

MY GIRL.

A little corner with its crib,
A little mug, a spoon, a bib,
A little tooth so pearly white,
A little rubber ring to bite.

A little plate all lettered round,
A little rattle to resound,
A little creeping—see! she stands!
A little step 'twixt outstretched hands.

A little doll with flaxen hair,
A little willow rocking chair,
A little dress of richest hue,
A little pair of gaiters blue.

A little school day after day,
A "little schoolma'am" to obey,
A little study—soon 'tis past—
A little graduate at last.

A little muff for winter weather,
A little jockey hat and feather,
A little sack with funny pockets,
A little chain, a ring, and lockets,

A little while to dance and bow,
A little escort homeward now,
A little party, somewhat late,
A little lingering at the gate.

A little walk in leafy June,
A little talk while shines the moon,
A little reference to papa,
A little planning with mamma.

A little ceremony grave,
A little struggle to be brave,
A little cottage on a lawn,
A little kiss—my girl was gone!

—Selected.

FOUR "STATIONS OF TERROR."

Midway between Teheran, the capital of Persia, and the holy city of Meshed, in Northern Khorassan, my bicycle tour around the world led me through the "Four Stations of Terror." These places are Shahrood, Mijamid, Miandasht and Abbasabad, towns on the pilgrim and caravan road to Meshed, and the sanctuary of a Mohammedan saint named Imam Riza.

The road leads through a portion of the Shah of Persia's territory, that a few years ago was the chief field of operations for the Turkoman man-stealers of Merv and Khiva. The above named places were called the Four Stations of Terror, because they are situated in the region most accessible to Turkoman raiders, and were consequently the greatest sufferers from their depredations.

I was forcibly impressed by the extraordinary precautions the people had to take to avoid being captured by the Turkomans, and carried off into slavery. Since the Russians captured Khiva and Merv, and suppressed slavery there, the raids of the terrible man-stealers have ceased, but the evidences of their work remain.

The man-stealing raids of the Turkomans were called *alamans*, and the horses they used to ride on these *alamans* are famous throughout Asia for their marvellous speed and endurance. The Turkoman horse is a long-legged, raw-boned animal, that one would never imagine capable of such performances; but they have been known frequently to cover a hundred miles a day, for eight or ten consecutive days.

In the Shah of Persia's present stud are Turkoman horses that have travelled eight hundred miles, over the bad roads of that country, in eight days. Day after day, halting only for a few hours daily, to nibble the grass and obtain a drink of water, these wonderful steeds pursue their way across sandy desert and rocky mountain, bearing up as though they were things of iron, instead of flesh and blood.

Mounted on these matchless horses, the Turkoman bands would swoop down, almost as swiftly and suddenly as eagles, upon some peaceful Persian village, gather up the most desirable young men and maidens, and carry them off to the slave-markets of Turkestan, Bokhara and Khiva.

I found all the fields in the vicinity of the Four Stations of Terror dotted with little towers of refuge for the laborers working in the fields to flee to whenever the dreaded human hawks swooped down upon them unawares. The towers are circular buildings, about twenty feet high, and built strongly of adobe or sun burnt brick.

They are often found scattered all about the fields but a few hundred yards apart, so that, at the first alarm of the Turkomans, the Persian ryot could scurry into the nearest tower, like a rabbit into its hole at the approach of a dog.

I examined a good many of these towers,

and found the entrance a mere hole to crawl through, on the hands and knees; at the bottom of the wall. The smallness of the entrance made the towers easy to defend from within. The interior was capable of sheltering about twenty people.

Being regarded as a mere temporary retreat, the towers had no roof, nor accommodations of any kind for personal comfort. Rude steps led to a sort of projecting platform where the refugees could stand and look out, or if they had guns, defend themselves until relief arrived.

