



LIFE OF A. L. O. E." BY AGNES GIBERNE.

THIS new Christmas volume will doubtless be one of the most attractive of the books published this season. It begins with a graphic account of Miss Charlotte Tucker's (A. L. O. E.) father—one of the directors of the East India Company, and a brief summary of his life; from which we learn that A. L. O. E. had a cheerful and happy childhood and girlhood, even at the early age of twelve and fourteen writing plays and poems for the pleasure of her home-circle. She was content with their approbation, and did not appear even to think of writing for the press till she was past thirty. Even then her father objected to her publishing her MS., so that only a few stray little stories appeared in print before the public, such as the beautiful poem, "The White Shroud," and "Daybreak in Britain." A. L. O. E.'s first great sorrow was the death of her father, which event cast a shadow over all her subsequent life; she was so devotedly attached to him. Of all her family of brothers and sisters, her sister Laura (afterwards Mrs. Hamilton) was her favourite and confidante; and she never seemed to need a better. Her brother Robert was killed in the Indian Mutiny; and his death came as a great shock to her, and his orphan children, whom she had taken charge of since they were almost babies. Subsequently she wrote regularly for the press; and her stories became the most popular ones of the day. She was singularly modest about her writing, never caring to be praised, and certainly never seeking it. Perhaps her inventive genius helped to drive away (for the time at least) the many sorrowful thoughts and anxieties which she bore with such patient resignation. And yet another sorrow—more keenly felt than any other, was close at hand. The only daughter of her brother Robert, whom she had brought up, went out to India as soon as she left the school-room; and in one short year died in that far-off land, not "too early gathered" for—

"No flower can fall too soon;
If ripe for glory—early plucked is
early bliss,"

and she was ready to go hence when the Master called her. But the sorrow fell heavily upon A. L. O. E.; and it was a life-long sorrow to her, none the less that it was bravely borne. Five years later her mother died, and the old home was broken up, and shortly after an elder sister died. And then A. L. O. E.'s thoughts turned to the Mission field, and after much prayer and deliberation, she determined to go out to India as an honorary missionary of the Indian Female School and Instruction Society; subsequently on its formation joining the other branch—the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. No matter that she was no longer young. She could go out at her own charges, and be an expense to none. And having once put her hand to the missionary plough, she did not look back. Indeed, during the eighteen years of life that yet remained to her, she never came home to England after she went out, though many loved ones longed to have her among them

once more. Perhaps the wrench of leaving all had been too painful for her to feel able to go through the ordeal a second time.

On first going out to India she stayed at Amritsar in the Punjab, but soon moved to the city of Batala, where she felt the need of workers was greater. Those first days at Amritsar were perhaps the brightest of all her missionary life, for she had the companionship of Mrs. Elmslie (widow of Dr. Elmslie of Cashmere), whose gentle kindness was very precious to her. And this friendship was strengthened when Mrs. Elmslie married



grace L. M. Tucker.

Mr. Baring, Principal of the boy's school at Batala; and A. L. O. E. lived with them as a loved and honoured fellow-worker. But this joy was short-lived, for after a short illness, Mrs. Baring passed away to the better land above, leaving a blank which no one else could fill. Other missionaries (good and kind many of them) came and went, but they were for the most part young and inexperienced, and scarcely companions to one so clever and intellectual as A. L. O. E. Her life was from this time more and more solitary, and she was often the only English lady in Batala, but she bore it without a murmur, and her cheerful letters home gave scarcely a hint of the shadows in her life. When one of her nephews about this time went as governor to the Andaman Islands (a penal settlement) A. L. O. E. herself proposed to go as a missionary to the poor convicts there, or to pay for a substitute if

she was considered too old to undertake such a venture. For various reasons both these offers were rejected; and thenceforth she settled down to the quiet monotony of missionary life at Batala. Much of her time was devoted to preparing native tracts and books for the Indians, and these had an immense circulation in many dialects, and she often sent home a story for her friends in England. One of her books, written at the special request of the Christian Vernacular Society for India (now called the Christian Literature Society), deserves particular notice. It is a brief compendium of all the Parables of our Lord, graced with pithy stories to explain the lessons they are meant to teach, so that the heathen might understand. The book is entitled *Pearls of Wisdom*, and was published in England as well as in many Indian dialects. These little books (for the original volume was printed in portions to be sold cheaply) are still carrying through India's length and breadth the glad tidings of the glorious gospel of the Grace of God. Hard work, sorrow, and many trials, combined with the climate perhaps (though she never seemed to feel the heat), told much on her strength, and she aged so rapidly that at seventy she looked like ninety, so frail and thin and bent did she become; and yet to the very last she laboured on, often beyond her strength, with a loyal enthusiasm which nothing could destroy.

For fuller particulars we refer our readers to Miss Giberne's book, hoping that its perusal may stimulate many to follow in the steps of this veteran missionary. Missionary life was not all ease and comfort to her, and she spent little on herself, though much on others. A room adjoining the Mission House became her bed-room and sitting-room in one, while she joined her fellow-missionaries at meal-times and social hours.

A. L. O. E. longed to die at Batala; but when she became dangerously ill those about her were so pressing in their desire to move her to Amritsar, that she yielded to their wishes, and allowed herself to be removed from the scene of her labours. Friends who loved her, both English and Native, were round her dying bed. No relative was near to minister to A. L. O. E. as she passed away from the darkness of the chamber of sickness into the Glory of God; but He Whom she loved best was with her in those last moments of earthly trial, and she feared no evil knowing that He was there.

"What care the saints of God if they
Through pain and grief are called away
To their reward?
What matters this short life of tears
Which ushers in the countless years
With their dear Lord."

NOTE.—Any profits derived by A. L. O. E.'s relatives from the publication of this volume will be appropriated among those missionary societies in which she was especially interested.