

SHADOW AND SUNSHINE IN AKIDU FIELD

By Miss S. A. Hinman.

"May there be just enough clouds in your life to ensure a glorious sunset." So ran a wish in an old-fashioned autograph album. After all the happy, sunny days described in my last report, this year we have had sufficient clouds to leave nothing lacking in the prospects for sunset effects.

Disappointments.

After a splendid hill-season, without a day of illness, soon came a drop back to the old condition of indifferent health. Then, in October, the servant who had been with me for four and a half years yielded to jealousy, turned traitor and had to be dismissed. The Evangelistic campaign did not seem to grip the teachers and school children as usual. Good work was done but they were too ready to drop everything as soon as the stipulated time was up. We did have a good rally of our Evangelistic Schools in November. The last week-end of that month, Mr. and Mrs. Bromley of the neighboring Brethren Mission, came over to help us with some meetings for the children. Both gave us powerful Gospel addresses. We were disappointed that there was not more outward response at the time, though we did notice an improvement in general conduct.

Sorrow

A little chap had had heart trouble in October but seemed to recover. On the evening of December 12th we found he was ill and had him taken at once to the hospital. He died very suddenly during the night. We grieved for his mother, who is a widow.

A Happy Christmas

Our Christmas events passed off very successfully. A live banyan tree in the centre of our compound held the gifts, many of which came in the Montreal boxes. In the evening of the same day we had a good pageant which was observed by the church full of people, in absolute silence. Many Hindus and Mohammedans were present.

A Bolt From the Blue

As a bolt from the blue, on the night of

Sunday, February 7th, every boy but two cleared out, without so much as saying "We are going." Ours has been the only school in the mission that did not use a kind of grain ground into flour for porridge one meal a day. We introduced it here over a year and a half ago as a health measure. The children have not taken kindly to it, the general impression seeming to have been that only very destitute people used this food. The run-away was a protest against this porridge and against the hour of manual work they are required to do each forenoon. The pastor and teachers asked to follow them up to try to parley with them. It was of no use whatever. Three boys did sneak back that same night and two the next morning. These, with two who happened to be at the bungalow when the others went, were the only boys we had for three weeks. Such a happy day as that Sunday had been. Before the morning service all the children who were church members were here for a little meeting in preparation for the Lord's Supper. Our session of Sunday School had been out of the ordinary. Several boys from seventh standard acted the lesson on the man born blind, as they had done in the daily Bible lesson when studying that portion. We had all had a picnic on the canal bank in the moonlight the previous Friday evening. When one thought of all the loving care they had received in sickness and in health the question would come again and again, 'How could they? How could they?'

The Sequel

After much thought, prayer and investigation five leaders were expelled. The boys of eighth standard, our highest, were suspended till next fall. The others were allowed back by paying a fine. Yes, it does look as if the punishment fell on the parents, but we were convinced that if the boys had not anticipated sympathy they would not have dared to go home. 'Tis true that some got a cool reception at home and some even abuse. In some cases the parents could not pay the fine and the child had to drop out. In others, the parents stupidly believed the lies their children told of the ill-usage here, and so they made provision for them in some other school.