







THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO  
OUTLINE MISSIONARY SERIES.



**I**NDIAN

**A**ENANA **M**ISSIONS.

Their Need, Origin, Objects,  
Agents, Modes of Working, and Results.

BY

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3 X



- “OH! for a clarion voice to reach and stir their nest  
With the story of sisters’ woes, gathering day by day,  
Over the Indian homes—sepulchres rather than rest—  
Till they rouse in the strength of the Lord, and roll the stone away!
- “Sisters! and yea they lie, not by the side of the road,  
But hidden in loathsome caves, in crushed and quivering throngs;  
Downtrodden, degraded, and dark, beneath the invisible load  
Of centuries, echoing groans, black with inherited wrongs.
- “Made like our own strange selves, with memory, mind, and will,  
Made with a heart to love, and a mind to live for ever;  
Sisters! is there no chord, vibrating with musical thrill,  
At the fall of that gentle word, to issue in bright endeavour?
- “Sisters! ye who have known the Elder Brother’s love—  
Ye who have sat at His feet, and leant on His gracious breast,  
Whose hearts are glad with the hope of His own bright home above,  
Will ye not seek them out, and lead them to Him for rest?
- “Is it too great a thing? Will not one rise and go,  
Laying her joys aside, as the Master laid them down,  
Seeking His lone and lost, in the veiled abodes of woe,  
Winning His Indian gems, to shine in His glorious crown?”

F. R. HAVERGAL.

# INDIAN ZENANA MISSIONS.

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## I.—THE WOMEN OF INDIA.

THE Indian Zenana Mission is simply *a mission to Indian women, conducted by women*, carried on in the harems, or Zenanas, of India by lady missionaries, both married and single. The larger number of Zenana missionaries are, however, unmarried, sent out by various Societies and Ladies' Committees, to labour solely among the female natives of our vast Indian empire. It is a work of recent years, and, to many of our older missionary societies, *a new agency*; but it is one imperatively needed, and wherever tried abundantly successful. Indeed, those who are acquainted with India and her needs, do not hesitate to say that the regeneration of that land depends upon her women.

Said Bishop Wilson, of Calcutta, once, when speaking of the evangelisation of India: "What can exceed the inviting prospect which India now presents? The fields white for the harvest, and awaiting the hand of the reaper! Nations bursting the intellectual sleep of thirty centuries! Superstitions, no longer mighty in the giant strength of youth, but doting to their fall! Britain placed at the head of the most extensive empire ever consigned to a Western sceptre; that is, the only great power of Europe professing the Protestant faith, entrusted with the thronging nations of Asia, whom she alone can teach!" Among the instrumentalities used by Christian missionaries for evangelising this vast Indian people, none is more needed, none more successful, when fairly tried, than Zenana visiting and teaching.

**Condition of the Native Women.**—Of the two hundred and fifty millions of Hindus, we may [safely] conclude

that one hundred millions are wives and mothers, for in India, girls are married when yet children—sold in infancy to the highest bidder, or the most holy priest, and taken straight from their childhood's homes, to be immured within the walls of their husbands' Zenanas for life. Of all the different classes of the population, these women feel the burden of heathenism worst. They are despised in their birth; subject to ill-treatment and the chance of infanticide in their earlier years; bartered away to some unknown husband; condemned to life-long imprisonment, ignorance, and drudgery; neglected in sickness; looked upon as unclean, polluted beings in health; shut out from communion with an enjoyment of nature, and considered in the light of slaves. What wonder is it that to such poor creatures the Gospel comes with healing, dignity, and refinement!

Of the entire population of India, not six per cent. can read or write. But of the female population, not *one in two hundred* can read or write. For centuries this vast female population has been enslaved with chains of error and heathenism, producing, as the result, untold sufferings. Among these sufferings may be enumerated—1st, The rite of Suttee; 2nd, Child-marriages; 3rd, Polygamy; 4th, Infanticide; 5th, Social bondage in Zenanas, producing deepest ignorance; 6th, Cruel domestic customs.

The existence of such suffering proves the *need* of Zenana missions.

A native gentleman, Rev. W. T. Sattianadan, who is a clergyman of the English Church, tells us that Hindu women were not always so degraded as now. He says, "During the last five hundred years Indian history might be divided into three periods, the Hindu, Mohammedan, and English. In the Hindu period the female population were in a condition which might be fairly called noble. They were then educated, and learning was much valued among them. Even to this day, one of the poems of a poetess of that day is sung in the country. In this period the women had a voice in choosing their own husbands, and usually exercised it. But all this was changed with the irruption of the Mohammedans. With them came retrogression and degradation. The Mohammedans kept their women shut up in their Zenanas, and partly by

the force of example, and partly by the fear of molestation and insult from their conquerors, the Hindus gradually adopted the same system. Then came the English period; and it was soon seen that any effort to raise India in the scale of nations must, to be successful, devote considerable attention to the improvement of the condition of the women."

Mrs. Weitbrecht, who has studied this subject more fully perhaps than any other living lady, bears similar testimony. She says, "It was during the *heroic* period that the simple religious institutions of the patriarchal age were supplanted by a regular priesthood, who were gradually consolidated into the Brahmini caste, so called because its members devoted themselves to sacred worship or devotion. These Brahmin priests being the mediators between the people and their deities, gradually gained such influence as to enclose the nation in a network of religious observances, extending to the inward impulses no less than to the outward movements, and thus led to the age of ascendant Brahminism, with which our time is connected." The enslavement of Hindu women appears to have been complete with the influence of the Brahmins.

**Hindu Laws relating to Women.**—Manu is one of the greatest Hindu lawgivers, and a passing glance at his writings reveals the fact that the whole spirit of them is designed to *crush* the soul out of womanhood; to treat woman as a vile, polluted, soulless animal, unworthy of kindness in this life and undeserving of a place in heaven in the next life, except it be by the merits of her husband and her own martyrdom. This martyrdom might not at first have been contemplated by Manu as a *fiery* one; he rather designed a *living* one, in honour of her husband's memory, as we see by his precepts. But in course of time the Hindu priests recommended and indeed *commanded* immolation on the funeral pile, as the best way to gain heaven, and escape from the cruel lot of a widow on earth. So true is it that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

Manu says in his statutes: "A wife who neglects her husband must, even though he be addicted to gaming and spirituous liquors, or diseased in body, be deserted for three months and deprived of her ornaments and house-

hold furniture ; but if *she* do the same she may be superseded by another wife." Also, "A wife who is barren or has only daughters may be superseded in the tenth or eleventh year ; but she who speaks unkindly to her husband may be superseded without delay." Again, "Every man shall give his daughter in marriage to an excellent and handsome youth of the same caste, even though she has not attained the age of eight years." Again, "The husband gives bliss to his wife here below, and he will give her happiness in the next world. In the absence or sickness of her lord, a good wife renounces every gratification, and at his death will die with him." The holy books, or Shasters, say, that a woman must never presume to eat until her husband has finished his meal ; then she must humbly finish the remains. Further, these same Shasters unblushingly assert that a woman's only deity is her husband, therefore, in life and death she is absolutely at his disposal.

Out of such cruel doctrines grew the revolting and oppressive customs under which Hindu women have suffered and groaned for centuries. Can we wonder that the sweet words of Jesus, concerning his own mission on earth, come with such beautiful and forceful appropriateness to these poor creatures ? "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor ; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." They are really captives, really bruised and downtrodden, as well as blind and poor spiritually, and the gracious message of the Gospel often makes the sweetest music in their lives. Is it any wonder that these poor creatures hang entranced upon the Zenana missionaries' words, and look upon their visits as forming a new era in their lives ?

**Suttee.**—As the outcome of Manu's legislation and Brahminical influence, the customs of their religious and domestic life were so designed that the *women* were the greatest sufferers. One custom, that of *Suttee*, was strictly observed for an indefinitely long period. Among the blessings of English rule in India, the abolishing of this custom has been one of the greatest ; but in order to realise the terrible depths to which Hindu women were

condemned by their creed, it is necessary to take a glance at it as it existed fifty years ago. We must quote from the testimonies of the pioneers of Indian mission work. The Rev. George Gogerly, one of the earliest of these pioneers, says, "During the first ten years of our missionary labours in Bengal it was common for many poor creatures to immolate themselves on the funeral pile of their deceased husbands, preferring this painful death to the certain contempt and pollution which is almost invariably connected with a life of continual widowhood; and however incredible the facts may appear, the parliamentary papers show that mere infants have thus been burnt alive. Between the years 1815 to 1820 there came under the notice of the Government the cases of no less than sixty-two girls under the age of 18, who were thus cruelly destroyed. The ages of these poor girls were as follows:—

14 girls were	17	years of age.
1 girl was	16 $\frac{1}{2}$	" "
22 girls were	16	" "
6 "	15	" "
2 "	14	" "
2 "	13	" "
10 "	12	" "
1 girl was	10	" "
3 girls were	8	" "

"These horrid rites were more frequent in the Calcutta district than in any other part of India, and within a few miles of my own house, more than one hundred poor infatuated women used to be burnt alive *every year*; and in the whole presidency of Bengal not less than five hundred and seventy *annually* thus miserably perished. The cold-hearted indifference of the relatives and the spectators of these fearful scenes, and the abominable rapacity of the Brahmins who perform the funeral ceremonies, were almost as painful and appalling to a Christian mind as the sight of the poor sufferer perishing in the flames."

