

## Work Abroad.

## VUYURU.

*My Dear Miss Green.* - It is Saturday afternoon, and just a week since my return from a tour of five weeks duration with our sister, Miss Stovel, on the good boat *Glad Tidings*. Some months ago Miss Stovel very kindly proposed this tour, to take place after my examination and accordingly, on July 14th, our sister came around to Vuyuru, spent the day with us, and she and I returned to the boat in the evening. We had expected to spend the whole of the transplanting season on tour together, but were unavoidably delayed until the season was more than half spent, so there was no time to be lost.

In all probability you understand the term "transplanting," but I shall add an explanation. As you are aware, this part of India is intersected by both irrigation and navigation canals, which are closed about the latter part of March, to be opened again the latter part of May. Then at an auspicious time for in India an auspicious moment is sought for the performance of almost every thing, from the ploughing of a field, the building of a house, to granting permission to a father to look upon the new baby that may have come during his absence from home - hence at an auspicious time the sprout beds, which, after the lapse of a month or so, are to supply all the other fields with sprouts, are prepared by letting on the water, ploughing and sowing the seed, after which the other fields are prepared, by which time the whole country side, which wears an otherwise somber garb, owing to the freshly turned earth, is enlivened with little patches of the loveliest, freshest green imaginable. These spots of green are the sprout beds, containing the young rice plants now ready to be transferred to quarters more commodious and conducive to sturdy growth and productiveness. [Spiritual transplanting would be a good thing to adopt in home churches, would it not?]

Now begins one of the busiest seasons in an Indian farming district, whole villages are depopulated, the population being transferred to the fields, so that from 9 o'clock in the morning till 5 o'clock in the evening in many villages, no one but the infirm, sick, mothers of infants and very young children are to be seen. No time is lost by the transplanters in returning for the mid day meal, for the small round bundle or the small black earthenware pot carried so easily on the head contains that simple meal - a bit of plain rice, or, in the case of the pot, the rice and the water in which it is cooked. All day long the song of the transplanters may be heard, as they, standing in water almost, if not quite knee-high, bury the roots of the sprouts in their soft bed.

This, and the harvest time, are the only seasons in which the women of certain castes are accessible, the men being absent in the fields, for the presence of the

sterner sex is not desirable to those who work among women. Indeed, their presence seems to quite unsettle the women, the attention of each one of whom is completely occupied with paying proper respect to her respective lord, at whose appearance she must rise and turn her back. Then, too, the "simple-minded Hindu," as some are pleased to call him, is a much more perplexing problem in some respects than his more illiterate wife, and is sure to propound some troublesome question, which, if one takes time to answer, is the most approved way of dispersing a crowd of women, whose gathering together is the result of much tact and patience.

We first spent some days on the Vuyuru side, then passed on to the Akidu side, thus I received an introduction into some of the villages in which my future work lies. In these new villages, the sight of white faces, at least those of women, was so unusual, that some time was spent in answering questions, for, whatever else these women are ignorant of, they have mastered the art of questioning. How timid they would be at first, until some more daring spirit would break the ice, then followed, "Are you men or women?" "Women! we thought you were men!" "Why did you come?" "How?" "What is your village?" "How many children have you?" "Not married!" accompanied by a suspicious shaking of heads, for such a state is beyond their comprehension. "How's that?" Whereupon we explain that they are the cause. "Have you father and mother?" [This from a mother.] "Have you elder and younger brothers and elder and younger sisters?" "Where are they?" "Are they married?" "Have they children?" "What work does your father do?" "What does your elder brother do?" "What is your brother in law's occupation?" "And your sisters?" "And you left them all and came to this country?" For upon being informed that our country is a long way beyond "Sina" (England), they are very much surprised, to say the least. "Well, what about your food?" "How much salary do you get?" We explain that we get none, for "jitam" is always connected in their minds with salaries paid by Government, and we wish them to understand that we are not dependent upon that source for a dub. So we tell them how the women in that far country, hearing of the fact that the women of India are idol worshippers, and knowing that God has expressly forbidden such worship, and that there is no salvation for those who live in disobedience to the true God's commands, sent us to make known the way of salvation, while they do their part by supporting us. "But how much do they send you, and do they send monthly, or how?" "What do you eat?" "How old are you?" "What do you become to each other?" In Akidu one woman asked if I was Miss Stovel's mother. We are questioned thus in every village, and in almost every house in which we work. It is only after their curiosity is satisfied that they are ready to listen.