

It was wonderful considering her parents and her surroundings that Appi grew up so graceful in form and so positively pretty in face. Often beaten because she was so lazy, she yet had a careless smiling manner with her as if she had not a sorrow or a care in the world.

Her outlook was limited indeed, and her desires were expressed in those of getting something to eat, something to wear, and by any means possible a few jewels. And indeed there were times when Appi got positively nothing to eat and was compelled to lie down silent and supperless and cry herself to sleep. The food on which she lived was but scant and often the hard berries of the jungle were resorted to in order to help out her meals.

Often the early morning found her on the road with the other girls and women on the way to the jungle for wood. Then perhaps they would join in a song. "Rama, Rama, Rama," went the refrain for it was to the heathens' god that she sang praises.

What a merry laughing group this band of women sometimes seemed to be, and how musical their voices would sound in the early morning air. Again their mood would change and a fierce wordy altercation would spring up and they would shriek and scream in a most threatening way or they would talk of things too shameful to think of. They were all very dirty and exceedingly ignorant, some of them very insufficiently clad, a few ate opium while all of them smoked on occasions. Appi was a true coolie girl, bright eyed, shrill of speech and lavish of gesture. She had a lazy, careless way with her and certainly did not carry the burden of the morrow.

At fifteen she became a wife and mother and the burdens of life crowded upon her. Her husband, if such indeed he could be called, was a worthless good for nothing fellow who seemed to care but little for the girl and her child.

She still had to work, for none are spared in the coolie community. So she often went into the jungle to bring wood or into the fields to dig grass.

We might follow this band of coolie girls into the jungle. They do not go near the hills until the sun is well up and the wandering tiger or panther has fled from the villages. The dry wood is picked up here and there and there is often a man with an axe to break the big sticks. The bundles are tied up and then the hot sun drives them into the shade of a big tree where they rest during the noon hour chatting with each other, smoking cigars, or perhaps drinking some *gunge* or rice water they have brought.

Around is the thronging life of the tropics; birds of beauteous hue, butterflies with all the prismatic blendings of the rainbow, beetles and insects of wondrous and varied shapes and sizes. The blue bird, the mynah, the impudent crow overhead, the soaring kite, while near by is the palen squirrel, or a mongoose, or a mountain sheep may be seen. Then again the harmless lizard, or the hateful scorpion, or dreaded snake passes from cover to cover.

Appi and the rest of the women were oblivious to the beauty of the scene. In their simple classification all these birds, insects and animals were known as harmless or poisonless, as good for food, or not fit to eat.

After the noonday rest and cigar, Appi would join the women in the weary trudge home. Then came the care of the child, the preparation of the evening meal, followed by sleep on a mat in a corner of the

hovel. Sometimes the frenzied shouts of the villagers as they quarrelled would render sleep impossible, or there might be an entertainment in the palem, when wandering minstrels would play and sing.

During feast times there would be plenty to eat and each woman would buy, or beg, or borrow a clean robe. On one occasion while preaching at a feast in Tuni we noticed Appi with a clean dress on and a gold circlet around her neck.

And so Appi's life drifted on; but the end soon came. The failure of the monsoons of '91 ruined the crops and rice was both scarce and high then, followed by the hot weather.

The heat of India cannot really be described, it must be felt to be realized. The readings of the thermometer may give the degree but it cannot give the quality of the heat nor can it register its effects upon the human frame, weakened it may be by lack of food or because of the lack of oxygen in the heated atmosphere.

A May day in Tuni is like an inferno. The earth is scorched and becomes as hard as a rock, the grasses die, the bushes wither, the trees droop.

No vegetation except that which is watered with care can resist the scorching sun. The miserable pariah dogs with lolling tongues and panting breath, driven to madness with hunger and heat, often run through a village biting man, woman, or child, or ox, or cow, or anything that stands in their mad career.

Then comes the raging land wind, hot as from a furnace, which warps the doors and curls up the backs of books and smites down the weary pilgrims who with languid step are returning from distant shrine or bathing ghāt.

Think of the Malapalem at this time with its naked sweltering mass of humanity, its leaf-roofed houses crowded together and with dogs and pigs and children and men in indescribable and promiscuous assemblage.

It was here then that Appi came to her end. April and May had come with their heat and scarcity, and the days had slowly dragged themselves along. She had not been able to work and her mother and the man who passed for her husband, could not, or would not, more likely, give her sufficient to eat. Then the rains came down in floods and poured through many a leaking roof. The fever season had come again so weakening and distressing to those who are already weak.

In September her second child was born, but the weary mother had no strength and there was none to help; those who would have assisted were not called and so she passed away.

The women crowded around with the hoarse moan of grief so hopeless and so distressing in a heathen land. Then the men came and Appi was carried to the burning ground which she had so often passed on her way to the hills for wood.

In a few minutes a volume of smoke commenced to ascend, the men sat down a short distance off and watched it burn and soon all that remained of Appi was reduced to ashes. Her baby also died in a short time. It was whispered that it was poisoned. Who can tell? The burning ground reveals no secrets.

This is a simple story. It is a true story. The work of the mission and especially of the girls' school is to put life and hope and purpose into the hearts of girls like Appi, for though they come from such unlovely surroundings they are worth saving and indeed are loveable and lovely when saved.