

MISSIONARY MEDICAL SCHOOL FOR WOMEN, VELLORE, INDIA

By Ida S. Scudder

Eighty-five miles northwest of Madras we find Vellore, and we feel that our part of India is beautiful in its quiet way. The railroad station is three miles to the north and the roads leading from Vellore are lined with large trees. There are many cocoanut and date palms with here and there a flame of the forest tree ablaze with its brilliant red blossoms. The graceful bamboo also adds an artistic touch. Stretching away from the road are the vivid, ever beautiful, ever green rice fields which often look like soft green cut velvet.

To the east of Vellore rise the rock-hewn hills—"our hills" the medical students all call them—and at their base nestles the city of Vellore. The Indian houses are small, usually one story, and it amazes one to know that here in Vellore we can find about sixty thousand people, for the city does not seem large.

To the west lies an interesting old fort dating from the thirteenth century, which makes Vellore a place of historic interest. The stone carvings found in the temple, which stands in the center of the fort, are some of the finest in India. As the temple was desecrated during the mutiny, one is able to penetrate the very holy of holies—a small, dark, bat-filled room where an idol stands. There are many Hindu temples in Vellore as well as some beautiful Mohammedan mosques, for Vellore is a large Mohammedan as well as a Hindu center.

In our drive from the railroad station we cross the Palar River, nearly a half mile of sand—or "desert", as a newcomer once called it. Occasionally during our monsoon season we find water in the river. After crossing it we enter Vellore, and soon pass the "junk stand" where the two-wheeled junkas with their patient little ponies await the traveler. Here, too, a few motor buses can be found. Turning abruptly to the left at this point, we pass some rather unattractive "shops" where a man seated cross-legged is willing to serve you with "hot tea." The

basket weavers have a small place on this roadside where they build a few gipsy-like houses, and do all their cooking and basket making under the trees.

Just after passing these rather forlorn places we see a beautiful tamarind tree and beyond, a fine low-lying white building—striking in its simplicity, but very attractive—and we know by the contrast of building that we have reached the Vellore Medical School, and this building is the Cole Dispensary recently opened by Lady Willingdon. It is large and roomy and delightful, built around an open court where during the cool weather flowers grow in profusion. Palms and crotons and hanging baskets of ferns decorate the arches which separate the wide verandahs from the court, and take away the feeling of this being a hospital and dispensary.

A timid patient came one day and looking about, said, "This isn't like a hospital. I have always been afraid of a hospital, but I have no fear here." So our palms and ferns are already doing their bit to make the sick people happier. A prominent government official when visiting the dispensary during its busy hours, when many sick and suffering were waiting, said, "People here all look so happy, even though many are so sick." Again we rejoiced that the beauty and simplicity of our first hospital are doing their quiet work of helping the suffering.

Surrounding the dispensary we have about twelve acres of land and it is here we plan to build all of the hospitals in connection with the Medical School. The plans are being drawn by two English architects who are very keen to make our entire institution a thing of beauty as well as of utility.

The hospital grouping looks most attractive on paper. Facing south we find first the Cole dispensary, and next the Northfield Chapel, and a little beyond, the Ewert Memorial Maternity Block. To the north we find the Scripps Children's Hospital and to the west the Weyerhauser Surgical and Medical building in the centre block. Each memorial is to be a separate unit and all to be connected by covered passages. When complete this should be wonderfully inspiring and if our visions of pretty gardens and lovely trees all