

Youths' Department.

SELF-DENIAL WEEK.

If there be first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to that one hath, and not according to that he hath not.

Self-Denial Week, in the Mission Band,
As of course you readily understand,
Was planned for the purpose of giving a lift
To the Mission Cause, by an extra gift.

"Oh, dear," cried Bessie, "Oh my! Oh my!
I don't see how I can self-deny.
I've nothing to do it with, at all,
I've scarcely a penny my own to call,
Whatever I save must be very small."
"I wonder, I wonder," cried Tom and Lou,
"What, in all the world, we can ever do.
Not a cent is ours, to spend or give,
'Tis as much as we all can do to live.
If we earned a little, 't would be so small
It wouldn't be worth our giving at all."

So the children talked, but they talked in vain,
For the leader hastened to make it plain
That the "doing without" for the Saviour's sake,
And the little sacrifice each could make
Were the very things they all should seek,
Just a day at a time, self-denial week.
You might never guess how it came about,
But each one found something to do without,
For their hearts in earnest they really gave,
And their best endeavors to earn, and save.

Not a single member of that bright band
Had a chance to do something great and grand,
But little things by the many wrought,
Exceeded all they had hoped or thought,
And the gifts of their hands went far and wide
That the bread of life might not be denied,
But that hungry souls might be satisfied.
If you add the littles, and multiply,
You will find that they count up, by and by.
It is *keeping on*, after all, that counts,
And that brings to the treasury large amounts.

—Julia H. Johnston, in *Over Sea and Land*.

AFRAID TO BE A GIRL.

ONE day a thin, hungry, but bright-faced boy of twelve came to our native preacher's house in Chapra and begged for food. Starvation had taken the pride out of the lordly little Brahmin, and he was ready to eat from the hand of a Christian. He was a skeleton almost, and could scarcely crawl. After a few days the preacher brought the supposed boy to our school at Muzaffarpur. The boys took a great dislike to the child. They said he was too proud to play with them. Always moping to himself and only speaking when asked a question, how could they like him?

One day, when Sunday school was just over in the big veranda of the mission house (for we have no church here as yet), the little Brahmin came up to the preacher and said he had some-

thing to tell. To the great surprise of the preacher, the supposed boy confessed to being a girl.

The ayah, or nurse, who looks after the health of the girls, was given charge of Tara, as she said her name was, and the child soon appeared, clothed as a girl, but with the short hair of a boy.

Then she told her sad story. In a town in this district she and her relatives lived when that awful disease, the plague, came. One after another of Tara's people died, father, mother, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins, until the little girl was the only one living out of forty persons. As each one was dying, he or she would request that a feast be given to the Brahmins of the town. Every devout Hindu believes it to be necessary for salvation that he should do good to Brahmins—that is, feed them.

Each one of these people before passing away would give the little savings of rupees to a relative in order that a dinner be given to the Brahmins in his name.

The plague claimed one after another until all were gone but one little girl of twelve, and in her hands were two hundred rupees, or about sixty-five dollars. According to her relatives' wishes, she gave a little dinner in memory of each one. Then the poor child thought she would be cared for, but kindness is rarely found, except where people have learned to love Jesus, and not one would help her. Very often they would say, "You are only a girl, why should we help you?" At last the idea came to the desolate, hungry child, who had wandered far, that if she were only a boy she would get help. She begged some one to cut her hair like a boy's, leaving a little tuft on top; and putting on boy's clothes, she started out to beg. Her disguise was a success, for a number of high-caste people were afraid of offending a boy who might one day be a powerful Brahmin, so they gave him a little money or a little food.

When Tara told me the story she said, "If they had known that I was a girl, I should long ago have been lying dead by the roadside."

Even as a boy she fared badly enough, and was glad to come to Christians for help.

Long exposure has injured her health very much, but we are caring for her, giving her plenty of milk and a warm place to sleep these cool nights; and we hope some day she may be what her name means, "a star,"—a star in the Master's crown. Is it not beautiful for Christian children to help such forlorn little ones as Tara?
—*Children's Missionary Friend*.