

FROM PEDDAPURAM, INDIA.

SCARCELY four months have elapsed since we reached this Telugu mission field. It is too early to speak of direct personal effort, but the very best time to record a few first impressions gleaned from observation and from conversation with our senior missionaries. I trust these may not be wholly void of interest.

The density of population at once impresses the new comer. Everywhere we are meeting people, in the fields, on the road, in the bazars, at the railway stations, in the cars—everywhere men, women and children of all castes or no caste. Looking up the bazar street in Cocanada from the bridge over the canal on any ordinary day, one sees the street filled from side to side, thousands of busy traffickers going hither and thither, but finally whither?

I look into their faces. Many bear the unsightly clay mark on the forehead that tells which of the vile gods of Hinduism they worship. But more unsightly still, is the look of many hardened, hopeless, or even beastly. For one who knows the deep, pure, upwelling joy of a life in Christ to look on the faces of these multitudes and read the ruin and the misery that sin has wrought in their lives is heart sickening. But that is only one side.

We find here and there faces in which a new light has been enkindled. Life plainly has a new meaning—nay rather, *has a meaning*—for the multitude know not the meaning of life at all. These few bright faces I need scarcely say are Christian faces. It is a great change indeed out here when Christ is given His place in the life.

Not that the Telugu Christians rise at once freed from all the weaknesses, prejudices, vices, and superstitions of their former life. That is unreasonable to expect; it was not so in Corinth in Paul's time. And if the opinion of one of our missionaries who expressed himself on this matter be the opinion of all, it is safe to say we have few if any churches in our mission that are not purer and better than the church at Corinth was when Paul first wrote to it. These Telugu Christians are weak and must be treated very much like children for years to come. They generally lack initiative; personal concern for the salvation of their heathen neighbors. They are accustomed to the old order of things. A sense of the awfulness of sin and of God's righteous judgment against it is slow to awaken and pos-

sess them. Many, too, have a false impression of the Christian life, looking on it as a means of getting rather than of giving. And there are darker stains on the character of some which are a source of unspeakable grief to the missionary. But withal they are God's elect. He has begun His work in them; we must not yet expect it perfected. He has begun the work in them, therefore he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. Looking at the work in this light we are filled with great joy, and missionaries who have had the privilege of laboring longest see a great advance in the spiritual life in the native churches. Indeed, could we realize the depth and foulness of the pit from whence they have been digged, and the inadequate supply of men to teach and feed and shepherd them, we cannot but be filled with wonder at what God has wrought, and shame that we have not done more for them. Altogether the Telugu Christians are a most lovable and loving people so far as I can hear and see, and personally I have been deeply moved by their evident love for us missionaries. I do not yet nearly understand all that they say in their prayers, but I know enough to understand they are praying for us that God would bless us and fill us with the Holy Spirit, and that the Telugu language might come easily and quickly. It is enough to make one's eyes moisten and one's heart melt in love for these dear members of the body of Christ.

I find the missionaries united. There are differences of opinion in details, and we are not sorry for that. It is enough and more than enough reason for praise that there is absolute oneness of purpose and the warmest Christian love in our mission family. But I find the missionaries are over-burdened. I wonder how they endure as they do. It is only through the strength of God.

More workers are urgently needed. There is the Peddapuram field, for example. Population about 225,000, Christians 366 in sixty-two villages, 250 villages on the field. One lady missionary, but no resident male missionary. Surely these facts must speak.

I am busy with the language. This must for some time be my special work. But I long for the time when I shall be able to preach Christ to this people in their own tongue. Pray for us.

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