

FROM OUR FOREIGN FIELD

MRS. CHURCHILL'S 80th BIRTHDAY IN INDIA.

My Dear Friends:

How would you like to spend your eightieth birthday? Let me tell you how Mrs. Churchill spent hers and perhaps it will give you some suggestions.

On the evening of October 20th, I arrived home somewhat later than usual to find my servant anxiously waiting for me. Two "missammaries" had come very unexpectedly and his problem was how to make a dinner for one satisfy three. I left the problems for him to solve. Live alone for several months with only an occasional opportunity to talk to one of your own kind and you will soon learn, if you do not already know, why the mere trifle of a meal was brushed aside in the pleasure of greeting the two ladies, the "Clark Sisters" from Sompeta. Their explanation was short and to the point. "We are going to Bobbill to spend Mrs. Churchill's birthday with her and you are coming too." I went.

We arrived at 2.30 a.m. and not caring to arouse a sleeping and unsuspecting household, secured cushions and mats and spent the remainder of the night in true Indian fashion on the verandah—the coolest spot available.

At 5.30 we went upstairs to find Mrs. Churchill already up, though she wasn't quite sure whether she were awake or not when the three of us appeared at such an early hour. Before she had gotten over her surprise footsteps were again heard on the stairs and Miss Elliott appeared at the head of a procession of boarding school girls. The latter surrounded Mrs. Churchill, sang their greetings, garlanded her with flowers and presented her with a number of small gifts.

The eighty years young member of the party was the one who was in a hurry that morning. She wanted to go out preaching and must get away early. She ate her "chota" upstairs by herself so she could hurry through it and just as the rest of

us were sitting down to the table she set off in her car with her victrola and a preacher.

It was nearly eleven o'clock before she returned.

After breakfast we all went over to the little chapel on Mr. Hardy's compound where forty very poor Christians from the "Rellis"—or fruit selling caste—were gathered. Mr. Hardy explained to them why they had been invited and after a short service of song and prayer Mrs. Churchill presented each with fruit, pappu, rice for their evening meal and an anna to buy something for curry.

The majority of these Christians had been received into the church only a short time before, and some of the women were still wearing their nose jewels and some of the men their juttus. The latter is a long lock of hair corresponding somewhat to the chinaman's pig-tail but in the case of the juttu the hair is not usually braided but simply tied in a knot at the back of the head. Both nose jewels and juttus are symbols of heathenism. Miss Clark suggested that they could add to Mrs. Churchill's happiness on that day by presenting her with these things and thus showing that they wanted to be recognized everywhere as christians. Some of the women promised to remove their jewels. Two of the men agreed to have their hair cut off then and there and Mrs. Stillwell joyously and courageously undertook the task; but a thick mass of matted hair isn't the easiest thing to cut, especially if the scissors aren't very sharp, so some of the men had to come to her assistance. She had the jettus though. Next time you see her be sure to ask her about them.

The afternoon was spent in opening the many letters of birthday greetings. Eighty letters, one for each year and three telegrams for good measure! There was time for only a peep at each one to see whom it was from.

Before the last letter was returned to its envelope the call came for dinner. A dozen or more of the older christians had