

# Dictionary of National Biography, 1885-1900, Volume 57 — Tucker, Charlotte Maria

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1899

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[TUCKER, CHARLOTTE MARIA](#) (1821–1893), known by the pseudonym ‘A. L. O. E.,’ i.e. A Lady Of England, writer for children, born at Friern Hatch, Barnet, on 8 May 1821, was the sixth child and third daughter of [Henry St. George Tucker](#) [q. v.] and his wife Jane, daughter of Robert Boswell of Edinburgh, a writer to the signet, who was nearly related to Johnson's biographer. In 1822 the Tucker family settled in London at 3 Upper Portland Place. Charlotte was educated at home, and as a girl was fond of writing verses and plays. In her father's house she saw much society; among her father's friends were the Duke of Wellington, Lord Metcalfe, Lord Glenelg, and Sir Henry Pottinger. Throughout life Charlotte was particularly devoted to a younger sister, Dorothea Laura, who married, on 19 Oct. 1852, Otho Hamilton.

About 1849 Miss Tucker commenced visiting the Marylebone workhouse, but it was not until after the death of her father on 14 June 1851 that she began her literary career. Her first book, ‘Claremont Tales,’ was published in 1852, and from that date until her death scarcely a year passed without one or more productions from her pen. She devoted the proceeds of her books to charitable purposes.

On the death of Mrs. Tucker in July 1869, the London house was given up, and for the next six years Charlotte lived with her brother St. George at Bracknell, Windlesham, and Binfield. For some time Miss Tucker had thought of

undertaking missionary work in India, and finding herself in 1875 without home ties, and with sufficient means to render her independent of missionary funds, she set to work at the age of fifty-four to study Hindustani. But, although she learned the grammar and construction with ease, she never mastered any Indian language colloquially. She went to India as an independent member of the Church of England Zenana Society in October 1875. From Bombay she went to Allahabad, and thence to Amritsar, which she reached on 1 Nov. 1875. In December 1876 she moved to Batala, a populous city to the north-east of Lahore, which was thenceforth the centre of her missionary work. In 1878 the Baring High School for native Christian boys was permanently established at Batala, and under its shadow Miss Tucker resided, taking great interest in the pupils. At times she was the only Englishwoman within twenty miles. She helped by her liberality to found a 'plough' school for Indian boys not yet Christians, who as soon as they became converts were drafted into the high school.

Miss Tucker's work consisted in zenana visiting and in writing booklets—allegories and parables—for translation into the vernacular dialects of India. Many of her books were published by the Christian Literary Society and the Punjab Religious Book Society, and sold more widely than almost any other of their productions. At the end of 1885 Miss Tucker had a serious illness, and never fully recovered. In 1893 she fell ill again, and she died at Amritsar on 2 Dec. 1893. She was buried at Batala on 5

Dec., in accordance with the terms of her will, without a coffin, at a cost not exceeding five rupees. There is an inscription to her memory in the Uran dialect in the church at Batala, and a memorial brass was placed in Lahore Cathedral.

Miss Tucker was a woman of tireless energy and stern determination; but her sociable temperament endeared her to all with whom she came in contact in India, both natives and English. Her industry was unceasing. The British Museum 'Catalogue' has 142 separate entries of books published by her between 1854 and 1893. Some are short tales written for the series of simple story books issued by Nelson, the Glasgow publisher; others, like 'Wings and Stings' (1855), 'The Rambles of a Rat' (1854), and 'Old Friends with New Faces' (1858), are of a more ambitious character. A few of her productions reached two, or in rare cases three, editions. Most of the tales are allegorical in form, with an obtrusive moral.

[Agnes Giberne's *A Lady of England; the Life and Letters of Charlotte Maria Tucker*, 1895. A very slight criticism of A. L. O. E. as a writer by Mrs. Marshall appears in *Women Novelists of Queen Victoria's Reign*, 1897, pp. 293–7; Allibone's Dict.]

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