

MISSION STUDIES.

BY MISS FERRIER, CALEDONIA.

In the hope that it may help to impress upon the youthful readers of the LEAFLET the great debt of gratitude which women and girls, living in Christian lands, owe to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, I propose to try to give some sketches of the condition of girls in those lands in which a false creed has resulted, as it always does, in the ignorance, degradation and misery of the female sex. I begin with Syria, which includes Palestine, the land so interesting to us because of its connection with the life and death of our Saviour.

The first Christian church was organized in Jerusalem, believers in Jesus were called Christians first in Antioch, and the apostles and first disciples went through the whole land preaching Christ so successfully that churches were planted everywhere, and for a long period Syria was the centre of Christian life and activity. In course of time the light grew dim, and truth became sadly mixed with error; and in the seventh century the followers of Mahomet, propagating their religion by the sword, conquered the country, since which it has been so miserably governed, that in many places the once beautiful and fertile land has become a desolate waste, while the inhabitants have been cruelly oppressed and kept in poverty and ignorance. At present fully half of them are Moslems. Those who still profess the Christian faith are sunk in ignorance and superstition, and all, except such as have been reached by modern missions, are ignorant of the way of Salvation. Women, especially among the Moslems, are treated as slaves, or beasts of burden, and home is too often a place where the wife mourns, and the children suffer. That "a threshold weeps forty days when a girl is born," is a proverb familiar in the land; and it is a well-known fact that the father too often regards a daughter as a disgrace and a burden of which he is anxious to rid himself as early as possible by giving her in marriage. Polygamy is one of the great evils of Mahommedanism, and many poor girls fall into the hands of wicked men who treat them cruelly and divorce them at will.

Many Moslems living in cities are wealthy, but none of them have any idea of what we call a home, and the more aristocratic the family are the more strict is the seclusion of the women. The girls marry very young, and grow up in the secluded harem