



## **Miss E. Starck – 1904 (Edition 1)**

Commended from Rongatea, Miss Emily Starck was one of a small party of missionaries that went out to India in October 1904. With Miss Cora Newport she joined Mr and Mrs C.H. Beer at Narsapur. Misses Starck and Newport were the first New Zealanders to go to the Godavari where the assembly witness was pioneered by Mr Beer's parents in 1836 as a result of a visit to India of Anthony Norris Groves in 1833. Not many months afterwards she was confronted with the tragedy of India. The body of a 12 year old girl was pulled out of the river. Her husband had died and as was customary her head was shorn and her jewels (?) taken away. Too ashamed to live she had ended her life in the murky waters.

In 1907 after passing her Telugu exams Miss Starck moved to be with Mr and Mrs Tom Heelis who had served the Lord in the Godavari since 1855. These were to become familiar experiences: – selling Scriptures amongst a crowd of 100,000 devotees bathing in the waters of the Godavari delta; watching the potters in the villages mould earthenware where missionaries sought by visitation to bring people to the Master potter; teaching young girls the Scriptures in classes, telling out the Word of life with the help of Bible women and the boatmen on the houseboat and visiting in the jungle as far afield as Rajahmundry. Miss Starck returned to New Zealand for furlough in 1910.

During the following ten years she saw the work grow in the Delta. By 1920 there were some 1,500 in fellowship in 25 centres, 4,000 in the Christian community, 2,000 children in day schools and 1,500 in Sunday Schools and Bible classes with 46 teachers, 30 Indian evangelists and 75 teachers in the day schools. Those had been years when hundred of villagers had been contacted. Miss Starck herself was active in girls' classes though often being frustrated in seeing good Christian girls taken away to be child wives. In 1913 she was visiting at Dowlashweram where the work had first been started in 1855 by Mrs and Mrs Bowden Senior who, as a young couple in their early '20s, had gone out to India with A.N. Groves in 1836. Dowlashweram had also been the scene of the activities of the engineer Sir Arthur Cotton who encouraged the Christian witness.

In 1918 while working in the girls' school which Miss J.A. Rhodes had commenced, her companion was taken to be with Christ. Miss Starck continued in charge of this work at Amalapuram. During the early 1920's she experienced a lot of sickness but in later years was able to continue with her work in the school and out visiting the villages from the houseboat with Miss Munro as her companion. One encouraging feature of her work was to come upon women in the villages who had been saved as girls in the school, still retaining their faith though with very little encouragement at all.

Miss Starck's health further deteriorated in 1935 and she was compelled to stay for some time at Ootacamund on the hills. In the following years she suffered considerably from neutritis and spent most of her time at Moutauban, Ootacamund with visits to Bangalore and in 1950 to Coonoor. Though only able to visit a little she confessed she could pray and exercised that ministry. She had a fall and broke her hip in 1952 and died in the nursing home about a week later on November 6th 1952.

[Source entry includes photos with captions: 'Miss B. Shirliff, Malaya, Mr E.H. Noel, Miss C. Newport, Mr J. McIver, Miss E. Starck", and 'Miss Starck with the girls of a Caste School at Amlapuram, India'. Also p.171 has photo captioned: 'Missionary group in 1924. Back: Mr Irvine, Miss Mai, Mr Brewerton. Centre: Miss Sundgren, Mrs Noel, Mrs Black, Mr Noel, Miss Mosley, Mr Revell, Miss Treweek, Miss Townley, Miss Starck, Mr Buchanan. Seated: Mr and Mrs Thomson, Mr Black, Mrs Irvine, Mrs Revell, Miss Dyason, Mrs A. Redwood. Note: Mr Brewerton was visiting India from Malaya.']