

THE YOUNG WOMEN

KATAKSHAMMA OF VUYURU.

By Miss Bessie Lockhart

I am sitting at my writing table, with the boarding school girls weaying a palm-leaf mat just outside my window. "Girls," I called, "what is the meaning of Katakshamma?" "Grace of God," comes the answer. Yes, "Grace of God is her name and the Grace of God is with her," I think, as I see her, in fancy, going from house to house this afternoon in the caste quarter of the village, telling the wonderful love of Jesus, and teaching regular learners the stories of the Bible. "Ammah," she said to me this morning, with that happy glow on her face that one sees rarely at home, but perhaps more often here, "God is just like David said, 'A lamp unto our feet.' Yes, better than that, 'He is the Light of the World,' I was glad to be able to answer.

She says the Light dawned upon her when she listened to Miss Murray's story of salvation, more than twenty years ago. After some time, she was baptized, but her heart was sore, and her body was bruised at the brutal treatment of her husband.

"Yes, I believe in Jesus, a caste friend of ours said, 'but what can I do? My husband will not come.' And then Katakshamma gave her happy message, 'Oh, keep on praying, keep on praying. You will never know the pain and sorrow I had for years. Oh! how my husband beat me because I was a Christian, but I kept on praying. I would awake at night and pray for him. God will hear your prayer. He heard mine, for at last my husband began to come to church, and then he was baptized. Keep on praying for him.' Oh! you Canadian women who have loved your unseen Indian sisters, if you could just have caught a glimpse of Katakshamma's face and seen the reflected gleam of hope that passed to her caste-bound sister, just that one sight of God's favour would make you glad for your sacrifice or work. Many a woman is seeing the dawn of the new light through her who walks indeed in the favour of God.

A few weeks ago, I visited Kardavall-colle, her native village, a few miles from here. After we had seen all the houses—for they are all Christians now—she said, "Now Ammah, you must see the house where I was born." And there, in the little, low, one-roomed hut, I stood silently and thanked our Father that He had chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. What a meaning those words have to me now. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." What absolute absurdity to expect those wretched coolies to exercise any influence on the caste people around them. What silly optimism to think that that illiterate, dirty, unkempt little girl could be over anything but what she was born. Here, in this hut, she lived the ordinary, poverty-stricken, dreary, ignorant life of the cooly. In wretchedness and heathenism she was married to her brutish husband, and here, in darkness, hopelessness, and bodily weakness she toiled at field work, until the light came into the dark village. Katakshamma, by the favor of God, walked no more in darkness but in the light of life.

Only a year after she had seen the fulfilment of her prayers in the baptism of her husband, she became a widow. Then, the sermon that Dr. Brown had preached while she was yet in Hindulism, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel," came with increasing power to her. She could not read. She only knew a few hymns and Bible stories. She was past the age when anyone could learn to read, much less a woman. Yet she came to the boarding school in Stillwell Doragaru's time, and there, with the tiny tots of the school, she learned to read the Bible that she loves best of all books.

Now for a story that ought to put heart into all of us who are struggling against temptation. I often think, "God could help that little Indian cooly woman, He can help me." She had become addicted to the habit of smoking, and somehow, although she had given up other heathen habits, she could not give up this. Night after night, she would steal off from the

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