

## THE NEW MOVEMENT AMONG THE SUDRAS.

It is with no small degree of pleasure that I write to you of the new attitude the caste people are holding toward the message we bring and toward the messengers. As you know, the converts in this part of the Telugu Mission have been almost entirely from the non-caste classes and chiefly from one of those classes, the Madigas. These are the hereditary leather workers and are despised on account of their work, as well as for other reasons. They are the scavengers and do all the mean and dirty work of the villages. They are indeed low and mean and dirty. Their hovels are outside of the village proper and they have no place in the village social economy. My blood has boiled within me as I have heard these poor despised creatures driven away from the caste people in some villages.

To such a wretched class the good news of Christ and his salvation came just forty-three years ago, and the first Madiga, Yerraguntla, Pariah was baptized by Dr. Jewett in Ongole. The work spread like wild-fire and soon all India and all Baptist America were thrilled with the news that thousands had turned from dumb idols to serve the living God. This great work has continued until just recently and most of the converts in the centre of the Baptist Telugu Mission are from the Madigas.

At first I think the missionaries were somewhat disappointed that the converts were not from the caste people. The Brahmans and the Sudras rather laughed at the idea of these Madigas becoming Christians and they hinted that as birds of feather flock together, so since these missionaries go so much to the Madigas, they must have been Madigas in their own country. The caste people laughed, then they cursed, and many have been the troubles of these poor despised people since they became Christians.

But a new day has come. It is now six years since I returned to India and in that time some fifty Sudras have been baptized, being more than were baptized during the seventy years preceding in the whole of the Telugu Baptist Mission. I have not the figures to tell just how many have been baptized in the whole mission during the past five years, but I believe it to be as many as two hundred. Yet I do not think that the number of baptisms shows even a slight degree the new attitude of mind of these Sudras toward the work we are doing among them.

Let me be specific. Take the matter of education. The government of India has a school system, which in theory admits all classes equally to the schools, but as a matter of fact the children of the non-caste classes, be they Christians or be they Hindu, are absolutely kept out of the village schools by the caste people. In a few of the larger towns where the missionaries have fought for them the children of the Christians attend some few schools along with the others, but in the villages on my field, which is as large as Rhode Island, not one Christian child attends the government schools. Now comes what is to me of deep interest in this social uplift of a downtrodden class. These very caste people who steadfastly refuse to allow any of the Christian children to attend the government schools are requesting me to send to them Christian teachers to instruct their youths. As there is somewhat of a prejudice to having the non-caste children attend a school in the caste part of the town and as the caste people do not care to send their children to a school in the non-caste part of the place, we have solved the question in several villages by putting up a small house midway between the two and then all classes may attend.

And now we have the sight of a humble Christian teacher from the most despised of India's low caste community instructing the children of probably the proudest class in the world, the Brahman. Most of the caste pupils, however, are from the Sudras. But the surprise is greater that one of our teachers, Ramiah, has