

lection, the Weights and Measures, and the Archives—a National Museum, in other words, after the manner of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington. When that building is put up the Royal Society will have its place therein, and then its labours, being concentrated and kept together for reference and illustration, it will be enabled to devote itself to scientific and literary work of incalculable importance to the intellectual development and the material advance of the whole Dominion.

JOHN TALON-LESPERANCE.

VILLANELLE.

(IN LOWER CANADA.)

THE tall twin towers of the grim *église*
Loom up over the wharf and street,
Over the Lombardy poplar trees.

Whichever way one goes one sees
The *séminaire*, and is sure to meet
The tall twin towers of the grim *église*,

And but for the keen Canadian breeze
Blowing the sharp Canadian sleet
Over the Lombardy poplar trees

To me and Pierre, who says it will freeze
By night, I feel as if I must greet
The tall twin towers of the grim *église*.

For an Old-World church with Old-World fees,
The Old-World *carillon* sounding sweet
Over the Lombardy poplar trees.

Vite donc, my Pierre! For the time it flees;
Once more would I see from my snug low seat
The tall twin towers of the grim *église*
Over the Lombardy poplar trees.

SERANUS.

THE HIGH-CASTE HINDU WOMAN.

It is a fact universally accepted that nothing is ever fully realized except by force of contrast. We are strong: we exult in "the wild joys of living," but our exultation is thoughtless like that of a child until a close relation with pain and feebleness forces us into thankfulness. So it is with the gifts of the Gospel. The civilization which we enjoy, the physical, mental, and spiritual blessings open to us all, we accept as our birthright, and it is only when the veil is drawn aside, and we see a glimpse of the blackness of darkness in heathen lands that we begin to appreciate our privileges.

One of the great glories of the Gospel is the reversal which it has caused in the position of woman. Perhaps the effects of Christianity in this respect cannot be more clearly shown than by the contrast between the condition of life with which we are familiar and that which exists in India.

India, a part of that empire whose women are the noblest in the world, has seventy-five million women doomed to life-long slavery for the crime of having been born. According to the belief of the Hindus, womanhood is the punishment for crimes, manhood the reward of goodness, in past existences. Women in themselves are incapable of attaining to Heaven, and only through union with man can they be saved. Marriage is hence the end of a Hindu woman's existence. The marriage of the daughters gives the parents a title deed to rich rewards in Heaven, and to ensure a husband Hindu girls are usually wedded between the ages of five and eleven. Education is of course impossible: it is a popular belief among high-caste Hindu women that their husbands will die if they should read or write, and the men of India have in most instances set their faces steadily against female education, regarding their wives as fit only for domestic drudgery. The Hindu wife is absolutely dependent upon her husband—his will is her law, its performance her only duty. She belongs to him entirely, and their relations are such that the wife will crouch and kiss the hand or foot that has been raised against her in apology for the blow or kick that has been so great an exertion to her master.

That the mothers should in any true sense train their children is impossible. It is the men's boast that their women have never seen the sun, for the latter are confined to the four walls of the house, which has no windows, and is ventilated by holes in the roof. "Thus deprived of any opportunity to breathe the healthy, fresh air, or to drink in the wholesome sunshine, the Indian women become weaker and weaker from generation to generation, their physical statures dwarfed, their spirits crushed under the weight of prejudices and superstitions, and their minds starved from absolute lack of literary food and of opportunity to observe the world." If it be true that "our mothers make us most," can we wonder that the sons of such women have developed into a slavery-loving and dependent nation?

But even more pitiable is the lot of widows, and especially of child-widows. There are in India 21,000,000 widows, of whom 382,736 are under nineteen, and 78,976 under nine. These unfortunate beings are regarded with peculiar hatred, the child-widows being considered the greatest criminals against whom heaven has pronounced judgment. The widow is cursed by all her husband's relatives as the cause of his death; she is forbidden the use of ornaments, which she has been taught to love, and is deprived of her glossy hair, which Hindu women think it worse than death to lose; she must eat one meal only during the twenty-four hours of the day, and on sacred days she must abstain altogether from food; she must never show herself on joyful occasions, for she is regarded as an "inauspicious" thing; she is ignorant of any art by which she could earn her own