Another missionary, a colleague of Mr. Gogerly, thus describes one of these scenes, and we think it only due to our readers, in order that they may obtain a right idea of the degradation of women in India, to quote it *verbatim*. True the Suttee is now a thing of the past, but it was of

yesterday, and many millions of living Hindus can remember these funeral pyres; while in estimating *all* the needs which have brought about the establishment of Zenana Missions, it would be obviously incorrect to leave out so important a factor. Says this eye-witness, writing in 1828:—

“One Sabbath morning, after conducting Divine service, I saw a great crowd approaching. In their midst was a *charpoy* (native bedstead) borne by four men, on which was lying the dead body of a man, and by his side, with the dead man's head resting in her lap, sat his wife; they were proceeding to the banks of the Ganges, there to be consumed together on the funeral pile. On arriving at the spot, where all necessary preparations had been made, the men laid down their burden, and the poor victim of superstition, supported by her female friends, entered the so-called sacred stream, bathed, and performed, according to the accustomed formula, her devotions. These having been completed, she emerged from the river, and her new clothes were taken from her, and were replaced by old ones. She was now conducted to the fearful pile, on which the dead body of her husband had already been placed; and, accompanied by her friends, walked three times round the pile, distributing to the crowd handfuls of parched rice, and dividing among her particular friends the few silver and brass ornaments she possessed. She was then assisted to mount the pile and was placed by the side of the corpse, with her arm under its head. A quantity of rosin and ghee (clarified butter), small pieces of sandal-wood, and large bundles of dry rushes, were thrown on the bodies; after which heavy logs of wood were placed on the top, rendering the escape of the woman, if attempted, quite impossible. The mother of the deceased man, being the nearest relative, received from the officiating Brahmins a handful of compressed hay containing smouldering fire, with which she encompassed the pile three times, and then, blowing the smoking hay into a flame, she applied it to the inflammable materials, and several other persons immediately afterwards doing the same, the whole mass became ignited, and one huge sheet of flame devoured alike the living and the dead. The shouts of the crowd, and the beating of the drums drowned every other sound: and whether the poor woman suffered much or little, could not

be ascertained. The indifference manifested by the spectators was truly frightful; some were singing lewd songs, some were fighting, others lewdly dancing; and the whole scene appeared more like a riotous fair than the immolation of a human being. The relations of the deceased were quarrelling among themselves as to who should pay the fees of the Brahmin and the undertaker: the former demanding two hundred rupees, and the latter twenty-five rupees. How it ended I know not, for I hurried from the place."

This horrible rite of Suttee, after having raged unchecked for centuries and destroyed the lives of thousands of women, was at last abolished by Lord William Bentinck, the English Governor-General of India, in the year 1830. Brahminical bigotry and hatred ran exceedingly high at the time in reference to this matter, but eventually humanity triumphed and scored a victory on behalf of Hindu women. Yet the custom has left its terrible traces on the women of India, and helped to make them what they now are.

**Child-marriages.**—These have been the rule among the people of India for long years. This system has been, and still is, productive of untold misery. The girls, if spared to grow up from infancy, were and are married invariably, while mere children, to any man who appeared to be acceptable to her relatives. If the bridegroom happened to be a child also, which was frequently the case, the two little beings would be betrothed wholly and solely according to the wishes of the parents, social considerations, or convenient circumstances. These children seldom saw each other; and if the boy-bridegroom died, the little girl-wife endured all the sorrows of widowhood, even to immolation during the time when the Suttee rite was observed. In the present day, however, after betrothal, the girl belongs no more to her own parents legally, but is wholly and solely under the control of her husband and his mother. In India the influence of the wife is very small, while that of the aged mother is paramount, provided she be the mother of sons; for as in that country all the family dwell in one home, and the sons, with their wives, continue to live under the parental roof, the mother-in-law has undisputed power over the young child, or girl, so recently introduced into the Zenana. Poor young wives! if they



fall into the hands of those who are in indigent circumstances, they are treated as slaves and drudges, while every new-comer is looked upon as a fresh servant, to toil for her lord and master. If they fall into the hands of rich husbands, they are imprisoned in the Zenana, in company with their fellow captives for life, restrained from intercourse with the outer world, shut off from every avenue of knowledge, and stunted in mind and intellect, until life becomes burdensome from its very *ennui*.

Then, too, they are often treated cruelly, and against this cruelty they have no appeal. They are as helpless and crushed as prisoners in dungeons. This is the condition of the wives, especially the *child-wives* of India. It is only when they become mothers of *sons*, that their condition becomes at all bearable. Then, for the sake of the boy who calls her mother, the poor young wife is better treated; but if it should be her ill-fortune to become the mother of a daughter, loud is her lamentation, for this event brings with it untold sorrow—contempt in the present and looming darkness in the future. Is it any wonder that little girls instructed in our mission-schools shrink from the prospect of being given to some man who may be unknown to them, may be kind, or cruel, according to the fancy of the hour; possibly to an old man, with several other wives already, who would look with jealousy upon the new star. Should a kind, sympathising mother-in-law rule the Zenana, the lot of the child-wife becomes more bearable; but if she prove hard, stern,—and haughty, the poor child has no resource but frequent tears, relieved only occasionally by the idle gossip of the women around her, or her amusements with her girlish toys. It will surprise many English wives and mothers to know that these little imprisoned, downtrodden child-wives of India are driven, by the very necessities of their condition, to find pleasure and pastime in playing with dolls, ornaments, and such things. The wife often carries with her, into her husband's Zenana, the box of toys which amused her in her father's house, and there, after growing to woman's estate, these little trifles are often among her most cherished possessions.

**Polygamy.**—Polygamy has also been, and still is, the rule among that class of men who can afford to support

more than one wife. Many of the poorer Hindus are forced to be content with one wife, because of poverty; still if a man takes two wives, he gains two servants, or drudges. But among the middle and upper classes polygamy is the rule. This custom is fraught with much unhappiness to the members of the households concerned, seeing that jealousies, quarrels, and disputes are most common. The custom seems to have had its origin in the superstitious belief that only through her husband could a woman gain heaven, as taught by Manu and diligently inculcated by succeeding generations of Brahmins. To prove how completely and universally this was acted on, we will quote from Ward's work on the natives of India: "Numbers of Koolan Brahmins procure a subsistence by this excessive polygamy. At their marriages they obtain large dowries, and as often as they visit their wives they are feasted, and receive presents from the family. Having thus married into forty or fifty families, a Koolan goes from house to house, and is there fed, clothed, and lodged. Thus the creation of this order of merit has ended in a state of monstrous polygamy, which has no parallel in the history of human depravity. Among the Turks, seraglios are confined to men of wealth; but here a Hindu, possessing only a shred of cloth and his *poita* (sacred thread), keeps more than a hundred wives. The fathers of Hindu girls will make any sacrifices to marry their daughters to these Koolan Brahmins, believing seriously that thereby the eternal happiness of the wives is secured. Instances have been known, in which Koolans have, although possessed already of scores of wives in different places, married yet more wives in their dying hours, thereby, as they taught, conferring on the poor deceived women the right to enter heaven."

The wives of a Hindu retain their maiden names. They are not allowed to live in their fathers' houses after marriage, except in the cases in which Koolan Brahmins marry them. In all other cases the wife becomes the possession of her husband—her body and soul are in his keeping, as well as her chances of eternal felicity, when she becomes an inmate of his Zenana. But so completely is her existence ignored by the outside world, that she is

never inquired for, never spoken of before strangers. Indeed, were any stranger to ask a Hindu for his wife, it would be resented as a serious offence. It is in the most densely populated province of India—that of Bengal, “the sixty millioned-province”—that this polygamous system is most observed, for it is there around the famed valley of the Ganges that Brahminism has had its most unchecked rule. It is in the province of Bengal, too, that the seclusion of women in the Zenanas is most strictly carried out; although to a certain extent this system obtains all over India. It is in these Zenanas to-day that numberless sorrows arise, because of the introduction of some new child, or girl-wife, in place of the middle-aged one who has offended her lord.

**Infanticide.**—This custom as it first existed was represented by the frequent offerings of infants to the Ganges. The mothers, feeling so deeply their own degradation, looked upon the birth of a daughter as a misfortune to be bewailed with bitter lamentations. According to their own words, a house in which daughters were born was “accursed,” and in former times the system of child-murder presented a ready means of ridding themselves of the little unconscious and unwelcome visitors. The English Government, however, to its lasting honour, has forbidden the practice of infanticide by drowning in the river Ganges; but there is too much reason to fear that at this present day a modified form of the evil is still existing, although *secretly*. Mrs. Urmston, speaking at the Mildmay Conference in 1878, on this question, observed: “No one ever congratulated me in India on the birth of a daughter. If a little boy is born, they think it a fine thing. They think you are the most favoured woman if you have a number of boys. But no one congratulated me on the arrival of a dear little girl. It was in vain that we displayed her and cherished her, and thanked God for such a precious gift; they could not understand it. No, it was a misfortune, and even to this day, I believe that multitudes of little girls are being deprived of life.” Mrs. Weitbrecht says: “Child-murder among Hindus is not confined to the offering of infants to the goddess Gunga, as practised formerly until Government forbade, but has, alas, its *secret* victims in many a highborn family even now.

Heart-harrowing tales can be related by the Zenana visitor in proof of this." Indeed, where the birth of a daughter is counted a curse, and the infant herself is doomed to a life of sorrow and contempt, it is often esteemed the mark of surest *kindness* by the parent to *allow it to die*. As a lady missionary says: "We mothers understand how a little neglect soon quenches the life of a baby-girl." This lady had seen sad instances of neglect leading to death—neglect which merited the name of *infanticide*.

In past times, many infants, both boys and girls, were cast into the Ganges as an offering to the goddess in order to *secure the salvation of the perishing little ones*. Many a loving, devoted mother, after kissing and weeping over her child, took it down to the river and cast it in, hoping thus to propitiate the goddess Gunga, and while weeping frantically at the sacrifice, turned away her head and put her fingers in her ears to keep out the dying screams of the child. Thus it came to pass that, what with sacrifices to Gunga, and the number which were put to death, *simply and solely because they were girls*, the multitude of slaughtered innocents became so appalling year by year, that our Government stepped in and forbade the continuance of this child-murder. Thus the horrible holocaust, as far as external appearances went, was stayed.

