

THE GRASS GATHERER.

BY REV. NORMAN RUSSELL.

For the CHILDRENS' RECORD.

FROM the frightened look in the faces of both woman and child, this picture was evidently taken only after much persuasion on the part of the photographer. Some people in India have a great dread of being photographed.

A gentleman in Bombay recently wished to procure the photograph of a Pathan from Afghanistan. One after another was approached in vain till the whole tribe came to know of his attempt, and they shunned that man as they would a ghost. They firmly believed the picture was to be sent to the Queen who would instantly order the unlucky man's head to be cut off.

This woman is a type of India's poor; her occupation is a very humble and profitless one. Daily she goes to the jungle for a bundle of grass which she sells in the town for the small sum of three or four cents.

This is not so easy an occupation as would be supposed. India's jungles are not, as is commonly imagined, a luxuriant tangle of grass, vines, trees, and beautiful flowers, but more usually dry bare plains intersected here and there with hills and streams.

Away from the river banks and hillsides there are few trees, and except for the cultivated fields the plains are brown and dry for eight months in the year, only springing into new and exuberant life during the rainy season.

It is no easy matter therefore, for the woman to gather her daily bundle of green

grass, especially as the pastures near the villages are reserved by the shepherds for their herds and she often has to go far afield.

Sometimes along with the grass they



gather a little bundle of sticks, which will always bring a pice or two more.

It is amusing to watch them when they arrive at the outskirts of the town, stop and re-arrange their grass and wood into