

Our Work Abroad

SAMALKOT—WOMEN'S

As I have only been in charge of the Women's work on the Samalkot field for a matter of six weeks it will easily be understood that I have not much to report. The amount of direct personal work that I have been able to do is small. The weather became rather severely hot very quickly this year, but for two very hot weeks in April we did visit in the town. We saw some of the caste women whom Miss McLeod and Miss Farnell had been specially interested in, and examined the eight little evangelistic schools which meet here and there on week days in the town. We have spent every Sunday morning with the Sunday School held in connection with the church in the Malapalem and our hearts have been cheered by quite an increase in the attendance. The Superintendent is a young Christian woman who teaches in the Government Caste Girls' School in town. She is sister to our pastor's wife, and takes a real interest in the school. One of our teachers is the old town Biblewoman, Mollamma, another is an interested layman. Another, Deva Sahayam, a young man, who is to attend the school here in the Mission Compound while teaching a night-school in the palem, and still another class was in charge of another Christian woman who teaches in the Government Caste Girls' School. But her lord the husband has just lately ascended the celebrated Miff-Tree and has commanded her not to come near our school or church! So the Missamma takes her class and enjoys it exceedingly.

The evangelistic schools, attended by little caste girls, are interesting but have dwindled very much in attendance, owing, probably, to the frequent changes in missionary personnel. I am the third new Missamma in as many years. Change always means a hiatus—a time when nobody goes to visit, for a while. And then the attendance always falls off. Mollamma teaches these schools, and is really interested, but is too old for this work and can-

not teach well. It takes special gifts to work successfully amongst children, and we wish we had a gifted one for these schools. The average attendance this last year has been very low—only 36.

Our visits to the Zenanas revealed a number of interested ones, to whom it was a real pleasure to speak of Jesus, and who have some general knowledge of His life and work, but none who are regular learners. There is far more illiteracy here among the Sudras than there is in Avanigadda, and I think that accounts for the reluctance to enroll as learners. In this city of 12,000 there are only 70 girls in attendance at the Government Caste Girls' School. We had that many or more in Avanigadda (more, I'm sure) with one-quarter the population.

A number of men are friendly, but a number through indifference or dislike, refuse to take our tracts, saying often when we know it is not true that they cannot read.

I have not been able to do any touring, but have met in workers' meeting, the staff of eleven Biblewomen. Eleven sounds fine to a missionary from Avanigadda where we never had more than four. But I have no hesitation in saying that these eleven do nothing like the amount of work nor cover the ground that the four of Avanigadda did. Most of these—seven of them, in fact—are more or less aged, illiterate, decrepit, and inefficient, though they may be faithful. One cannot help feeling that they cannot do much toward the bringing in of the Kingdom. There are four younger ones. Of these, two—Sujenamma and Guanaratnamma—are efficient women of experience and some initiative, but they do not work beyond the limits of their own village, partly, perhaps, because they cannot be spared from family duties and partly, it seems, because they have never been used to walking any distance. Two others, of the younger four, Krispamma and Annamma, have just lately been taken on and have yet to prove themselves. They are both inexperienced. Krupamma's husband is a