**Social Bondage in Zenanas.**—It is not astonishing that great ignorance should be the result of Zenana life. Mrs. Greaves, a devoted Zenana worker, widow of an English missionary, tells of a Hindu lady who had never seen a river. All attempts to explain this natural phenomenon to the lady had failed, for so closely had she been kept prisoner all her life that she had not the least idea of running water, either in the form of sea or river. But so eagerly did she long to know what a river meant that one day, with the connivance of the mother-in-law who ruled over her son's wives, she was carried in a closed palanquin down to the margin of the Ganges, and as the bearers stood there, the side of the palanquin was slipped back, so that the imprisoned *Bow* (wife) could gaze on the stream. This she did, with delight and wonder unbounded, for a few minutes, and then returned to ponder over the strange sight. Other ladies will ask the Zenana visitors all sorts of questions about their native lands, people, and customs,

as childish as it is possible to conceive of. This is the result of the dense, dark ignorance in which they have been and still are kept.

It is a favourite doctrine, both with the Hindus and Mohammedans, that women have no minds; and most thoroughly do they regulate their procedure by it, as far as it regards their women. But whenever a Zenana missionary has tried to break down the barriers and teach the fettered soul something of the vast stores of knowledge which are waiting to bless and cheer mankind, she has found her efforts responded to with an eager answering intelligence. And out of this eager response has grown up, in many cases, a consuming desire for information upon all subjects, until the inquirer has ended her quest only in Jesus the Fount of all knowledge. Mrs. Ferguson mentions that the petted wife of a Hindu barrister was once lamenting to her that she could not read. She said to the lady missionary, "When my husband is away, I get his books and turn them over, and wonder what is in them that interests him so much. Do you think I could ever learn to read?" "I replied," says Mrs. Ferguson, "of course you could! Wouldn't you like to begin at once?" And I brought out my Bengali spelling-book and taught her the first five letters of the alphabet. In six months that woman could read her own language fluently, and with great intelligence; and then, at her own request, we began English. She also progressed in that, and as a lesson exercise book, I gave her "Little Arthur's History of England." The first day after she got the book, she met me with beaming eyes, and said, "Since you were here I have been so happy. I have been reading what your country was like; and in reading I felt sure that there's hope for India; that as the light had shined and brightened you, so also will it shine on India; and we too shall enjoy the happiness and freedom that you have." And this is by no means an isolated incident. Many a time it has been proved that if only the opportunity be granted, these poor ignorant women eagerly *grasp* at instruction.

**Derivation of the word "Zenana."**—It may not be out of place here to say a word as to the derivation of the term "Zenana." It is derived from two Mohammedan

words, signifying "The place of the women." This term, however, is not used in every part of India, although so familiar to us; other terms are used, such as "purdah," "gosha," and "anthakar;" but each of these signifies the same thing, "curtained women" and the place of their seclusion. In Bengal, as we have said, this seclusion is most rigidly maintained in the case of the more wealthy classes; but the women of the poorer classes must of necessity have more freedom, because of their having to perform the household duties; and in the southern Provinces of India the females possess still more liberty, although, to a certain extent, the system is carried out. The wives of the agricultural classes *cannot* be confined so strictly, so that they enjoy more liberty to come and go, but their oppression, contemptuous treatment, and bitter lot are precisely the same.

**Cruel Domestic Customs.**—Another proof of the *need* of Zenana missions may be found in the cruel domestic customs of Hinduism. We have seen how hardly the system of child-marriage and polygamy presses upon the female part of the population, who are included in the term "wives;" and when these wives become mothers they find that "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." Cast out of the house in the hour of her deepest need and sharpest agony, the young Hindu mother spends the first few weeks of motherhood in a dark, dirty shed in the courtyard, on the mud floor, deeming herself happy if her child be only a boy, for then the father will honour and love her for her boy's sake, and when she dies she will have a son, provided he be spared long enough, to set fire to the funeral pyre. By this means she believes that her soul will go straight to heaven, and not become an unhappy wandering spirit. The Bengali word for son means "deliverer from hell." By the cruel domestic custom of casting out the young mother at the very time when she most needs sympathy and care, many lives are lost and many constitutions permanently weakened.

Another cruel domestic custom is that of *tyranny over widows*. As we have said, the Suttee being abolished, no widow can now be burnt with the dead body of her husband. Various attempts, it is true, were made to evade the new law, but in time that law prevailed. But now the

widow undergoes a *social martyrdom*, which is to some of them so terrible that they seek a quick escape from it by means of suicide. A Hindu widow of the present day, however young, or even if she have never seen her betrothed husband, has to leave off her jewels, wear the poorest clothing, keep fasts, perform the most menial offices of her mother-in-law's house, and receive unlimited contempt. Widowhood is supposed to be the punishment for some dreadful sin committed in a former state of existence, and that, therefore, it is to be made as bitter as possible. As re-marriage is strictly forbidden to her, she leads a life of hopeless anguish until she either seeks escape by suicide from the circumstances of her lot, or until, overcome by ill-treatment and sorrow, she sinks and dies.

The Brahmins have been asked to account for the fact of such contempt being constantly shown to women in their land, and their answer is founded upon the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. They teach that woman, together with "the diseased, maimed, and infidels," are disgraced in this life in consequence of the sin committed in a former life. Thus, by this false teaching, a reason is found for the existence of the wrong as well as an argument for its continuance. Unregarded and unhelped, the women of India—fellow-subjects of our own Queen—obtain no redress, no amelioration of their lot, except by means of the Gospel of the grace of God. And this must be carried to them by *women*. Male missionaries, however gentlemanly, however good and considerate, are absolutely *denied admission* to the Zenanas of the rich and middling classes. Only the poorest women who labour in agriculture, and perform their own household duties, are at liberty to listen to the word of truth as these missionaries proclaim it. On their way to and from the bazaar, or market, or rice-field, they stop and listen to the good tidings of salvation proclaimed by the foreigners to their husbands, brothers, and sons, but it is at the expense of their respectability, even then. Society is so conservative in India that the women *must* learn of women, or lose respectability. In case of illness they would rather die than be preserved to life by the services and skill of a male doctor. Indeed, the circumstances of a Hindu woman's life, be it high or low, all conspire so bitterly to fill her cup with misery that

suicide has grown to be quite of frequent occurrence. Mrs. Greaves tells us that as she was passing by a Zenana one day, a Hindu gentleman said to her, "I would take you in here were it not that the gentleman is in mourning for his wife." "On inquiring for her," she adds, "I found that she had had a little quarrel with her husband, and when he was gone out she sent the servant for opium and killed herself. I asked if this was a rare circumstance among the women, but he replied, 'Oh no; if a woman is unhappy she knows she must die some time, so she just poisons herself to get out of her trouble quickly.'" Helpless, hopeless, and despairing, these sisters of ours cry loudly to us with a mute yet longing outlook for some message—some action on the part of those who know the truth which maketh free, to assist them to rise from their downtrodden, enslaved condition. Christian women, both in England and America, have heard that cry, obeyed, gone forth, and commenced the work of blessing. The "Bright and Morning Star" has arisen upon the women of India with its beams full of healing, and already we see the promise of brighter days. India's daughters now truly "wait for" the Lord.

## II.—ORIGIN OF ZENANA MISSIONS.

As might have been expected, this work originated in the midst of difficulties, obstacles, and scorn; it was commenced and tried in secrecy, under ban, and opposed by all the inherited notions of Hindu social and household economy. The idea of gaining access to the houses of the rich appeared to be a far-fetched dream, while any plan which concerned the imparting of instruction to the poor was ridiculed. Such ideas were foreign to Hindu life, and were looked upon as notions invented by the English on purpose to destroy their distinctions of caste. Further, it was said that if a knowledge of learning was introduced into the harems of gentlemen, it would be the means of causing insubordination in families, and, above all, teach the women to disregard the teachings of the Brahmins. These possibilities were magnified into great and real dangers by the spiritual guides of the Hindus, with the



consequence that all openings for mission work among the women seemed denied or closed.

**Early Pioneers.**—What was to be done? Several missionaries were in the country, and their wives were anxious to labour for the souls of this vast multitude of heathen women and girls. Taking heart, and committing the project to the Lord, two missionaries' wives, Mrs. Gogerly, of the London Mission, and Mrs. Pearce, of the Baptist Mission, opened schools (about 1820) for native females. A little later, Mrs. Louisa Mundy, of the London Mission, established several female schools. All thinking minds interested in work either of a missionary or benevolent character perceived that *female education* was the crying want of India. Alphonse Lacroix, a diligent, self-denying missionary in India at that time, uttered these memorable words: "In my opinion, we ought to be anything but sanguine of success, till Christianity has imparted to the Hindus different ideas of the female sex from those which they now possess." The daughter of this man, Mrs. Mullens, was afterwards known as one of the most efficient Zenana workers, and indeed won the honourable title, "the Apostle of the Zenanas." One of the reports of the Bengal Auxiliary Missionary Society thus gives the story of the commencement of Mrs. Mullens' Zenana efforts.

"In the beginning of the year 1856, the native doctor, who had attended the sick in the mission compound at Bhowanipore for more than fourteen years, died, after a protracted illness of six months. A man possessed of singular intelligence and skill in his profession, of high moral character, and great liberality to the poor, he still, alas, died as he had lived, a follower of Vishnu. After his death, Mrs. Mullens went to the house for the purpose of comforting the bereaved family. She found that it consisted entirely of females, with the exception of one young lad hardly able to earn sixteen rupees a month, whereas the doctor's income had been more than five times that sum. The family was consequently plunged into great pecuniary distress, in addition to what appeared to be sincere grief for the loss of their relative. A trifling present of rupees was offered to the widow; but this it was known would save them from embarrassment only for a few days. What was to be done? It occurred to Mrs.

