

CHILDREN OF INDIA.

BABYHOOD and childhood is not so happy in heathen lands as it is in Christian countries, and I have often longed to be able to build a home for poor, neglected children, where they would be kept clean, taught about Jesus and made happy. I used to have a class of servants' children on the verandah every Sunday, when I taught them to sing, repeat some little prayers, and the Catechism and Commandments in rhyme. This is the little prayer which here so many little ones learn to lisp as soon as they are old enough :

Moiu sol jata hun Khuda
 Tu mujhe afat se bacha,
 Aur jo moi maruu aj ki rat
 Tu mere ruh ko de najat.

I have had children brought to me for medicine when they were so dirty I could scarcely bear to have them near me. I must first bring a basin of warm water and make the mother wash the dirty little face and eyes before the lotion or eyewater can be used. At our hospital I have always kept a bottle filled with "potasses," a native sweet which was called the "mem sahib's" medicine, because I always filled the baby hands with the candy to comfort the little heart after we had administered some bitter dose or put some stinging lotion into the sore eyes.

When the child is born the parents get charms from the brahmin or priest, and tie them about the neck or arms of the baby to keep away sickness or evil spirits, and these priests deceive the people, giving them a bit of paper with a little pencil scribbling on it, telling the mother to tie it carefully on the string round the child's neck. When a baby boy is born in a family, they have great rejoicing, and everybody congratulates the father because he has a son. They often have a band of music and other demonstrations, but if the new baby is a girl it is kept very quiet, and when friends hear of it they sympathize with the father and tell him it is a great pity, but that he must hope and pray that God will, some time in the future, send him a son to bury him when he dies.

It costs a great deal to marry a girl, and you know they begin to arrange for the marriage of their children when they are very young, and never wait to consult them about the matter. The poor mother generally loves her child, even when it is a girl, but she is often treated as if she had been guilty of some great sin that God should have sent her a girl baby. Sometimes they neglect their girls so that they may die, and thus they may be spared the expense of buying a husband for them. Many years ago they used to throw them into the river, but now the English Government will punish any who are so cruel, if they are found out.

I once had a poor little baby brought to me, so ill and thin that its face looked like an old woman's. The father did not care for it, and would not give the mother money to buy suitable food, and even in the winter no clothes were provided except old

dirty rags—all this because it was a girl. I gave it medicine and food on the verandah twice every day, but the poor little thing had been neglected too long, and one morning I heard that it had died through the night beside its mother, and she found it when the light dawned, cold and lifeless. The father would not even allow enough oil to burn a light, or help to keep watch over the poor, sick baby. I felt sorry for the mother and could only comfort her by telling her I was sure her little one had gone to be with Jesus, who loved little children and blessed them when he was upon this earth.

This is to them quite a new idea, as the heathen believe they will never meet again with those who are taken away by death, but that they are born again and again in form of some animal, or perchance a snake. It is for this reason that they do not like to destroy life of any kind, and will even allow a dangerous snake to live lest they might destroy some relative. Now these are the children for whom you pray and work. God is answering your prayers, and I can only urge you to pray and work more diligently, thanking Him that you have been born in a Christian land, and have been given a mother who teaches you to love and serve Jesus.—*Children's Work for Children.*

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SPECIAL.

TO THE W. M. A. SOCIETIES OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

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