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Esmer's Story.

(By Miss C. H. Pratt, Missionary in Mardin, Turkey.)

I live in a stone and mud house, and my father keeps his wheat in the walls of the house.

There is not room for me to play in the house, because there is a great wooden loom in the middle of the room where father weaves: and besides the great skin bags for lentil seed (that is what Esau's pottage was made of, you know), and some other kinds of seeds, there is the big pile of bedding for all of us, and by the fireside baby's cradle and mother's spinning wheel.

In my cousin Besne's house there is more room to play, but her mother calls us bad and says she will cut our ears off, so Besne and I go out in the yard or up on the roof to play. Besne is very quick in playing ball; she throws the ball down on to the roof very hard, to make it bounce high, and then whirls around once before it comes down. I haven't any playthings except a few painted bones.

Besne's yard is larger than ours, too, and we play there Saturdays and Sundays till it is time for the cows and oxen and donkeys to come in. Besne's father has one poor, thin horse, too, and at night all the animals go through the house into a stable in the back part of the house.

We have only a donkey at our house, and at his drinking time I like to ride him down to the large pool where the women wash clothes. The pool dries sometimes, and then when rain comes again we boys (we are almost always barefoot) run back and forth through the fresh water in the pool.

One day, a few years ago, I was out with other boys on the large, flat rocks where father threshes his wheat, and a strange-looking man rode by on horseback. One of the boys called out, 'Englleze,' and another said, 'See the man with the pail on his head.' That night this strange man had a meeting in the house of those new people, the Protestants, and father and I went.

The man read from a book he called 'The Holy Book,' and shut his eyes and prayed, and then talked to us, and did it all in our own language, but he talked to the men and I couldn't understand very well.

I cannot understand the priest in our church at all. His reading sounds like singing, and he reads and prays in a language none of us know; and when my uncle prays he keeps his eyes open.

Father called this man an American, and when we went home some men went with us and while I was getting to sleep they sat around on the floor smoking their long-handled pipes and cigarettes, and talking about what the American had said. My father said, 'I have heard their talk before and I have been learning to read their book, and I believe they bring to us the truth.'

I went to sleep, wondering whether father had been taking some of the medicine that makes people Protestants, and whether wicked men would send oxen to tread down his wheat, if he should join the Protestants. The next day father said to me, 'I am going to send you to the Protestant school to learn reading before I teach you a trade.

Here is your primer, and I will go with you this morning.'

When the boys and girls on the roofs saw us going to the Protestant school, they shouted after us, 'Prot, Prot,' and I was afraid they would throw stones as they did at the American, but they did not.

My father told the teacher, Yusof, to teach me to read. Teacher Yusof sent me into the corner with one of the big boys who taught me aleph, ba, ta (a, b, c), and so sometimes from the teacher, and sometimes from one of the boys, I took two lessons every day in my new pink primer. I soon

school when he comes to the village, and he wants me to stay in the school longer, and after I learn my trade to study more and learn to be a teacher. I have already taught my mother her letters. She and father and I go to all the Protestant meetings, and I have learned the story of 'Joseph the Comely,' and 'David the Sweet Singer,' and we have a Sunday-school and study the same lessons they are studying in America.

Besne has begun to come to our school; she brings bread and pickles in a kerchief, and does not go home at noon. Besne has some new red shoes, and they look very



A SCHOOL IN TURKEY.

passed ta-thumma-non-ta, toot (ta-thumma-non-ta spells 'toot'), and when I reached rummel-el-bahr (that means 'sand of the sea,' and is in the back part of my primer), then my father bought me a new clean Holy Book, and I began to read at Genesis and am reading it through. I am going to learn some arithmetic and perhaps geography, but my father will not leave me in school long; he want me to learn to dye the red cloth people wear, or to weave cloth from goat's hair.

The American, they call him a missionary, always comes to our house and to the

bright among the old shoes inside the school door. Our new shoes are always red, but they turn black after we have worn them a while. My aunt has a pair of yellow ones; she bought them in Mardin, the large city where the camel caravan comes.

Teacher Miriam is coming and will have a school for girls, and Besne will not go to our school after that.

An American lady came to see about a school for the girls, and she was stranger than the man. She rode on one side of the horse, and had her face covered just as they say the women in the cities do.