Mullens that in conversing with the doctor he had often told her that he approved of female education, and had consequently had his daughter—a widow and only child—thoroughly taught by a pundit. On inquiring for her she came, an interesting young woman about twenty-five years of age. Mrs. Mullens found her all that the father had represented her to be, and even surpassed in intelligence what she had been led to believe. Whilst holding a conversation with her, the thought struck Mrs. Mullens, that were she to engage this young widow to hold a school in her own house, she might, perhaps, be able to persuade the respectable Hindus to send their daughters to her. Some few days after, the plan was proposed to her, and within a short time she had twenty-three pupils, from the age of eight to twenty. Some of these, of course, were married: one was a mother, and they were all the daughters of respectable Hindu householders. This school was constantly visited by Mrs. Mullens and other ladies, and through the scholars they were introduced into their families; and so the Zenanas began to be visited, and this good work is advancing every year.”

About 1830, Miss Bird gained access to several Zenanas in Calcutta, although it was by dint of much perseverance and many secret journeys to and fro. Many ladies received blessings by her means; but the record of her work was kept within the knowledge only of a very few, or it would have been summarily stopped.

**Formation of Zenana Societies.**—About twenty years afterwards, by a conjunction of somewhat remarkable circumstances, the Calcutta Normal School was established, in order to prepare *females born in the country* for Zenana work among the female aristocracy. Upwards of a hundred young women, some natives, and others Eurasians, or descendants of mixed marriages, have been trained in this school, and have done good service among their fellow country-women. In 1834, the “Society for Promoting Female Education in the East” was formed. Mr. Abeel, an American missionary, came to England purposely to plead for heathen women. He represented, very feelingly and forcibly, that it was impossible for *male* missionaries to attempt to educate or Christianise women in Eastern countries, because of Oriental habits and prejudices; and

as one result of his pleadings this society was formed. The first Zenana workers sent out by an English society were those of this society, and India was their first field of operations. Six distinct Zenana missions are supported by it—missions in different parts of India—which include two hundred and four aristocratic Zenanas, containing over 1,000 pupils; while three hundred schools, containing about 20,000 scholars, are conducted or assisted by the society. Help is also granted to teachers of other schools, and correspondence is kept up with missionary ladies labouring in other spheres.

Other societies have followed in the wake of this, and are doing noble service in the same manner; a notable example being the "Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society." This was founded in 1851, and employs five different agencies, viz., normal schools, Zenana visitation, medical missions, Hindu and Mohammedan female schools, and Bible-women. In and around the large cities, European and native Christian girls are trained to be teachers, either for the aristocratic inmates of the secluded Zenana, or for female schools. Zenana visitation is carried on by these trained agents, and by trained English ladies sent out from England. The medical missionary ladies are all English women, trained in England, and taught to combine the womanly arts of ministering to both body and mind. The Bible-women are native Christians of proved piety and talent, who work among the poorer women in the villages, at markets, hospitals, and jails. This society, in 1878, was able to report a staff of eighty-three trained Zenana workers and teachers, besides about eighty-eight native Christian assistants. This staff ministered to about 1,800 Zenana pupils, and nearly 3,000 scholars in the different schools, besides making a vast number of visits to the poorer homes.

Other societies were originated by ladies of different churches—Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregational—until scarcely any missionary society can now be found without its "Women's Branch" or "Ladies' Committee," formed solely to deal with this question of female education. Christian opinion and Christian feeling were roused in the matter, and it was felt most earnestly that if heathenism was to be successfully battled with, the

*homes* of the people must be permeated by Christian influences; and that the only way to accomplish this was by getting hold of the *mothers* and *wives*. As a consequence Women's Missionary Societies have been formed in England, America, Scotland, Germany, and Switzerland, having these great aims for their objects. A large number of the agents of each society are labouring in India, dealing directly with this Zenana question; but if, as is estimated by one writer, only one Zenana visitor is at work to each million of Hindu women, the prospect appears very gloomy. True, there are a larger number of workers in India than this; but then many are teachers in the schools, and cannot be spared from their own special work. All the countries of the East have to share in the resources of these societies, and when so many fields of labour are represented, we may well ask, "What are these few labourers among so many?" Until the women of Christian lands understand and prayerfully undertake this matter, the efforts put forth will be in no sense commensurate with the need.

It is remarkable, that almost simultaneous with these new efforts of the Christian Church for the welfare of heathen women, an interest was developed among the native women themselves relating to these questions. The heathen mind was awakened to inquire for, and long after, what the Christian mind was stirred up to give. It is almost always so. God's time and God's workers are fitted for each other. The opportunity brings the workers, and the workers find soil prepared. For long years the missionary agents at work in India had preached in public, taught in public, and argued in public, influencing the male part of the population in no small degree. Men and youths of all ages and ranks gave up heathenism and renounced idols to make a public profession of faith in Christ Jesus, at the expense of all that made life desirable to a Hindu. But the women sat in darkness and in silence, enthralled by a cruel system of religious and social bondage. The Indian *home* could never be blessed by the genial influences of the religion of Jesus, because its heralds were denied access there. It was necessary to find some means of introducing this new Evangel to the *homes*. What means? For long years this was a problem, but now we have found

the solution. If womanhood be elevated, the home is elevated; if woman be taught to recognise her deliverer, she uses her influence from that time with children and husband for Christ. Heathenism fades away, and the "true light" shines with a pure and steady radiance, as the hitherto despised Hindu woman recognises and obeys the summons, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

### III.—OBJECTS SOUGHT BY ZENANA MISSIONS.

The aim of this missionary agency is nothing less than the *Christianising, civilising, and elevating* of the women of India, by means of the Gospel and the liberty which it brings; then, further, to benefit through the women the homes and the families of India, and to remove the stumbling-stone out of the way of many who would fain confess Christ. Some philanthropists speak as though civilisation should *precede* Christianity; but the experience of all missionaries goes against the idea. Civilisation follows in the track of the religion of Jesus as surely as does daylight upon the rising of the sun; so will it be with India. So *has* it been in every case.

**Christianising of Indian Women.**—It is an admitted fact that many of the Hindus believe in Jesus now, and have given in the adhesion of the heart to the Gospel; but from various circumstances, such as family ties, social position, idolatrous relatives, &c., shrink from coming forward with a public profession of Christianity. It often happens that the men of a household are so instructed and so convinced, that they renounce Hinduism, yet are not brave enough to put on Christianity. In the Zenana the influence of the mother is all-powerful. She is a devoted adherent of the old idolatry, because she knows no better, and her bitterest invectives are heaped upon the heads of those who were the means of beguiling her son from the faith of his ancestors. But if the *women* were instructed, and led to Christ, what upheavals may we not expect, what numerous confessions, what progress in the faith of Christ?

Mrs. Urmston put one phase of this matter very clearly

and startlingly before the Mildmay Conference. She said, "There is a new element of sorrow come in amongst them (the mothers and homes). In Bengal, people are bitterly bewailing the decay of faith. We have, as a nation, taken our education to the young men, and the wives and mothers are broken-hearted. The mothers are weeping for the decay of faith, and breaking *their* hearts over children who are throwing off the old customs and the good ways, as they consider them; and the mothers, what can they teach them? These mothers know nothing better to teach them, while the young men are laughing at the old gods and turning them to derision. So these women are beginning to curse our rule, in Bengal especially, because we have taken away their old faith." Said a convert once to a missionary lady, "Do you know why we have opposed Christianity always more than any other people? It was just this, that we didn't know what it was. We understood that it was a religion of love; we cannot warn our sons against it."

So that, by winning the *women* over to Christianity, Zenana missions are preparing the way of the Lord in relation to the open confession of Christ by the men. In thousands of cases, the tears, entreaties, and prayers of the wife or mother have caused the young convert to act false to his own convictions; but wherever the knowledge of Christ has penetrated into the dark recesses of the Zenana, *there* the women have welcomed the profession of the Christian religion on the part of their male relatives. The Christianising and enlightenment of the women is, then, one prominent object in Zenana missions.

**Elevation of Indian Women.** — Another thing sought after is their *elevation*. Zenana visitors find various difficulties and hindrances to their work, according to the district and people where and among whom they labour. It is necessary to bear this in mind when speaking of missionary work in India. The country contains different nations — Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, Mahratti, Punjabi, Hindustani, Bengali, and others. All these have different customs, with which the missionary has to contend. Polygamy is the rule in some parts of India, but not in others. In Bengal the richer women are imprisoned for life in the Zenana, while in South India they have far

more liberty; but in all parts of India the *poor* women are treated like slaves, and worked accordingly, instead of being confined or secluded. To all these differing classes Christianity comes with elevating power. It deals with all the relations of life, raising and sanctifying them; and it shows the husband that his wife is to be beloved and treated like an *equal*. It tells the lords of creation that women have souls as well as they themselves—souls to be saved by faith in Christ, not to be admitted into paradise because of the husband's merits. How strangely must the words of the New Testament fall upon the ears of many of these downtrodden women, drudging life's weary day through. "Husbands love your wives, *even as Christ loved the church.*"

Christianity has ever exercised an elevating power upon woman. In all heathen and pagan countries she is degraded. The curse falls heaviest upon her weaker frame, and the penalty of the transgression is reproduced with intensest bitterness in her daily life. But the Gospel dispensation commenced with special honour to all woman-kind. By being born of a woman Christ Jesus set eternal honour upon womanhood; and through all His life He manifested His kindness to woman. Was it wonderful that the Marys clung to Him? that the mother of Zebedee's children prayed to Him for those children? that the Syro-Phenician woman besought Him for her daughter? that the sick woman touched believingly the hem of His garment? that the women stood by Him longest when on the cross, and sought Him first at the sepulchre? Was not His ministry and His message full of mercy to women? As she was first in the transgression, it seemed as if He were determined that she should be foremost in blessing. All history, if rightly read, proves that blessing and elevation for woman have followed unfailingly in the wake of the Gospel. Place the Gospel, with its blessings, on one side and the anathemas of Manu on the other side, and is it wonderful that the hearts of Hindu women are touched and conquered by Christ, although in the past crushed and scorned by the heathen lawgiver? Nay, would it not be wonderful if they turned away from the loving message, so full of hope, now sent to them?

