strenuous efforts to hinder the project, even demeaning themselves so far as to use very abusive language. “Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do,” finds an illustration in the case of some Brahmans at least, for the orthodox Brahmin rarely en-

gages in any pursuit, but sits at home fondling and trying to revive the corpse of his Hindu religion. Jacob tells how that when it seemed as though the people of the land were going to be successful in their endeavors to weaken the hands of the Lord's servants, that the Lord graciously revived his faith and courage by Psalm xxxvii: 1-3. “Fret not thyself because of evil doers,” etc.; so that he boldly assured the enemies of the Lord that a house of prayer would be erected, and that they (the Brahmans) would live to see the day when ladies and gentlemen should come to visit it, which prophecy he was reminded, was fulfilled by my coming, the gentleman, Mr. Brown, having come and gone many times. Not only so, but this teacher and the Christians seem to have won the respect of those very Brahmans, several of whom sent me cordial invitations to visit their homes, which I accepted and spent one of the most pleasant afternoons with the Brahmin women.

The Brahmans are beginning to learn that their prestige is gone and that at least some of those who, of yore, worshipped at their feet, yea, drank the water in which those feet had been bathed, are finding better employment, and that, under British rule, the meanest subject has rights that even Brahmans cannot lightly interfere with. Methinks it must gail them to behold the rapid strides towards freedom, in the highest sense of the word, that are being made by those whose grand-parents dared not so much as claim the right to cover their bodies decently.

I must tell you of an encounter Vuramma and I had with a Brahmin widow in one of the villages. Immediately upon our entrance into the village, we were conducted to a shed belonging to a wealthy farmer and were in a short time surrounded by a crowd of women, among whom was Maha Dakshmi, the woman to whom I have already referred. It was evident from her consequential air that she had come with the intention of defeating us, for, seating herself at some distance to avoid contamination, and being encouraged by nods of approval and triumphant exclamations at her profound wisdom from the other women, proceeded to dispute each point we raised with such volubility, that Vuramma, who is rarely at a loss for a word, turned to me with a look almost of despair.

She claimed to have lived without sin from the time of her husband's death, when she had had a vision. Watching my opportunity, I began reading and explaining the first chapter of Genesis, which is a favorite chapter of mine in dealing with the heathen, as it reveals the utter ridiculousness and sin of man, made in the image of God, and animated by His breath, worshipping and serving, rather than the Creator, the creatures which he was assigned to rule, and the sun, moon and stars, stones and trees, etc., designed for his comfort and use. But she took exception to the account of the creation as