

SAD SCENES.

PENANCE IN MEXICO.

Do you know what "penance" means? Let me tell you. In the Roman Catholic Church the people confess their sins to the priest, and he imposes such punishments as he may think each case demands.

I know of three kinds of penance here in Mexico.

First, the penitents are allowed nothing to eat for a given time but bread and water. Another, is to go from their home to the church or cathedral on their knees. In each hand they carry a wax candle about two feet long, and when they reach the church the priest lights the candles. They must remain on their knees in there until they are burned out. When one thinks that pavements in Mexico are rough and broken, and the streets steep and irregular, it is not difficult to imagine what a hard penance this would be.

The other and the most horrible one, perhaps, of all, is imposed during Lent. A room is set apart for the purpose at the church. The women on whom penance has been laid are gathered together first. Afterward the men. They are confined in this room for a period of eight or ten days. The priest furnishes each penitent with a scourge, very much resembling a cat-o'-nine-tails. Then the priest preaches a sermon each night on such subjects as the Judgment, Death, and Purgatory. While he is preaching, the lights are blown out in this room, the clothing is partly removed, and each penitent is expected to beat himself or herself on the back with this whip until the skin is broken and the blood flows.

The waiting congregation in the body of the church can plainly hear the blows and cries of these poor deluded creatures. I was told that two women died in Monterey last year from the effects of this penance. This is a horrible word-picture, but, alas! it is too true. Do not think that the poorer and ignorant classes alone are subjected to such outrages, no class is excepted. Rome reigns supreme and her commands must be obeyed.
—Annie A. Boyce in *Over Sea and Land*.

"LITTLE LIGHTS."

A SERMON FOR LITTLE FOLK.

"Ye are the Light of the World."

IT was Sunday afternoon in September. The Mission Band was holding its five o'clock meeting. The day had been very warm, and a smaller number than usual had come to the meeting.

When they first went into the room the setting sun shone through the stained glass and laid bright blue, red and golden diamonds on the carpet.

Little Willie sat dangling his short legs and counting the spots until they slowly faded out.

Then Miss Greenleaf spoke from the little alcove which was getting dim in the gathering twilight.

"Willie, what is this?"

"A match," said Willie, after a sharp look.

"Will it give a bright light?" said she, lighting it.

"Yes—a little light," said Willie.

"There! It has gone out! But a match helps a little. How does it help?"

"I found my ball once with a match, said Hermie.

"We light lamps with matches," Arthur said.

"Now, can anyone tell what this is?" and Miss Greenleaf held up a queer little dish with oil in it, and a little roll of cloth coming from the oil up to the side of the dish.

It had grown so dim in the alcove that she stepped down to them with it. But no one knew, so she said, "It is a kind of lamp used long ago. Now, when I take it back and light it so—with this match, you see what a dim, queer light it gives, but it is better than a match.—Why, Lila?"

"Because it don't go out," said Lila.

"Now what is this?" said the teacher, slipping forward again.

A dozen voices said "A candle!"

"Yes—just a tallow candle; will it give a good light?"

"Pretty good—better than the old-fashioned lamp there," answered James.

"Now we have it lighted—watch it a