

VUYYURU, KISHNA DISTRICT.

July 23, 1904.

DEAR FRIENDS OF THE LINK,—

For some time now I have been wanting to send you a letter, to tell you how good it is to be back again at work. In one way I am living on my furlough yet. It was such a lovely holiday,—I don't suppose one could have two such furloughs in one lifetime, but in another way it hardly seems as if I had been away at all. The harness feels so familiar, and the conditions of life so natural, that it is as if it had always been and always would be.

As I came bumping along to Vuyyuru in the usual ox-cart, and drew near the village where I had lived for five years; I began to look for the emotion which other people had spoken of in my hearing, as having come to them under similar circumstances, but they seemed strangely absent. What occupied the front place in my consciousness was the very familiar emotion of aching bones and sore muscles, consequent upon the jolting ride of seventy miles in a springless ox-cart. However as I passed one familiar landmark after another, and at last came right into the dusty little town, the very surroundings began to impress very forcibly upon my mind the fact that I had left Canada with all its fairness far, far behind me, and that I was once more in India,—the same old India! Yes, here was the same white, choky dust, the same old glare, the same old smell; the same old squalid-looking wood houses, the same old mangy dogs, the same old temple on the bank of the village tank, reminding me with a dull thud at my heart, of the same old fight to which I had returned. Nothing was sweet or clean or pretty. All was dust, dirt, squalor and sin. Oh! how my heart sank at the prospect of another seven or eight years amidst such surroundings! And I had so lately left the fairest country under the sun. There was not one glint of romance in the whole outlook. All seemed uncompromisingly grey and dull.

But lo! a gleam of comfort, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and the gleam widened and brightened into perfect peace. Better, far better, than any romantic view of the situation, was the sure knowledge and trust that, "The Lord, He it is that doth go with thee."

There was no formal welcome for me in Vuyyuru, but an informal one, lengthened out for many

days, even out to the days on tour among the villages, when heathen and Christian friends alike would break into smiles on seeing me and say:—"What a long time since we have seen you!" Some of the women in the villages were very badly mixed, and didn't know whether I was a reincarnation of the very first Missamma (Miss Murray) or The-one-who-had-been-and-gone, or The-one-who-had-come-in-the-meantime. All Missammas look alike to them, and there seemed as many different opinions as there were Missammas, but finally we persuaded them that it was The-one-who-had-been-and-gone. When I got on tour, the little depression of the ox-cart fled—never to return as long as I am in the work; this wonderful work which is a panacea for all ills of the mind and spirit.

We had just as good times as ever, on tour. One young widow whose name means Good Treasure, had heard the Gospel from us several times, and this time she said "You've talked of Jesus Christ over and over again; now tell me how to *get hold* of him." I was pretty well taken aback, for I thought I always told how to "get hold of him," but evidently she had not understood; probably she thought I could teach her some charm or incantation by which she might invoke the Divine presence, so I read her passage after passage about faith and prayer, and spent another hour trying to tell her the secret of the Lord. When I could say no more she said, "You have answered my question, you have told me what I wanted to know." I was glad of her question, because it showed that she saw a difference between just knowing about Jesus, and having Him as her Saviour.

Some listeners remind me of a deep well. You drop a stone in; the circles widen and there seems to be a difference, but in a little while all is deathly still again, and you never see nor hear anything more of the stone you dropped in; no more than if you had never dropped it.

Some others remind me of a seed sown in good soil. Next time you visit the place there is a difference; there is a tiny sprout. We went to a new part of our field this year, at least it was always there, I am sure, but it wasn't always "Our" field. Down in the delta of the Krishna river where its many mouths join the sea, two of these divided streams form a large island where, a few years ago, the Gospel had, as far as we know, no believers. The Vuyyuru field was large enough; we never used to go into this