



KINDERGARTEN IN NELLORE MISSION, PAGE 275

were empty, and so the rice fields, once a carpet of lovely green, had shriveled into brown terraced wastes.

There was almost no grain to be had, and many of the Old Woman's children were hungry. They came to us for help, and we organized the mothers into groups, so that we could give them work, and the little ones were kept on the compound and school for them was started under a big margosa tree. Every evening the women came for their grain, and the children slipped in beside their mothers, holding out a piece of cloth, so that we would not forget as we measured out the grain, that there were many mouths to feed. One meal a day, and how thankful they were to get it! Many of them had only a little conge or broth in the morning, and nothing else all day. They came in to us from the villages hollow-cheeked and weak, asking for food for their little ones. All were willing to work, but some had to be fed before they were strong enough. After a while even the Old Woman's broth gave out, and then the tiny babies became

weak and sick and many of them died. Then the saddest of all things happened. Some of the poor mothers knew that they could not feed their little ones any longer and so rather than see them suffer they tried to sell them to whoever would pay. Sometimes a little girl would be sold in order to procure food for the rest of the family. One evening they brought to me a beautiful little three-year-old girl, asking me to buy her. I offered to take her and feed her, but as there is a strict law against buying and selling children, I dared not offer money for her. They would not listen to us, and went away saying that they could get a good price for her, and I never saw her again. My heart ached for days over that beautiful child, but though we searched near and far we could not find her.

At last, after months of famine, came the rain, cool and refreshing, but fatal to many who were weakened by privation. We had no doctor to care for the sick ones, but did what we could in our little

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