In the grazing districts, the towers of temporary refuge were surrounded by a second adobe wall, about half as high as the tower, inclosing a space large enough to shelter several hundred sheep or goats. The shepherds carried guns, or bows and arrows, and were always prepared at a moment's notice to hurry their flocks into the inclosures and resist the Turkomans.

On the grazing lands the towers of refuge were necessarily farther apart, and longer time was required for rounding up the flocks. The watchfulness of the shepherds was therefore supplemented by look-outs stationed on the peaks of the adjacent mountains and various points of observation overlooking the valleys.

The little round watch-towers perched on the highest peaks of the hills are conspicuous objects of the landscape about the Four Stations of Terror. When these elevated watchmen saw any conspicuous horsemen appear within the scope of their observation, they would communicate the fact by well-understood signals to the shepherds below, who would immediately hurry with their flocks to the nearest towers of refuge. The Four Stations of Terror are sur-



STATIONS OF TERROR.

rounded with thick, strong walls of adobe, and entrance is gained through ponderous wooden gates sheeted with iron. The walls are about thirty feet high, and the houses are built against the wall inside, so that in case of attack, the men could congregate on the flat roofs and shoot at the Turkomans through loop-holes or over the top.

Inside the wall are accommodations for all the flocks and herds, which are still brought in every night. Attached to the towns are huge brick caravansaries, for the shelter and protection of caravans and travellers. At Miandasht and Abbasabad even these caravansaries are enclosed by the great, protecting wall.

Some of the neighboring villages are very interesting and curious specimens of defensive architecture. The most interesting of these I saw at a place called Lasgird. It consisted of a huge circular tower, built of mud and adobe, about a hundred feet high, and two hundred yards in circumference. The tower was perched on a high mound, which was evidently formed of the ruins of former towers. For the first fifty feet the tower formed a solid wall, without door or window, save one narrow entrance, guarded by a door formed of one massive stone slab. This door opened into a low, gloomy passage-way that led into the interior of the tower.

Upon entering the gate and traversing the passage, I found myself in the middle of a kind of rude amphitheatre, with the mud-houses rising in tiers against the wall, row above row, like the cells of some huge circular prison.

Steps led from tier to tier, and narrow

footways led the whole way round each story. The central portion of the tower was reserved for the sheep and goats and work-oxen of the villagers. At the first alarm of an *alaman* in the neighborhood, the people of Lasgird would hurriedly gather their animals, and repair within this huge tower. With the massive stone door closed and barricaded, and everybody inside, they were quite secure against such light-armed foes as the Turkomans.

Above the first fifty feet the tower was provided with numbers of small openings, with which musketeers or bow-men could make things quite lively for the Turkomans if they came within range. These vast mud fortresses, rising above the plain, surrounded on all sides with hundreds of the smaller field-towers, look very curious.

At every village the people would bring to me men and women who had been carried off by the Turkomans, and, years after, liberated by the Russians. Some of them would show me scars on their wrists, where the thongs that bound them to the saddles of their savage captors had cut into the flesh.

At Mijamid they showed me an old man whose eyes had been put out by the Bokhariots, to prevent him ever finding his way back to Persia. No wonder the poor Persians took such extraordinary precautions against being carried off!—Thomas Stevens, in *Youth's Companion*.

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

The type of Christianity now growing up in Japan is intensely missionary. In almost every individual church the members combine to carry the Gospel to their unconverted friends and neighbors. Many

of the churches have regular preaching places in the localities lying outside their own congregational limits. Already numerous home missionary boards and societies have been organized and are in full operation.

This missionary spirit must soon make itself felt abroad. Indeed, attempts have been made already to organize foreign missionary societies, but they have failed because of the great pressure upon the Church from the necessities of the work at home; and, no doubt, this will be the case for many years to come. The Japanese Church will be so occupied with the work at home that it cannot give much attention to foreign work. It is probably true also that in case Japanese missionaries should be sent to China their influence would not be so great as that of missionaries coming from countries that have been Christian for a long time, but it cannot be doubted that if Japan should become thoroughly Christianized, the fact would have a great influence in favor of Christianity in China. The mere fact that a great nation like Japan should become practically a Christian nation as the result of missionary effort would prove a great stimulus both to the churches at home and to those laboring in other fields.—*Missionary Review of the World*.