**Civilisation of Indian Women.**—The *civilisation* of their

heathen sisters is another object also ardently sought by lady-workers. In the dreary, monotonous life of the Zenana, one sees no books, writing materials, fancy-work—nothing in fact of the innumerable traces of civilisation which are scattered around the boudoirs of English ladies. The Indian lady-prisoner may be the wife of a man who owns thousands of acres; but she knows nothing of any benevolent labours among those poor natives who live around her, neither is she permitted social enjoyment and intercourse with those of her own station around. To dress her hair, count her jewels and costly robes, play with trinkets, dolls, and toys of childhood, amuse herself with gossip about other Zenanas, play with or teach her children to bow down to idols—these things make up the sum of her existence. Even the surroundings are not cheerful. The husband's apartments may be, and often are, furnished in the English style, and suggestive of comfort; but the furniture of the Zenana is mostly comprised of a few mats, a number of cushions, the cooking utensils, and a *tuktaposh* or low bedstead, used as a seat by day and a couch by night. The apartments set apart for the ladies of the house are always the worst, most ill-ventilated, and darkest. The Zenana visitors give us the dreariest pictures of their apartments. Writes one, "I had to-day to be the comforter of a young bride in her gay attire of red and gold, who looked so sad and weary that I instinctively put my arm round her; and down went the little weary head on my bosom, as if a Christian lady's breast were a natural place of repose for a sad young Indian bride."

And not only is the civilisation produced by the Gospel fraught with blessing to the inmates of the Zenanas, it also comes as a bright and cheering ray into the lives of the poor toiling women of India—a class which is to be counted by millions. In dress, in treatment, in toil, in suffering, these poorer sisters have tasted a bitter lot; but wherever the knowledge of the Gospel is imparted, the new hopes given by it, the fresh interest in life, the promise of comfort "to the life that now is" cheers, brightens, and softens the rugged path. The wives of the missionaries in past days were able to operate somewhat upon this class, and laboured constantly for their temporal good as well as for their spiritual benefit. Womanly arts,



more modest dress, more considerate treatment, have succeeded; and to-day there are poor Hindu wives and mothers exalted and uplifted and refined by the influence of the Gospel which these ladies exemplified and taught.

Mrs. Mault, of the London Mission, deserves especial mention as one of the pioneers in this kind of labour. Her husband was stationed at Nagercoil in the early part of this century, and she threw herself heart and soul into every movement calculated to *raise* and *civilise* the native females. Among the rest of her labours, she taught them the art of lace-making with great success. This occupation suited the Eastern mind; it was eagerly learnt and cleverly executed; and to this day the art is diligently followed in that district. That the industry is still flourishing is proved by the fact that, a few months since, the writer was privileged to inspect some specimens of Indian lace-work executed near Nagercoil, and sent to this country as a present to the granddaughter of Mrs. Mault. Among them was a lady's collar, worked in *gold* lace and really magnificent. The giving of employment and the teaching of needlework to native females may be looked upon as some of the *collateral* advantages of Christianity. It will, of necessity, uplift and refine the females in relation to their every-day life.

#### IV.—AGENTS EMPLOYED IN ZENANA MISSIONS.

These are of various classes and degrees of education, from the thoroughly trained efficient medical lady missionary, or teacher, who has gained fitness and culture in the midst of the highest advantages, down to the simple, half-educated, but honest-hearted, native Bible-woman, who, like the humble cottager of Cowper's verse—

“just knows,  
And knows no more, her Bible true.”

The workers in these various grades find special work to do in their spheres of labour—work which none can do so well as themselves, and they succeed, consequently, in reaching and ministering to different classes of society. For distinctions of grade and caste are as rigidly observed and enforced in Hindu society as in lordlier England; and the rich Zenana lady belonging to a high caste would

scorn the ministrations of a sister of lowlier caste; while the religion of Jesus has not yet permeated the national life sufficiently to permit of high-caste ladies seeking for and instructing their humbler sisters—although we are glad to learn that in one or two instances there exist exceptions to this rule.

The agents employed in Zenana missions are—

**Teachers in Normal Schools.**—These teachers are engaged in the important work of *training* native teachers for the future female schools of India, as well as inducting them into the work of Zenana visitation. Such teachers are nearly always properly trained, efficient English ladies, but they are frequently assisted by trained native females. An extract from the Report of the “Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society” will show the kind of work accomplished in this training class. “This class, which constitutes a most important part of our staff, consists of ten pupils, native Christian women, mostly new converts, all of whom are very intelligent, and some show considerable ability. They take a prominent part in the teaching in Zenanas, schools, and villages, and a thorough knowledge of Scripture is indispensable to fit them for this work and make them intelligent Christians. The Bible is not the familiar book to them that it is to us, and consequently they need more time to acquire a knowledge of it.” From these institutions we may hope that in future years a supply of Zenana workers and teachers will go forth fitted to cope with the needs of their fellow women and the girls of India.

**Teachers in Native Girls' Schools.**—These schools are of different grades, classes, and kinds. There are orphan schools, English schools, vernacular schools, boarding and bazaar schools. The middle classes of India can afford to pay for the education furnished to their daughters, and, to a certain limited extent, do so, although not so universally as we may hope that they will another day when they are more Christianised. In those cases where schools are established for the girls of this class of society, *English* is the language in which much of the instruction is given, and properly so, seeing that the English language takes the place among the Hindus of French and German with us. For the poorer children, both Mohammedan and

Hindu, it has been found advisable to open *bazaar* schools, where the instruction is mostly imparted in the vernacular or native tongue. It is evident that this class of schools, by employing the vernacular as the language of instruction, reaches the poorest girls, and conveys instruction to the lowest. Very seldom can any fees be charged in these schools. There has been an increase in the number of *orphan* schools since the famine; and of these some are conducted as purely vernacular schools, while others are carried on as higher-class English schools, with the intention of fitting the boarders, who have to be supported entirely by the mission, either for teachers in native schools, or for wives of native evangelists, pastors, and Scripture-readers. These objects are very important ones. Mrs. Weitbrecht says, "In some missions, where careful attention has been given to the education of Christian girls, there is a marked result in the larger proportion of truly Christian families."

**Zenana Visitors.**—These ladies, among whom are numbered English ladies and educated native Christian assistants, visit the native ladies at their own houses, read to and instruct them, conduct schools there, and work generally for and among the women. The work of these Zenana visitors is not always pleasant or easy; it is oftener difficult, arduous, and trying; but it is blessed work, and productive of glorious results, for it carries the tidings of the Gospel right into the *homes* of heathenism, and makes converts there, as well as sheds a radiance over the pathway of the most downtrodden class in India. Says Mrs. Weitbrecht, "There is something very fascinating in the sound of these two words, 'Zenana Visitation,' and it is truly a work replete with interest; yet in its practical details the romance is soon forgotten in the stern reality of the work. Going forth in the hottest part of the day, in a burning sun, and making your way through narrow lanes—walking is a necessity, for no wheeled conveyance can proceed—a young and zealous labourer is taught the meaning of 'bearing the burden and heat of the day,' and she soon finds that unless constrained by the love of Christ, and upheld by His grace from day to day, she would be ready to relinquish what appeared in prospect such an inviting sphere of labour; and then, when the daily

toil has continued for weeks and months, and no fruit appears such as her soul desires, then she is almost ready to adopt the words of one, 'I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought.'

A Zenana visitor says respecting her pupils: "When not engaged in household duties, the women, as a rule, spend their time in gossiping, in idle and frivolous amusements, and in listening to legends about their household gods. In all native houses in this district one finds dolls made of red wood, which not only children, but also young women, make a great source of amusement. These they dress up, adorn with real jewellery, and perform marriage and other ceremonies with them, as they would for their own children. The other day a family spent no less than about £25 in English money on the coming of age of their doll. . . . I have with fear and trembling put the Tamil Bible into the hands of some of the pupils, but I find that they are reading it with much interest. One especially, I hear, is found with it every moment she can spare or get an opportunity to be alone. She wrote to me that she cannot live without the Bible. Centuries of ignorance and heathenism have brought the women to a very low state, morally and socially, and the education they get otherwise than through missionaries does not tend to open their eyes to the real interests of the soul."

Another Zenana visitor says, "On visiting a Zenana for the first few times, the women of the house generally assemble, looking at us rather distrustfully; but after a little time, when they see that our intentions towards them are only good, they become very confidential, and I believe that some really like us very much. As a rule, we find them ready and waiting for us at the proper time; they usually have a place prepared where we teach them. Most of my pupils are beginners, nearly all the Hindu houses having been opened this year. In one of them I have three pupils, all advanced in years; one is the owner of the house, a widow; the other two live close by, and come in to read with her."

Another lady writes: "It is satisfactory to know that a gradual improvement has been noticed in the women we visit. There are, it is true, many obstacles in the way which discourage us, but our efforts are not in vain, and

I am glad to say there have been a few new houses opened to us lately. Many of the women commit verses from the Bible to memory, and proudly repeat them to us on our visits. In no instance has a home been visited where the Bible has been refused admission. There is one woman who lives on the banks of the river, and her house has been open to us for some years. She is very well acquainted with the Gospel. She tells me she does not believe in idols; and I am inclined to credit her, because she has taken down all the little images that were on a shelf, and has put up instead the text, St. John iii. 16, sent out from England. Very often tears run down her cheeks during Bible lessons, and she says, 'I know that all you are saying is true.' She sees her religion is false, and I am persuaded that were it not for the scorn of her relations and friends she would openly declare herself a Christian."

