

and in various other ways, under this appalling system of superstition. So true is it that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." Scores of well authenticated instances which have come under the personal notice of the Missionaries might be given in illustration of the degraded condition of the poor Kaffirs, but it is more pleasant to dwell upon the all-sufficient remedy provided in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.

Every Mission station in Kaffirland is an asylum for the oppressed and afflicted, as well as a school of Christ, in which may be learned the lessons of His love; and every Missionary is a friend of the persecuted outcast. Often has the life of the poor doomed victim been spared at the intercession of the men of God; and many a time has the homeless fugitive found shelter in the "city of refuge." It is a pleasing fact that Christian schools for the instruction of the rising generation have been established in connection with each station, where many have been taught to read the Word of God for themselves. And it is still more pleasing to contemplate that a large number of precious immortal souls have been won to Christ by the faithful preaching of His Gospel.

[Stories of the Netherland War.]

THE WOMEN-SOLDIERS.

BY MARY BARRETT.

IN the days of this terrible conflict the women of the Netherlands sometimes served as soldiers. They were not of the "strong-minded" sort by any means, though they were probably more able-bodied than women often are at the present day, and I do not suppose they would ever have wished to take up arms for the sake of showing what they could do. But when they had to choose between helping to defend their children or seeing them butchered by the cruel Spaniards, they did not hesitate to fight, just as any brute mother will. If you blame them, think what *your* mother would do to save her baby from being tossed back and forth on the point of a bayonet, or the beating heart torn from its little innocent bosom, right before her eyes. For

just such horrible things used to be done in those dreadful days.

So, as I said before, when worst came to worst, the women used to fight. During the long siege of Harlem, there was a volunteer company of highly respectable females, numbering three hundred, who did excellent service, not only within the walls, but also in frequent sallies beyond them. The women helped to repulse the Spaniards at Alkmaar, too. But so far as I have been able to learn, it was at Maestricht that they did most. In order that you may understand how it was, I must tell you something about the city, and the circumstances under which it was besieged.

Maestricht is situated in the south-eastern part of the Netherland States, upon the river Meuse. Its location rendered it important; for whoever entered the provinces by Germany might be expected to come by way of this city. The greater part of the town lies upon the western or left bank of the river, that upon the eastern bank being a mere suburb, generally called Wyck.

When, in March, 1579, the people of Maestricht found out that it was about to be invested by the Spaniards, they at once went to work as hard as they could to repair the walls, and clear out the moat, and make all safe and strong. As there was a vast deal to be done, and comparatively few men to do it, the women took hold of the work too. And as they had only about twelve hundred regular soldiers, besides the citizens and country-folks, while the Spanish army numbered more than twenty thousand, many of the women offered to bear arms in defending the town. The men found their help so valuable that they soon enrolled three regiments composed wholly of women, besides those who served here and there among the rest of the troops.

The Spanish commander was a very brave and able general, called Alexander of Parma. He was a nephew of King Philip II., and had lately been sent to subdue the Netherlands. A part of his army was stationed on the east side of the river, under command of the famous Colonel Mondragon, while he himself encamped on the west side with the main body