

CHILD LIFE IN NORTH AFRICA.

BY ELLA A. BALDWIN.

WHEN a little girl is eight years old, she may no longer play in the streets, may never go to school, but must learn all kinds of hard work. Her first burden is generally to carry a little brother or sister, tied upon her back with a sabanier or long towel, two ends being knotted around her waist, one end passed over the right shoulder, and the other under the left—the baby's legs astride her back, and only its little bobbing head above the towel. She has often to learn to grind the wheat and knead the bread, and carry it on a board on her head to the public oven—all with baby on her back. All girls and women must grind their wheat daily, unless they have slaves to do it for them. Their mills are simply two small round grindstones, one upon another. The upper one has a hole in the center, into which the corn is put by the handful. A little stick, or handle, is firmly driven into a hole in the stone by which to make it revolve. It is very hard work, and only enough grain is ground for one meal at a time. I cannot remember ever seeing there toys of any kind for girls. They make for themselves dolls out of two pieces of bamboo stick tied together in the form of a cross. They cut off pieces of their own black hair, and tie it on the top of the stick, and dress it up always as a bride, never as a baby.

A girl's first and highest and only ambition is to become a bride. I have often heard mothers say to their tiny girls, "If you are naughty, you shall never be a bride." These dear little girls are most teachable and interesting. Had I space, I could tell you many funny things I saw and heard among them; also many sad things, for they are taught every form of evil from their babyhood.

Another thing I was long in finding out was where were the young ladies of the land? Lots of boys, older lads, and young men, but only babies, little girls, and old women. This, I learned, was the result of the child-marriages. Muhammad, their so-called "holy prophet," was the leader in this great sin. His fourth wife, Aisha, was but nine years old. So very soon they lose all freshness and beauty, and become haggard and ugly, depressed, oppressed, repulsive old women—all for lack of the knowledge that God gave his Son to die for and to save girls and women as well as men and boys.—*S. S. Times.*

FOR SALE.—Pictures of the Chinese girls of the Rescue Home, Victoria, can be had for fifty cents (50 cts.), by applying to Mrs. Pendray, 92 Belleville St., James Bay, Victoria, B. C.

(FOR THE BOYS.)

A PRAYER.

Dear Lord Christ, I am only a boy,
So merry and brimful of fun,
But I *do* want to work for you now,
Please give me an errand to run.

If I cheerfully go to my work,
And always be fair in my play,
If I do without things that I want
And work to give something away.

If I carry a basket of food,
Or stop in my game to be kind,
If I help some slow fellow at school,
Or read to somebody that's blind—

Won't you count it an errand for you?
"Inasmuch as to others," you said;
Won't you whisper new things I can do?
Make me quick to run on where I'm led?

If I live I'll do real mission work,
But perhaps I shall never grow old;
Let me do a boy's work, dear Lord Christ,
Make me willing to do as I'm told.

Laura Wade Rice.

SCROLL SAWS IN CHINA.

MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS:—How many boys would like to have a scroll saw, but have not the money to buy one! Would you like to learn from the Chinese how to make one yourself? They have had a very simple method for centuries, and they do beautiful work. I have often seen them at work, but yesterday a friend who was with me wanted to see more closely, and we stepped into a shop where a man was at work with one of the little implements. It was simply a piece of bamboo about the size of an ordinary lath, and a long piece of iron wire. The wire had a great many little notches in it, made with a cold steel chisel, very much like the teeth of a saw. All the wire, except about two feet of it with the teeth, was wound around one end of the bamboo; then the bamboo was bent into a bow like a half circle, and the end of the wire hooked on to the other end of it. This is a Chinese scroll saw. The workman told me that he could get rich if the wire did not break so often. When it does break he simply unwinds some of that on the one end of the bamboo, cuts it full of notches with his little chisel, and goes to work again.

Now the Bible says, learn not of the heathen, but it will not be wrong to learn from the heathen Chinese how to make a scroll saw. But you have no bamboo in America, and there is no other kind of timber that will answer this purpose half so well. Suppose you try with a piece of hickory wood!

Your friend, J. L. STUART.

—From the Children's Missionary.