Not only are channels opened up for Zenana visiting among the Hindu, and Bengali, and Mohammedan homes, but in many places the husbands of the ladies are coming forward, *asking* for instruction on behalf of their wives. Mrs. Greaves tells us that the kindness with which the Babus (gentlemen) received her and her friends was beyond all that they had ever before experienced. These gentlemen *begged* that a mission to the women and girls might be established at Burdwan. Mrs. Blackett, formerly of the Barrackpore Zenana mission, says, "Both my husband and I have been greatly moved by the state of utter ignorance and isolation the women of these country villages and country Zenanas are in. It has been brought before him how *utterly inaccessible* even the very poor ones are to a *man's* ministrations; how that there are thousands of the women of India who are at present altogether out of the way of hearing the sound of the Gospel, unless it is taken by women *into their homes*. It is no longer because the women are hard to get at, shut up by rigid rule and custom from all intercourse with the outside world that they have not been reached, but just from the simple want of some one to go to them. I have been able to go in and out at will among the poorer houses, and *have received invitations* into many of the Zenanas. We have no longer to contend with a strong prejudice

before obtaining entrance into these Bengali houses, and getting an opportunity of pointing their darkened inmates to the 'Light of the World.' *The Babus invite us in.* The door is open ; shall we not enter it ? ”

Proofs abound that this Zenana mission field is “ white unto the harvest.” But “ the labourers are few ”—too few, to overtake the work. Probably the proportion would be, as elsewhere said, about *one Zenana visitor to a million of women*, after deducting those required in the scholastic departments of missionary labour. Missionaries' wives nobly labour too in this work—and, indeed, they were its early pioneers. True, there are now a number of native Christian young women in training for this special work ; but even then European and American ladies will be urgently needed as superintendents of the work. All those who are actively engaged in it unite in bearing this testimony. There are also a few ladies who are *honorary* missionaries to their Indian sisters : Miss Tucker (A.L.O.E.), Miss Anstey, Miss Reade, and Miss Lowe, among them ; but with all these the labourers are emphatically “ *few!* ” Who will step forward and devote herself, her talents, or her means to this great work ? Women may be spared *here*, for Christian agencies abound ; but *there* is a great dearth ; and our heathen sisters are dying day by day destitute of peace and comfort in this life, as well as of hope for the next. Another important class of agents are—

**Medical Missionaries.**—Ladies trained in medical science are being sent out now by many societies—notably by the Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society—by various Women's Missionary Societies of America, and now by different missionary societies in England. Indeed, it is now so thoroughly recognised that the power to heal and bless in bodily sickness is a passport to other and higher service, that most of the societies and ladies' committees working in this Zenana field of operations have sent out *some* trained missionaries to devote themselves entirely to the healing art. In order to meet the need for medical lady-missionaries, there is an institution, lately opened, at 71, Vincent-square, Westminster, London, where ladies may be trained for special medical work among Indian Zenanas. Several pupils are now attend-

ing this Medical Mission Hospital for instruction. A recent Women's Missionary Journal stated that, during 1879-80 twelve ladies were studying medicine at the London medical schools, in order to apply their talent among their heathen sisters, under the direction of different societies. These medical missionaries have thus two weapons with which to fight the foe—Christian teaching and medical knowledge. So convinced are the natives of the power and skill of English ladies in cases of disease, that most frequently on going into a Zenana some sick child or woman is brought forward with a request to the visitor to relieve the sickness under which the patient is labouring. If, in response to the request, the missionary can suggest or take measures for the restoration of the sick one, her influence over the inmates of that household is unbounded. Even the haughty Mussulman or Hindu husband will condescend to *beg* at such times for attention and medicine from the lady missionary. Many thousands of women and children die annually in India, whose lives might be saved by proper treatment. No male doctor is called to a case of disease among women; and, confined in the close, unhealthy, dark Zenanas, and left to the tender mercies of women steeped in ignorance and superstition, there is little chance that a woman's constitution will triumph over acute disease. Even in the most critical times of a woman's life she is shut away from the family circle, thrust out as a polluted thing, "cribbed, cabined, and confined" in a low shed in the courtyard, and tended only by some ignorant old woman.

Miss Beilby, who is carrying on a most successful medical mission among the native women at Lucknow, tells us, "One of my patients is a Hindu. She was so filthy when she came into our hospital that the first thing was a bath. She was so grateful, and said she had been ill for a month, but had no one to give her anything. When the pain was a little better she used to drag herself out and buy a little food." Another missionary says, "I have seen an impromptu idol made out of a daub of manure, plastered on a wall, and shaped into something inexplicable, which I was informed was the guardian of a small, low, dark outhouse, where a poor young mother and her baby, of a few days old, were handed over for

two months to the tender mercies and sole care of one little miserable old woman." Says another, "I can hardly imagine any condition of life *anywhere* so thoroughly degraded as that of the lower castes of this people; and one striking feature of the country is that, with few exceptions, the women of the upper castes enjoy no higher privileges and less liberty than the low castes and the pariahs; and the hardships and cares in sickness and sorrow press nearly as heavily on the one as on the other."

If a native woman dies after childbirth—a thing which often happens, and at which there cannot be any room for surprise—it is believed that she becomes an evil spirit, haunting other women in the same condition, and so causing their deaths in turn. The Brahmins are then paid money for the performance of certain ceremonies in order to exorcise the evil wandering spirit and lay it to rest. Is it any wonder that, when medical female missionaries go out to India, fired with love to souls and qualified to treat the various sicknesses of the women, they find an *abundant* entrance among the poor people? Life is very sweet to us; what then must be the feeling of an Indian mother, when stretched on a bed of weakness and pain, neglected by those who should succour her, or tormented with useless ceremonies, to hear from her English lady visitor that there is a possibility of a cure, that she may have rational, kind treatment, and that, too, with Christian sympathy and kindness? Can we not imagine that these sick women hang as lovingly upon the words and looks of the medical lady missionary as those "sick folk" to whom Jesus ministered did upon His?

But our American cousins have made use of this agency yet more largely than we ourselves. In India, Turkey, China, Burmah, and Japan they employ female medical missionaries with most marked success. One of these ladies, writing of her work, says, "We have had two sad cases recently to deal with. One, a woman who had attempted to commit suicide, because she had trouble with her husband. She suffered greatly, and her mother-in-law scolded her for putting them all to so much trouble. 'And now,' said she, 'you are sick, we'll all have to wait on you.' The second case was that of a nice-looking



young woman who had been terribly cut with a knife by her opium-smoking husband. There were great gashes on her head and back. When Miss Trask went to her, at the call of one of the family, the others would not let her touch the wounds, and she was compelled to leave without doing anything for the poor woman. The sorrows of the women of this land are indeed grievous." Another missionary tells of a little lame girl, who had both legs amputated by the intelligent lady doctor, and adds, "Although so small she is betrothed, and doubtless has been for many years; and I doubt not that her mother-in-law feels that she has sadly wasted her substance in purchasing a child for her son that has come to so much affliction. She listens with an earnest face as I tell her if she is good all the pain and trouble will end with this world, and her face is positively bright as I tell her of the beautiful home above." From these different testimonies it will be seen that the work of the female medical missionary is indeed a very blessed one; one, too, in which comfort and blessing can be given for this life, and the blessed doctrine of salvation from sin and eternal death inculcated under the most favourable auspices.

**Native Bible-women and Assistants.**—This branch of female agency, though placed last, is far from *least* of the agencies employed in the upraising and teaching of heathen women. It has been found that Christian native females are *most useful* in visiting among, and reading to, their neighbours and fellow women. It is not always that Hindu or Mussulman *ladies* will receive these native workers; prejudice has not, in many cases, been sufficiently conquered to admit of this, but in a few cases the superintendent can, and does, employ native aid in those Zenanas where the inmates are eager to receive instruction. It has, however, been proved over and over again that native female *teachers*, in both Hindu and Mohammedan girls' schools, are training classes for this work, and are now occupying important posts, chiefly under lady superintendents. This plan is found, for the present, to work best; but as time rolls on, and stations and churches become self-supporting, while female education becomes more sought after and more general, these native female teachers will be able to maintain their

positions alone. Government, recognising the necessity and importance of female education for India, has granted aid to normal schools professing to train native female teachers; and many have gone forth from these government-aided institutions to teach their fellow countrywomen. Still, the great drawback is that Government offers a *non-Christian* education to these young women, *i.e.*, one purely secular, and the disastrous effects of such a course upon the female native character may be easily understood. But such is the desire among women for education, and among fathers for their daughters' instruction, that sooner than go without education they will eagerly accept this secular system. Hence the crying necessity for Christian effort in this direction.

But as *Bible-women* to the poorer classes, Christian native females, of sound piety and sanctified common sense, are found invaluable. One of these women, sent out by the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East, thus reports of her work in the dispensary, the hospital, and the jail: "Went to the hospital and visited the woman suffering from asthma. I gave her a copy of the New Testament in Marathi; she took it, kissed it, and pressed it to her bosom for a long time, while the tears rolled down her cheeks. She said, 'This book will be my companion as long as I live and read it, for the name of my Lord Jesus is in it. He will talk to me and teach me what I am to do.' Went to the dispensary; many women were present. After finishing here, went and read to the school-children; then went to the jail. There were sixteen women; they all sat listening; one of them was crying." Says another Bible-woman, "By this time, about fifteen women had gathered round. I told them about our Saviour sitting by the well of Samaria; of the woman who came to draw water, and of His conversation with her. 'What did He mean by the water?' asked one young woman. I told them He meant the Holy Spirit, which is given to every one that asks, and that He satisfies the soul, so that there is no more craving for the things of earth, and that whoever has the Holy Spirit in the heart will hereafter obtain eternal life in heaven. Finding them interested, I went on to tell them how the Holy Spirit had been obtained for us. One

woman, I found, could read. I showed my books, and opening the Gospel of John, I pointed out the chapter which tells of living water. She bought the book, and then I went away. Asking Christ to go with me and direct my steps, I was led to go into a Babu's house. The door was open, and I heard two female singers singing. A number of the neighbours had collected, and I went in and stood with them. The singers sang the praises of Krishna. After they had done, I stepped forward and said, 'I also know some good songs; let me sing one.' So I had permission, and I sung some Christian *bhajans*."