ASPHALT LAKE OF TRINIDAD.

Asphalt is a substance as familiar now as are its related substances, coal and petroleum. It is used in great quantities for paving streets and roofing houses. A large part of the supply is brought from the lake of La Brea in the island of Trinidad. This lake is said to have been discovered in 1595 by Sir Walter Raleigh, who employed the pitch found there in caulking his ships.

This wonderful bituminous sheet has an area of nearly one hundred acres, between elevations close to the hill-top. It is a broad surface of pitch, seamed with small channels of water.

The pitch is dug from the hardened top, and the quantity taken away is constantly replenished by the soft asphalt oozing up from below, which becomes hardened by the evaporation of its constituent oil in the sun. Night supplies the exhaustion of day.

The method of skimming the great bowl may be illustrated by comparing it to a pond from which blocks of ice have been cut, and the water solidified again by the action of frost, the difference being that heat is the agent in one case, and cold in the other.—*Ec.*

"DON'T HOLD BACK FROM LETTING HIM USE YOU."

If the prayer, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" follows upon the glad avowal, "O Lord, truly I am Thy servant!" the answering direction will not be long delayed, "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard!" Let it never be forgotten that discipleship implies service as well as learning, and to those who labor, a growing knowledge of the Lord's will is given.

"Don't hold back from letting him use you!" He has ordained that his servants shall be the agents of blessing—conduits through which life and love shall reach the hearts of others; and the crying need of the world is the sacred ministry of deeds kindly and lowly, and words tender and true. It is impossible to withhold this ministry without unfaithfulness to the most solemn of obligations.

How will he use me? This is the anxious question of many, but the answer will come! We must not expect a full revelation of the whole work of a lifetime, but we may look for the indications of the duty which lies next to-hand. Few, if any, who have been greatly used of God, were permitted a foreshadowing of the greatness of their work. They did not hold back from letting him use them, and so the work grew to their hands, and they now read the purpose and the prophecy in the record of their surprising triumphs.

A minister, preaching to a colored congregation in one of the Southern States, urged his hearers to give themselves to missionary work. The sermon produced a wonderful effect, for one of the most recent converts sprang to his feet, and exclaimed—"Then, me be a missionary!" Knowing the good brother to have had no education, the minister bade him sit down, remarking—"No, no, Sambo; you only know the A B C. You cannot be a missionary!"

Severe as was the rebuff, Sambo's zeal, so newly kindled, was not to be quenched, and maintaining his posture, he exclaimed—"Me only know de A B C? Dere's a nigger ober dere dat don't know de A B C! Me teach that nigger de A B C! Me be a missionary!"

It all who know the A B C of the Gospel would seek out those who fall short of this attainment, how vast an influence for good would be exerted upon the community!

Our blessed Master "set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem," and he has left us an example that we should follow in his steps! If in that path he found a cross and a tomb, these were but stepping stones in the way to the throne and the crown; and if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together. Instead of holding back, let the song of the poet be the historic record of a resolution which has passed into action.

"I love to kiss each print where Christ did set His pilgrim feet.
Now can I fear that blessed path whose traces are so sweet!"

"Don't hold back from letting him use you!" and then the joy of being "approved of him" will be the fitting crown of being "accepted in the Beloved!"

"Dismiss me not, Thy service, Lord,
But train me for Thy will;
For even I, in fields so broad,
Some duties may fulfil;
And I will ask for no reward,
Except to serve Thee still.

"Our Master all the work hath done
He asks of us to-day;
Sharing his service, every one
Share, too, His Sonship may;
Lord, I would serve and be a son;
Dismiss me not, I pray."

—Frances Ridley Havergal.