

THE LAZARETTO, PORT SPAIN.

BY MISS A. L. M. BLACKADDER.

"WHERE shall we go next Saturday, dear Teacher?" asked a pretty, bright-eyed Indian girl. "Well, I think if you are very good we shall go to the Blue Basin." "Oh, yes, we will be as good as gold," was the ready answer. The wished-for day comes, and the party starts, as a cabman described them, "A white lady, a red girl, and a black young man." We rolled away over the smooth hard roads, with lovely views of olive water, Gulf of Paria, faint blue outline of the Spanish main, tall cocconut trees, long grass, grove of fig trees, palms lifting high and haughty heads to the heavens, mountains veiled in blue and at times hidden by clouds of mist, Port of Spain away behind us, just like a beautiful dream.

We come to a place where several roads meet, a cross stands near. At this lonely place a Catholic priest was cruelly murdered years ago. The perpetrators of this cowardly crime have never been discovered. Still on, now we go upwards, a small river or brook flows on, now gentle and mild, but in the wet season a raging torrent. The horse and carriage is left, breakfast basket in hand we climb the mountain, and at last we see the "Blue Basin." A pretty waterfall, a deep, circular hole worn in the rock, gay birds flying about, wonderful ferns growing at the foot of the falls, and the glorious tropical sky over all; words fail to tell the thoughts that came thronging to us, but the feeling deepest of all was no one of our own people to see and enjoy it, a foreign land, and our companions of a race and color not our own. We bid a reluctant adieu to this wonderful forest-fall and retrace our way. We stop at the Lazaretto, our hospital for lepers, a large building overlooking the sea; tall mountains rear themselves up behind the house, little garden plots are scattered about, flowers and creeping vines add a beauty to the place, white buildings and vegetable gardens are on the slope of the mountain, but, oh, such a stillness is over all. People go to and fro but no sound of laughter, no song, no shout of little children is heard, for we are at the Leper Home, Cocorite. A sweet faced, gentle French sister, who has spent thirty years in that sad abode of hopeless suffering meets us, gives us in charge of an English speaking sister, and we go to the wards. A Chinaman too dreadful to describe, lies under a mosquito netting, just longing for the angel of death to take him away. Others are seen, some with fingers and toes gone, limbs rotted away, other with dreadful tumors that give to the face the expression of a lion, others with dreadful swollen limbs, elephantiasis, sometimes called Barbadoes leg. But saddest of all to see young, handsome East Indians stricken with the dread foe, the hopeless look in the beautiful dark eyes, the sad expression on their fine faces, the gentle noiseless step, the silence too deep for words just sent a chill to one's heart.