These Bible-women can minister to their fellow country-women in places and at homes when European ladies could not venture out. At the market, by the tank, in the fields, near the bathing-place, as well as in house-to-house visitation, these humble, simple servants of the Master tell of the faith once delivered to the saints, and brighten the hard work-a-day lives of their sisters with words of good cheer from out the Book which tells of medicine for all wounds, and cordials for all fears. It was a happy thought of these Women's Missionary Societies to employ Bible-women. This agency so fraught with good to the toiling masses in London and other large cities is simply *invaluable* among the pariah labourers of India. The number of English and American ladies stationed in that land is *very few* compared with the *millions* of native females sunk in ignorant degradation and darkness; and it is a judicious outlay of strength and time to train, at each centre of mission-operations, as many native Bible-women as can be found fit for the work. Being natives they can bear the heat of the climate better, understand the feelings of the people and the modes of daily life far more, and feel a sincere sympathy for their sufferings—not deeper or more true, perhaps, than that cherished by English missionaries, but a sympathy born of actual experience.

## V.—RESULTS OF ZENANA MISSIONS.

It is confessedly difficult to estimate results correctly with reference to *any* benevolent or missionary work, and this especially holds true in relation to Zenana work.

Many thousands of women are so influenced by the teaching they receive from lady visitors, or Bible-women, that, although not nominally Christian, they have given up the old superstitions, and are examining the "new faith" with eager attention. Many thousands more, through contact with education and intelligence in the persons of their own children and husbands, are unsettled, restless, anxious, and wondering "whether these things are so, or no." Many others—to be numbered by hundreds, if not by thousands—have consciously and thoroughly renounced heathenism, discarded its ceremonies, and given up the forms of idolatry prescribed by past ages.

**Converts.**—A large number have come out and made public profession of their faith in Christ, while a yet larger number are Christians *secretly*, because of the many obstacles which surround them. Zenana visitors can tell of many touching instances in which their pupils have withstood persecution, scorn, and threats rather than deny their newly-found faith; as well as of others, who, like Nicodemus, serve the Lord secretly. The path of a Hindu lady is full of thorns should she desire to make a profession of religion. If her husband or mother-in-law be heathen, and opposed to the new faith, they can make the new convert's life exceedingly miserable; and cases have been known where poison has been used to cut short the life of the new convert, and so effectually prevent her from making any confession of faith. This can, and is, done very easily, for in India a woman's life is held very cheaply. An Englishwoman can scarcely realise what it means for a Bengali or Mohammedan woman to make a Christian profession. In too many cases it is the commencement of a persecution which ends in her being literally thrust out upon the world, homeless, defenceless, and friendless. In India there are almost no avenues for woman's work; and if there were, high-caste ladies are profoundly ignorant of how to help themselves. In many cases the missionaries have employed high-caste ladies, when so cast out, as teachers of native girls' schools, and as visitors and Bible-readers in other Zenanas; but this cannot always be done. The question of how to provide for these women has become a very serious one, the more especially as they can follow few branches of industry.

Stocking-knitting, lace-making, and teaching appear at present to be the only ways in which these suffering, persecuted, native Christians can earn a living. These things will certainly keep the number of *professed* female converts—except in the families of those who favour Christianity—very low, as compared with those really under instruction. Still, there are now a large number of Hindus who either believe in, or reverence the new faith, and who offer no opposition to the profession of Christianity by their wives; while, generally speaking, they are beginning to discountenance the early marriages of their daughters. Therefore it may be confidently asserted that wherever Zenana missionaries have laboured, there the women are stretching forth their hands unto the Lord!

**Child-marriages.**—The practice of child-marriages has received what may be termed its death-blow, although it may survive in a modified form for many years yet. Parents are beginning to see that such a practice cannot but bring suffering to all parties. As the husband does not usually see his wife until she arrives at his house, as there is no choice in the matter allowed to the husbands and wives, it is seen and allowed on all hands that much unhappiness must ensue. Educated Christian native gentlemen in India are fighting against this evil, and trying to secure to their sisters and daughters the right of choice and the freedom of delay until a more suitable age. Then, too, the baneful custom of polygamy is growing into disesteem among the enlightened portion of the Hindu population. Says an American missionary, "That land is to the women the most to be desired where women go about of their free will, where they may go to school and learn all they desire, where they have the love and respect of their husbands." One said, "It is a happy land where the law gives a man but one wife." These poor mothers, widows, and wives look longingly at Christian lands, as they hear of the domestic bliss enjoyed there, and sigh for the day when they, too, shall possess that freedom and position which is every woman's right.

**Customs and Education.**—Again, a healthy public opinion is being formed as to heathen customs, education, and other similar questions. In Bengal literary clubs and public meetings these matters are debated with great

interest. The people seem to be stirring with new thought upon these great matters, and inquiring after a newer and better way. Not long since, at the annual distribution of prizes to the Madras girls' school, in connection with the London Missionary Society, a Hindu gentleman presided, and spoke as follows: "It must indeed be a source of gratification to every one who took any interest in the progress of the empire, to observe the marked attention which was being paid by Hindu parents to the subject of female education. Twenty years ago there were difficulties and prejudices to be encountered on every side, which the advocates of the cause of progress had to face; but now, he was glad to say, these difficulties were fast disappearing, and prejudices rapidly passing away. He was not overrating the importance of female education when he said it was a very powerful agent in the progress of a country, though it had not entered yet beyond the stage of its infancy. The system of early marriage, to which their attention had been called in the report, restricted in a very great measure the amount and quality of the knowledge which girls could receive at school; it was therefore of the greatest importance to the cause of female education that the efforts of the present day should be supplemented by two measures which must prove beneficent:—they should provide a number of teachers; and normal schools should be provided in all the towns, so that these teachers might gain access to the houses of the elder Hindu ladies, and thus enable them to continue the education which they at first receive at school." Thus boldly do the thinking natives of India reason out the matter.

**Remarriage of Widows.**—The national prejudices against remarriage of widows has also received a shock. In some cases Christian widows have married again; and even the popular sense of justice recognises the fact that having at first been married while yet children, and in some cases not having *seen* the husbands to whom they were betrothed, it is a monstrous act of injustice to condemn such widows to lives of perpetual suffering and drudgery because of the fact that they were thus early bereaved.\*

\* The "Star in the East," a Calcutta journal, thinks there is hope yet for Hindu widows. A society has been formed for aiding Hindu widows to contract second marriages.

The larger culture and broader views of the more cultivated natives allow this, although it is confessedly a very difficult thing to inaugurate social action which runs counter to the teaching of centuries. And women themselves must be brave, as well as sustained by a high and lofty faith, to dare all the scorn and sneers and prejudices which abound in a conservative country like India. Yet recognising the fact that, according to Bible teaching, "a widow is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord," some of the younger converts who were in this category have been happily settled as wives of catechists, evangelists, and teachers, thus exemplifying to the world the beauty, the love, and the equality of a really well-ordered *Christian* home. It is impossible to tell how much joy and brightness this social revolution will carry to the thousands of helpless, depressed, downtrodden child-widows, who are now mourning their hopeless bondage under the belief that they have committed some heinous sin in a former life, and are therefore punished thus in this.

Mrs. Duthie, of the London Missionary Society, writes thus, quite recently: "I visited lately a widow not more than eighteen. Her husband died when they had been married only a year or two. I found the whole family in great sorrow. The father is a rich man, but he said to me, 'I spent all my savings to get this daughter married; now she can only wear a common white cloth; she must not put on any jewels; she must only take one meal a day; she cannot lie on a cot, but must sleep on the floor. This is the custom of our country. I know it is bad, but what can I do?' I mentioned to him the case of a Brahmin I knew, who had been the first in Travancore to re-marry his widowed daughter, and advised him to follow his example, adding, that if a few enlightened men of his position would only lead the way this bad custom might be abolished. He replied by saying, 'It was quite true that this Brahmin had set a good example, but he had repented it ever since, and that when he died no one would bury him.' This incident proves that a new impulse is moving the hearts of the people; but it also proves that much yet remains to be done before the barriers of caste and custom can be wholly removed."

**Personal Devotedness.**—Then, constantly, instances of devotedness and faith in Christ come to light, even under the most inauspicious circumstances. At Amritsur, where there is a flourishing Zenana mission, a young Mohammedan lady, who was brought under tuition, sought and found Christ as her Saviour. She was threatened with death by her relatives if only she professed the new religion, but the “leaven” of the faith worked, and she *could not* hide it. Her friends confined her in a cell, fed her on bread and water, condemned her to do the heaviest drudgery of the establishment; but she still continued steadfast, till her people believed her to be bewitched. But an opening offered in the normal school, and the missionaries offered her employment there, in order to shield her as much as possible from persecution. So great an influence did she exert on her pupils, that her baptism was followed by the conversion and profession of *five* of them. Another, on her death-bed, gathered her Mohammedan and Hindu neighbours around her, and preached Jesus to them all. Then, while giving utterance to that beautiful verse beginning, “Jesus, thy robe of righteousness,” she passed away to join the blood-washed throng. Another, a young wife of fourteen, who had just gone to live at her husband’s home, was hearing that husband commence an account of his faith in Christ, which he did with much embarrassment and fear, when she exclaimed with delight, “You don’t mean to say that you are a Christian?” and ran away to the little box in which she kept all her girl treasures, where her Bible was, saying, as she came back with the little Bible in her hand, “If I had been asked what greatest happiness I should have chosen, I should have prayed that you might have become a Christian. I, too, have been reading this book, and have come to the conclusion that it contains the true religion.” As the result, both husband and wife were baptized a few days later.

