

LITTLE MISSIONARIES.

BY ANNIE ROTHWELL.—(An incident at the Mission Hospital at Amritsar.)

I.

WITHIN the gaze and grasp of death the Hindoo mother lay,
While feeble fluttering pulse and breath grew fainter day by day;
In kindly Christian shelter she had learned the Christian's Creed,

Had felt the hunger of the soul and satisfied her need.
Safe anchored on the Christian's hope, she knew their heaven her home;
And summoned by the Saviour's voice feared not to say, "I come."

But sharper than the sting of death, or dread of parting pain,
The future of the babes she left to heathen hands again.
Ah! what avail the sacred sign upon the childish brow?
The prayer and benison of priest, or sponsor's fervent vow?
While he, their lord and ruler, is to India's gods a slave,
And to their worship giving back the soul Jehovah gave.
A soldier, steadfast, loyal, but no soldier of the Cross;
An heir of life—yet outcast, and unknowing of his loss;
Fanatic follower of false faiths, for countless ages old—
Yet master, owner of the lambs now gathered in Christ's fold.
What wonder if the dying breast were torn with cruel strife,
If mother love o'erbore the meek obedience of the wife?
If, when the missive called at last her husband to her side,
Fear of the father's claim outweighed hope of the father's pride?

If clasping close the Christian sons, to heaven dedicate,
Her new-born faith did battle with the old belief in fate?

II.

Oh, mystery to the doubting heart! Oh, miracle of love!
God's opportunities are found when man's most hopeless prove;

His purposes are graven on rocks, yet soft as sway of flower
Of times the touch wherewith he writes the record of his power.

He speaks in thunder, and in flood, in flame that rends the pine.

Yet in the ceremonies of the moth He whispers truth divine;
His voice is heard in fever's throbs, in famine and in war—
But that same speech that sets their bounds the daisies make their law;

So with new strength from baby lips salvation's story fell;
With more resistless claim is preached the wondrous evangel,

Where priest had scattered seed in vain upon a barren soil,
The children reaped full harvest from their sweet unconscious toil,

The false gods fell and fled where smote the sword that cannot fail,

Where reason broke a useless lance, faith told her simple tale.

The stern man listened, smiling as at words and ways apart,
Till truth struck root and cleft the rock and blossomed in his heart.

Father from child learned wisdom through the royal law of love,

And followed where the tottering feet had climbed to heights above.

Ah! halm to soothe the bruised heart, to dry the weeping eyes,

To praise has turned the wife's pure prayer, to smiles the mother's sighs.

As soldier, servant in God's ranks, the husband stands enrolled;

A faithful Christian father now, in sacred trust to hold.
The Christian mother gives her babes, and knows the promise bright,

To humble trust fulfilled, "At evening time it shall be light."

A NIGHT AMONG THE BEDOUINS.

I WAS once travelling with a friend in Galilee, and as we were riding along, tired and hungry, near the waters of Merom, we longed to find some place where we could rest, and get shelter for the night. There were no villages or houses near where we might ask for a lodging, so we continued our journey until we came in sight of some black camel's-hair tents, which we knew belonged to the Bedouins. These people are very hospitable and kind to travellers, and after having eaten bread with a stranger, consider themselves bound to protect and care for him. So we rode up to the tent door and asked for the sheik. He came out to welcome us, and sent for his wives to entertain us. Very soon we were surrounded by a crowd of dark figures; carpets were brought out and we were seated in the middle of the ring of women. The first thing we did was to get some bread from our saddle-bags and invite the chief wife to eat with us. She took a small piece and liked it so much that she asked for more, and in a few minutes our little store of bread had quite disappeared. Our appearance excited great curiosity; a circle of open-eyed, admiring children gathered round me as I showed them my watch and tried to explain its use. The only clock they know of is the sun, and as soon as it sank to rest we took up our baggage and entered the tent.

It was a strange dark place, about thirty feet long, with no furniture but a few mats around the camel's hair walls. A large wood fire was burning in the centre opposite the door, and our beds were put down behind it. An immense iron pot filled with rice was taken off the fire as we entered; we all sat round on the floor, and dipping our fingers into the unsavory mess, managed to eat a few mouthfuls. Then we talked to the group around of the goodness of our heavenly Father, who not only gives us temporal mercies, but loved us so much that he sent his beloved Son to die for us. The poor ignorant women could hardly understand, and when we knelt down to pray seemed very much mystified. The sheik informed me that he could pray, and spreading a small carpet on the ground, bowed himself down on hands and knees, repeating over many times:—

"La Allah, illa Allah wa Mahommed rasoul Allah.

"There is no God but God, and Mahomet, the prophet of God."

He knew nothing about the God he prayed to, so, as he could read a little, I gave him a Testament, which I told him would teach him about God. Then we gathered the children together, and tried to make them learn a text. It saddened us to see so many souls darkened and without the knowledge of Christ.

THE Children's Aid Society has established twenty-seven excellent lodging-houses for boys in New York city.