

The End of the Centenary of India.

One of Miss Fahs' expressions was "This too will pass away" and so it has with the centenary of the India mission. Over two years ago there was much excitement about the beginning of it in Guntur, and at the time when there were disturbances within and without. The begin was profitably carried out beginning with July 31st 1942 in Guntur and now a few words about the end up to and after Jan. 31st. 1944 when the big celebration took place in Rajahmundry.

The closing tours took place on the southern side of the great Godavari River, with its waters flowing into the many canals, on which travel is easy in house boats. To save time a number of groups worked from different centers and changed personal after ten days or two weeks, which was long enough for such strenuous work. There were three or four missionaries in each group and a number of pastors and other workers. The women had special privileges, getting into many Hindu homes, not entered by Bible women as they are far too few.

It was a great time for each congregation to have so many strangers among them. It meant some burden for them to feed the groups. Many times the missionaries would have rather returned to the boat for a meal as they are not used to eating rice and curry day after day, but it would have been an offense not to accept their hospitality especially after "the fatted calf" or rather rooster had been killed for the occasion. It seemed to make no difference how late the meal was served but it some times interfered with the gospel work of the afternoon. In many of the villages on this side of the mission, there are still a number of the out castes out side the fold so there is much work to be done among them. It was noticed the poor condition of the Christians if they lived among a majority of unconverted. One village, of the untouchables, proudly boasted of not having a heathen among them. Many all claim that in time.

As in other parts of the mission these people from the lowest type, because of their position now, were allowed to parade through the main streets of the caste-part of the town to tell why Christ came and what He had done for them, and how Father Heyer started the mission. Mr. Valet really started the work on Rajahmundry side but all claim Rev. Heyer as their real father and showed it by wearing the Father Heyer pins. Except in a few places permission was given to show the magic lantern of the life of Christ and the cinema of Father Heyer's travels in the big square of the town. All could enjoy it there and often several hundred sat on the ground listening to these and the gospel story by word of mouth. All thank God for His protection and guidance in carrying out the program and plans to the very end. In the dry parts, where the rice is not the main crop the missionaries lived in tents and the workers in the homes of the Christians.

Just for a few personal touches of things seen and heard about. One day the missionaries had their noon meal in a very big, two story house. Years ago the host had put a case against the missionary because he had helped the poor Christians in standing out on the principle of not working on Sunday. The missionary could not refrain from teasing him just a little for his change of mind altho he lost the case.

One evening the ox cart to be sent by the Christians did not turn up but a friendly Hindu woman had pity on the women and sent them to the canal in their big farm cart. Then the boat was too far away for them to walk to it so they climbed into a cargo boat, filled with bags of rice, which ^{made} our seats and with the help of a little wind in the sails all reached town soon after dark but too far away to walk home. Another friend got us a small ox cart to send us home and handed us an egg apiece to eat instead of our dinner, which we had missed. They went to bed thankful that they had seen the biggest, village congregation, of all the mission. Would you not have enjoyed seeing that clean, quiet congregation going through an order of service, such as you use each Sunday? Only about 400 could get into the church and that was only half of the number of the congregation. Just outside the door there were baskets of chickens, which had been raised off their donation on this greatest day of their history. Only a few in each congregation can read but they learn many songs and loved to sing one of the centenary songs.

One time the house boat was held up on account of lack of water in the canal, but an empty bungalow^w was not many miles away so the party made it the center for a few days. Every difficulty seemed to be overcome and practically no change had to be made in the program and very little sickness and few accidents. One little missionary boy threw his shoes into the canal to see if they would sink. The helm of one of the boats was lost but a village blacksmith made another one for them.

As one closes such evangelistic trips the wish to do more of such work is uppermost in one's mind but they are expensive and very wearing for all who take part in them. The missionaries perhaps had more comforts but often had to walk long distances and run cinemas late at night. If in tents the men would be around early next morning to move the tent on to the next village. A boat is both an easy way to travel and a more comfortable place for eating. While away from the station work piles up on the office desk. Plans too must be made in the local conferences, synods, and mission councils. Things will not work without machinery, neither will missionary work without gears and oils.

The motto on the centenary banner was "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light". It was spoken by Isaiah many years ago and that Light has been carried into many villages during the last two years and we are sure the lighted torches will light many during the coming years. We leave results with God.