**Appeals from Native Women.**—As the result of this enlightened public opinion on the subject of Christian teaching for the women, appeals constantly come from the natives themselves, both male and female, for missionaries and missionary advantages. They are, in many cases, seeing the new faith but dimly, and recognising its



advantages but feebly, still quite enough to wish for instruction in its doctrines; while to those who have enjoyed instruction in Christianity, the bare idea of being left destitute of teachers is productive of great sorrow. The following appeal from a native Christian girl in India to her teacher may serve as a sample of the rest. She said, "Dear teacher, for many nights sleep has not visited my eyes, but my pillow is wet with tears; and during the day I have no rest for my thoughts. And why am I so full of thought by day? and why is my pillow wet with tears at night? Because we have heard news which makes our hearts sad. We have heard that Christian women in America are tired of sending money to print Bibles, and tired of sending teachers to tell us about God; and since this rumour came to our ears we have had no rest. Dear teacher, the teachers who are with us have been here many years, and they are not strong in body as they once were, and we have looked for a teacher from America to come and help them, until our eyes are blind with watching, and no one comes. I knew that you were in your own country to rest, and I thought you would know the hearts of the Christian women in America; and thus I have written to you to know if it is true that the Christians are tired of sending us money, and tired of sending us teachers to help us." Surely the simplicity and child-like earnestness of this appeal might move any heart.

## VI.—STATISTICS OF ZENANA MISSIONS.

It is exceedingly difficult to obtain or dissect the statistics of Zenana work as applied solely to India; for, with the exception of one society, the lady-missionaries employed are sent out to various Eastern lands. India forms *only one* field of operations among many, seeing that the customs of Eastern nations *preclude* male missionaries from teaching the women. But, as far as possible, we will endeavour to convey an idea of the numbers of labourers at present employed in India alone. The American Women's Missionary Societies are the most numerous, therefore we will give their statistics first.

NAME OF SOCIETY.	No. of lady agents employed.	No. of these agents labouring in India.
AMERICAN SOCIETIES.		
Baptist Ladies' Missionary Society.. ..	28	5
Women's Baptist Missionary Society of the West .. .. .	10	1
Free Baptist Women's Missionary Society	20	20
Women's Board of Missions, of the Congregational Churches .. .. .	83	12
Women's Board of Missions for the Interior—Congregational Churches.. ..	21	A few.
Methodist Episcopal Women's Foreign Missionary Society .. .. .	34	8
Ladies' Board of Missions (Presbyterian)	42	4
Women's Union Missionary Society.. ..	24	11
Women's Foreign Missionary Society (Presbyterian) .. .. .	85	23
ENGLISH SOCIETIES.		
London Missionary Society .. .. .	12	6
Baptist Missionary Society .. .. .	20	20
Indian Female Normal School and Instruction Society .. .. .	83	83
Society for Promoting Female Education in the East .. .. .	34	14
Ladies' Association for Promotion of Female Education, in connection with the Society for Propagation of the Gospel .. .. .	34	18
China Inland Mission.. .. .	10	none.
	540	225

Some of these ladies are *native* ladies, properly trained for the work.

These statistics are incomplete, because it is difficult to ascertain exactly the lady missionary agents of *each* society in the field. For instance, the Wesleyan Missionary Society has a Ladies' Association, formed in 1859, with an income during 1879 of £2,282. There are also other societies in existence, operating in various fields of work, among which may be named the Ladies' Association of Scotland, for Heathen Women; the Friends' Foreign Mission, which employs female agents; Women's Mis-

sionary Association of the Presbyterian Church of England, formed quite recently; the Berlin Ladies' Society, and various German societies, employing both male and female agents.

But the above statement gives some approximate idea of the extent to which this work has developed in the Churches, and of the way in which Christian ladies of England, Scotland, America, and Germany, have endeavoured to grapple with the evil. The great heart of Christendom is touched and stirred on behalf of its heathen sisters; and on every hand we hear news of efforts being put forth to reach, civilise, and elevate those daughters of Eve on whom the curse has lain so heavily. It is recognised by all missionary labourers, that the first step in the elevation of the people among whom they labour is the improvement of the home, and that the home can never be improved while the wife and mother is regarded in the light in which she now is, not only in India, but in all heathen lands. Years ago the missionaries' wives had to do their best, single-handed; to-day the Church of God, in almost all its sections, is rousing itself to send out trained single women, unencumbered with the cares of housekeeping, but placed under the superintendence and care of married missionaries, to devote themselves entirely to the work. But there are so many departments of labour that the workers are very scattered. After deducting the number of ladies engaged in teaching schools, of one kind and another, the proportion devoted to pure Zenana work is very small. Did space permit we could cull many interesting reports from workers in other Eastern lands, full of interest and beauty; but as this little work deals exclusively with *Indian Zenana Missions*, these things do not come within its scope. But now, having conveyed much information on this subject to readers, we will consider, finally,

## VII.—HOW WE MAY HELP ZENANA MISSIONS.

Two modes of helping this work seem to suggest themselves. The first is—

**Personal Effort.**—It is in the power of every Christian woman, young or old, to do *something* for this object.

The gift, the prayer, the subscription, the opportune word, are all within the scope of feminine effort. It may not be—it is not—in the power of all women who love Jesus to give largely to this or any other society, because of narrow incomes and many wants; but all can give *something*. If we remember that these devoted hardy-worked lady missionaries are paid but small salaries, comparatively speaking, and that still smaller salaries suffice for the remuneration of native assistants, we shall not grudge to help this mission forward. Remember, too, that this mission is to *our sisters* specially, and womanly pity will unite with Christian sympathy in urging us to put forth every effort “while it is called to-day.” How many in the well-to-do classes of society spend annually *on trifles* the sum that would sustain a lady missionary in India, and think nothing of it. In these cases it is “want of thought” more than “want of heart,” which permits the waste; and many a lady would seriously retrench her expenditure *in trifles* did she but know and realise the need for her aid in this great work. To those who do not feel called to work personally in this field, but yet possess “treasure upon earth,” is not the call *loud* to consecrate some of their treasure? A thousand pounds would establish a training-school for native teachers; a hundred pounds annually would keep a lady worker in the field, doing the work which some Christian lady could not summon courage to do herself. Are there not, here and there, to be found ladies who will *maintain* other ladies in this mission-field? We believe that there are many, provided the matter be fully and faithfully laid before them. The *responsibilities* of wealth are terrible: without it the kingdom of Christ upon earth cannot be extended, as far as human agency is concerned; and the possessors of it will have to yield up an account of this talent with honest, trembling, self-abashed faithfulness. Happy in that solemn hour will the wealthy man or woman be who can feel that while on earth his or her wealth was consecrated to the Lord.

The other mode of helping Zenana work forward is by

**Personal Service.**—To how many young women, middle-aged women, and widows, does the summons come, “The Master is come and calleth for *thee*”? With vacant posts waiting to be filled—with thousands of places fit for

stations yet unoccupied—with *millions* of women still uncheered by a single ray of Gospel light—is there not abundance of work waiting to be done? Mrs. Weitbrecht says: “One of the most painful impressions I received as I looked around me in India was this, that what we call our mission to the women of India scarcely deserves the name . . . . I travelled nearly a thousand miles and only passed two missionary stations on the route, neither of which had lady missionaries; and again a thousand miles and only passed one station.” This work is one which angels might desire to do; but such service is reserved for *us*. God puts honour upon *us*, that we should be “co-workers” with *Him*; shall it be then laid to our charge that we turned away from the proffered duty? True, one may be spoken of in the fashionable circles of earth as “only a missionary;” but what then? Is not the service an honourable one, seeing that Christ himself ordained and sent forth his servants to do the missionary work? And will not the Lord of the harvest abundantly honour those faithful labourers who go forth now, bearing the heat and burden of the day, in order to teach those yet lying in darkness the joyful news of salvation? “Great and effectual doors” into heathen homes are open now; it is at our peril as Christian Englishwomen, if we refuse to enter in. India is the brightest jewel in the crown of its Empress—shall the Christian women under her rule *refuse* or *neglect* to convey to their heathen sisters the Gospel? It must be that *ignorance* on this matter has prevented more active service in the work. It *cannot* be that *Christian women*, ever eager to help in the forefront of all good work, will knowingly and deliberately leave this one branch of service undone.

But what is done must be done *now*. Time hastens on; life is short; and every day sees the departure of many souls among our Indian sisters into the unseen world. They die unblest, and untaught. When we gave ourselves to Christ did we not also surrender our talents, time, money, and powers for work?

“WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TO-DAY, FOR THE NIGHT  
COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK.”

CLASS

7th 266

BOOK

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CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL.**

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**KEEP YOUR CARD IN THIS POCKET.**

stations yet unoccupied—with *millions* of women still uncheered by a single ray of Gospel light—is there not abundance of work waiting to be done? Mrs. Weitbrecht says: “One of the most painful impressions I received as I looked around me in India was this, that what we call our mission to the women of India scarcely deserves the name . . . . I travelled nearly a thousand miles and only passed two missionary stations on the route, neither of which had lady missionaries; and again a thousand miles and only passed one station.” This work is one which angels might desire to do; but such service is reserved for *us*. God puts honour upon *us*, that we should be “co-workers” with *Him*; shall it be then laid to our charge that we turned away from the proffered duty? True, one may be spoken of in the fashionable circles of earth as “only a missionary;” but what then? Is not the service an honourable one, seeing that Christ himself ordained and sent forth his servants to do the missionary work? And will not the Lord of the harvest abundantly honour those faithful labourers who go forth now, bearing the heat and burden of the day, in order to teach those yet lying in darkness the joyful news of salvation? “Great and effectual doors” into heathen homes are open now; it is at our peril as Christian Englishwomen, if we refuse to enter in. India is the brightest jewel in the crown of its Empress—shall the Christian women under her rule *refuse* or *neglect* to convey to their heathen sisters the Gospel? It must be that *ignorance* on this matter has prevented more active service in the work. It *cannot* be that *Christian women*, ever eager to help in the forefront of all good work, will knowingly and deliberately leave this one branch of service undone.

But what is done must be done *now*. Time hastens on; life is short; and every day sees the departure of many souls among our Indian sisters into the unseen world. They die unblest, and untaught. When we gave ourselves to Christ did we not also surrender our talents, time, money, and powers for work?

“WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TO-DAY, FOR THE NIGHT  
COMETH WHEN NO MAN CAN WORK.”

CLASS *Pth 266*

BOOK *26*

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