

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## A Sunday Morning's Walk.

(By the Rev. David Donald, of Chittagong, Bengal.)

The object of our walk was to see Sat-a-Fru, at Pequa Choree. His house stands alone among the hills, apart from the homes of his Christian brethren, but that is all the more reason why we should go to see him.

I may as well take off my shoes at the start. Our first river is at our door. We must cross it; and the art in crossing at this place, is to wade into the middle, walk five hundred yards up-stream, and make for the other bank.

Just at the crossing a party of bamboo



THE PATH LEADING FROM THE RIVER.

cutters are piloting their long-twisting raft down towards the distant markets. They stare at my white shins. They are a polite people; but the white feet of a Britisher are the sight of a lifetime. These people rarely see an Englishman to begin with, and never, save on some unheard-of occasion such as this, see him without his shoes.

The path from the river lies up the side of a hill like a wall—it is just as wide at the top as a wall—and we have to totter carefully down the other side. Thick vegetation hides the sheer precipice at the side of the path, and saves us from fear and falls, but as I climb up I am so concerned in watching my steps, that I knock my head against a tree which has fallen across the path. The previous afternoon I had come in collision with that tree, and had said to myself: 'Next time I come this way I will be more careful; but sure enough the very next morning there are my head and the tree together again.'

A gentleman who lives on the great Himalayas once asked me how high were the hills in our district. I replied they ran up to about eighteen hundred and two thousand feet. He laughed and abused me for calling such sand-heaps by the name of hills. But when you have them no more than two hundred or three hundred feet high, and have to cross half-a-dozen of them in a morning's walk, it is no joke.

Once over the first hill our path lies through the thick jungle. The bamboos push their long, shiny leaves into one's face. The grass and undergrowth is from six to twelve feet high. This is the path along which last night we fled with torches from the wild elephant.

From the bare top of the next hill we

get a fine view of the surrounding country. 'Look, sir, there is the mountain of Sita.' I do look, and just at the moment my tender sole descends upon the sharp stub of a shrub bamboo. I forget the goddess and her mountain for the moment, but try to make a cheerful reply.

Now we have got down into a valley. Our path lies for a quarter-of-a-mile in a beautiful little brook. The water is cool, and the sandy bed not unpleasant. Here, as elsewhere, we have to climb over or creep under the great trunks of fallen trees.

A shout from one of our party on ahead intimates that he has descried a troop of monkeys. They are sitting on the trees away up on the top of the cliff, above us. Shouts from the monkeys give reply, and in a moment they are bounding from tree to tree. They scarcely seem to touch the branches as they pass, until one after another landing on the slender tops of the bamboos, they bend them towards the ground like a bow. These are large fellows, and quite at home leaping about up in mid-air.

Just at this point a barricade has been built across the stream. The sluice is now open, and the stream above is filled with cut bamboos. When sufficient bamboos have been collected, the sluice will be closed, and the stream now only six to eight inches deep, will gather volume; then the waters will be allowed to escape with a rush, and the bamboo, floated by the deepened water, will be dragged to the river. The streams are the only way of access and exit to be found in the jungles.

Sat-a-Fru, they said, was not at home. He was believed to be in a distant village, building himself a new house. Nevertheless, I thought it well to visit his lonely dwelling. To reach his home we had to pass through his fields. Some cotton was



NATURE'S ROAD THROUGH HER FORESTS.

still standing, growing among the stubble of the rice, reaped a little while before, and interspersed with melon-like vegetables. He had a beautiful clearing, but they said he would have to leave it that year. The belief here is that the soil can only yield one year in five; so a man reaps his field for one year and abandons it for four years at least. Having just been reading up the

subject of agriculture, I ventured to dispute this alleged necessity, but have no intention of trying to change popular opinion on this subject.

We had to creep round the side of the house to reach the front door. The whole of this little hill-top was taken up by the house and the rice-husking beam. On the slope the cotton was growing, and the op-



THE COTTON PLANT, WITH RICE-STUBBLE ROUND ROOT.

posite hillside was covered by a forest of young bamboos. To our surprise Sat-a-Fru was at home. He had returned to protect his house and family against the wild elephant rampaging in the neighborhood.

Lonely as was the house, we found Sat-a-Fru had three visitors. They were Moorongs from a distance. The preachers sat in the cotton-bin and I on the bamboo floor. A text-card was produced, on which was written Sat-a-Fru's name, and the date of his baptism. The text on the front, telling the news of our great salvation, was explained, and then the card was hung up on the wall in the sight of all. The evangelist read and explained a passage, and we said together the Lord's Prayer.

Sat-a-Fru assured me he could read, but when I asked him to let me hear, he said he required a magnifying-glass to see with. I confessed myself ready to hear his reading by aid of the glass, but alas! his children had broken the magnifier and lost the pieces.

Under a hundred disadvantages our fellow-Christians here are trusting in our Saviour. How slow their progress in knowledge, and how many years it will be before they are skilful in the truth, it is beyond one's power to say. 'This be our joy, that their feet are turned Zionwards.—David Donald.'

## Forgive and Forget.

Forgive and forget! There's no breast so unfeeling

But some gentle thoughts of affection there live;

And the best of us all require something concealing,

Some heart that with smiles can forget and forgive.

Then away with the cloud from those beautiful eyes,

That brow was no home for such frowns to have met;

Oh, how could our spirits e'er hope for the skies,

if heaven refused to forgive and forget?

—Charles Swain in 'Temperance Record.'