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MARY SMITH, *Treas. W.H.M.U.*

AMHERST, April 30th, 1894.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT

### TO OUR MISSION BANDS.

A good friend of ours in Montreal sent me, last week, a very interesting letter from Miss Murray, one of our new missionaries in Cocanada, India, and asked me to publish part of it instead of a lesson for you this month in the LINK. I am sure you will all enjoy it as much as the Montreal Mission Bands, although it was only written for them.

SISTER BELLE.

*My Dear Young Friends,—*

Thinking that probably I have something interesting to tell the boys and girls of our Baptist Mission Bands in your city, I am writing a letter to be circulated among the Bands.

Each morning I rise quite early in order to spend some time with my Bible, and in talking with my Master ask Him to keep me and help me to let my light shine for Him during the day, so that if I cannot speak to the people in their language and tell them of Christ, my life, my actions and my looks may speak to them of Him. You know the people of India are divided into a great many castes or classes, and although those of one caste will talk with those of another caste, they will not eat together or marry outside of their own caste. Each caste worships a different god or gods, for they have millions of different gods made of wood, stone, mud, etc. In order to show which caste they belong to, the people wear marks on their forehead of different colored paints. Even the little boys and girls wear these. The man who is teaching us Telugu is a Brahmin and wears on his brow a little round spot of brown paint with two little white lines running out, one on each side. I told him one day that I wished very much to wear a caste mark. He looked surprised, but I explained to him that I wished people to know, by looking at my face, that I belonged to Christ. That is the best caste mark. You know our faces do become like the master we serve; if we serve Christ faithfully we are changed into His image.

Just as I become interested in my Bible each morning my heart grows sad at the sound of music from a heathen temple just south of our compound, a drum, bugle, and such noisy instruments! Moses warned the children of Israel about worshipping any graven image, for "God is a jealous God." How sad He must feel to see these people giving

the praise which belongs alone to Him, to these gods which they have made themselves.

It is very hard for those who have grown old in the service of idols to break off worshipping them, so we missionaries like to get the little children and teach them of Jesus and His love. One plan we have is to go out on Sunday afternoon to the homes of the children of the lowest caste. These people live in mud huts made in clusters together. (There are about nine of these groups in Cocanada city.) At first very few children came, for their mothers feared that the missionary wished to carry them off or harm them in some way, but now when the time for Sunday-school comes the children gather from all directions, the mothers often coming too. They sit on mats on the ground, the sweeper caste, the lowest of all. When each one looks so needy you wonder why any think themselves better than others, but they do.

As they gather there is a perfect torrent of "salaams" to the missionary: they seat themselves in rows on the mats and the school is opened by prayer. After the lesson is over, tickets are given out for attendance and perfect recitations. Do not think that these children come all nice and clean to Sunday-school. Sunday means no more than Monday or Tuesday to their parents. They are too poor to buy any clothes, if they did know enough to do so, so they just come in their nakedness, or in old waists or vests they have secured in some way, and look very funny. There are several schools like this one and of higher castes, and they are all doing good in leading their mothers also to Christ.

At Christmas time these children were given a treat by the missionaries, of plantains, like your bananas, but smaller, cakes and candy, balls, and some who attend a little day school received little jackets. The children in this country wear a great deal of jewelry, earrings, three or four in each ear sometimes, nose jewels, necklaces, bracelets, rings about their ankles and on their toes.

I must close by telling you of a sight that I saw on New Year's Day. Miss Simpson has a school for girls of different castes; in many of them are the daughters of wealthy parents. In this school they are taught reading (Telugu), arithmetic, catechism, sewing, and a great deal of the Bible, also singing hymns and action songs. They are of all ages, from five or six to thirteen years, and the majority of them are married, though they do not go to live with their husbands until they are twelve or thirteen. They had their treat on New Year's Day. The school-room is reached by passing through a place of business, where men are usually seated on the floor writing up a steep stair-case. It is not a large room, is furnished with long, old-fashioned benches, no desks, a table, one or two chairs; on the floor is bamboo matting, and on the wall some Bible pictures such as are used in your infant classes in Canada. A very interesting sight were these seats full of little dusky maidens, about forty of them, all resplendent in jewelry, and who greeted us with many "salaams."

I must tell you of their appearance as they sat waiting for the programme to begin. I shall start with the ornament worn by all on the top of their head, and which looked all