

THE FOREIGN MAIL BOX

EIGHTEEN MARYS.

To all of us the name Mary is very dear, and not less so to our Telugu Christians, as evidenced by the number of girls bearing that name in the Cocanada Girls' Boarding School. Would you like to become acquainted with some of them?

First let me introduce Duvvada Mary (top row, first girl, left-hand side), the little round-faced girl with the big scar on her forehead, where she was burned before her parents became Christians, to keep away the evil spirits. I remember so well the first time I saw her, when she came newly to the boarding school, attended by her brother, just a little larger than herself—he dressed in a huge turban and not much else, and carrying a stick much taller than himself. As I crossed the compound to meet them, Mary held back and began to cry. Oh, yes, she had seen white people a few times before, but that was in her village, where she had a mother near to protect her, behind whose skirts she could hide, only peeping out occasionally at the strange being with the white face and the big hat. But now it was different. Here she was far away from home, with no place to hide. A few words of welcome dispelled her fears, and soon she was among the other girls in the big compound, and the next day began her education. She is a mischievous imp, that likes lots of fun, and sometimes pinches the girl next to her when no one is looking, but she is getting on nicely with her studies, and is one of the first to want to tell her Bible story each day in class.

Next in the row you see Chindada Mary, and may like to hear something of her story. Her mother died when she was about three years old, and her grandmother (not a Christian) took her to her home, where she was surrounded by heathenism in a little village far from the mission station. It seemed as if Mary's life would be lived out in ignorance and sin, like so many others in the villages, where the light has not shone, but some things "happened" which changed the whole course of her life.

Her father married Veeramma (now a Biblewoman), and a little boy came to gladden her heart and be a comfort to her after her husband's death, but after beginning school he died, and the thoughts of the broken-hearted mother turned to her stepdaughter, who was still in the far-off village. At first all her efforts were unavailing, as the grandmother refused to give up the child. But that year a great flood destroyed much of the village, and the poor old woman was quite unable to support her, so came to the mission station and gave her over to Veeramma and the missionary. To comfort the grandmother, she was given a new quaka (cloth), also a present for her husband. Thus Mary was rescued and brought under Christian influence. She is quiet and faithful, and is making good progress with her studies. Just recently an effort was made to steal her away and marry her to one of her heathen relations. She needs your prayers.

Third in the row is Mudi Mary, a fine-looking girl, whose father died when she was quite young, and the mother had to work to support herself and two children. She is now a nurse in a Government hospital.

Cheeli Mary (junior) comes from a very poor home, where she has been unkindly treated since her mother's death. Her aunt, Pentamma, brought her in to the school to rescue her from abuse. Last summer holidays she went home, but not being welcome there, was sent away to her older sister, who is still in heathenism. She was made to work very hard, and when it was time to return to school she was forbidden to come. For a time she remained there, but her thoughts often turned to the Boarding School and to the girls who were happy there. At last her mind was made up, and although it was a long trip, she decided to run away and find her way back to school. When she arrived, more than two months late, she was a pitiful-looking little object, dressed in scanty rags. During these holidays she is to stay with her aunt, who will be kind to her.