livelihood, and no respectable family would employ her as a servant. Thus destitute of light and love and hope, is it wonderful that "the passage of the Sati to her couch of flame" was, in former days, "like a public festival," and that now many of the widows, unable to endure their life, seek rest in the waters of the sacred river? "O Lord, inquire into our case," writes one, the pupil of a zenana missionary, and one of the few Hindu women who can read and write; "from Thy throne of judgment justice flows, but it does not reach us; in this our life-long misery only injustice comes near us. Thou hearer of prayer, if we have sinned against Thee, forgive, but we are too ignorant to know what sin is. Must the punishment of sin fall on those who are too ignorant to know what it is? O great Lord, our name is written with drunkards, with lunatics, with imbeciles, with the very animals; they are responsible, but we are not; criminals confined in the gaols for life are happier than we, for they know something of Thy world. Those who have seen Thy works may learn to understand Thee, but for us who have never, even in dreams, seen Thy world, it is not possible to learn to know Thee. We see only the four walls of the house; shall we call them the world or India? We have been born in this gaol, we have died here, and are dying. O Father of the world, hast not Thou created us? or has perchance some other god made us? Hast Thou no thought for us women? Why hast Thou created us male and female? O God of mercy, our prayer to Thee is this, that the curse may be removed from the women of India. Create in the hearts of the men some sympathy, that our lives may no longer be passed in vain longing, that saved by Thy mercy we may taste something of the joys of life."

This supplication has been heard; a high-caste Hindu woman, herself a widow, has been raised up to plead before the world the cause of her countrywomen. She is a living protest against the Hindu doctrine of woman's inferiority, and having already defied the giant of Hindu prejudice, is prepared to carry on warfare against the social and religious bigotry of her countrymen. The Pundita Ramabai owes to her enlightened parents the scholarship, rare in any country, which gained for her the honourable title of Sarasvati; her father, a martyr to the cause of female education, bequeathed this work to his daughter, who with a faith and constancy which angels love, and men regard with reverence and humility, dedicates her life to the regeneration of the Indian race, which, says Prof. Max Müller, "can be accomplished only through the regeneration of the women." For six years Ramabai has studied educational systems in England and the United States, and it is her intention to establish secular schools in India, beginning at Calcutta, for the training and education of child-widows.

The danger of exciting dangerous disturbances by interfering with caste prejudices occurs to our minds when we hear of this scheme. It must, however, be remembered that the work is undertaken, not by well-meaning and ignorant English people, but by a native thoroughly acquainted with the strength of the caste-system, and also with the natures of her people, and with their needs. The remarkable history of Dr. Anandiba Goshee, the first Hindu woman to take a medical degree in any country, may help to allay these fears. After graduating at the Woman's Medical College, Philadelphia, Dr. Goshee returned to India, where, instead of being shunned as an outcast, she was much honoured by the orthodox, and after her death was eulogized in native journals "as proving that the great qualities, perseverance, unselfishness, undaunted courage, and an eager desire to serve one's country, do exist in the so-called weaker sex."

As to the objection that has been made on the ground of the secularity of the schools, reflection will furnish a satisfactory answer. Would any Christian woman attend a school where the study of Brahminism was compulsory? Would a devout Romanist go where she were forced to adopt the doctrine of the Church of England? "From what I have seen and known of my countrywoman," writes Ramabai, "my impression is that many excellent and devout Hindu women will not come to such a school house if the study of the Christian religion be made a condition of their admittance."

For this work Ramabai requires \$75,000, of which she has already obtained \$35,000. Ten thousand dollars is necessary for the purchasing and furnishing of a building, and an annual payment of \$5,000 for ten years to meet current expenses. No pecuniary aid can at present be hoped for from the majority of Hindus, who are so bitterly opposed to female education. "One must have the power of performing miracles to induce the high-caste Hindu gentlemen to receive the Gospel of society's well-being through the elevation of women. Such a miracle Ramabai has faith to believe will be performed in India during the next ten years, and if this be true, the enterprise will prove self-supporting after that period with only native aid." Circles have been formed in the United States and in Canada in connection with the "Ramabai Association." Members pledge themselves to the annual payment of one dollar for ten years. One such circle has lately been formed in Toronto, which new members are earnestly invited to join.

"Mothers and fathers," writes Ramabai, "compare the condition of your own sweet darlings at your happy firesides with that of millions of little girls of a corresponding age in India, who have already been sacrificed on the unholy altar of an inhuman social system, whether you can stop short of doing something to rescue the little widows from the hands of their tormentors. Millions of heartrending cries are daily rising from within the walls of Indian zenanas: thousands of child widows are annually dying without a ray of hope to cheer their hearts, and other thousands are daily being crushed under the fearful weight of sin and shame, with no one to prevent their ruin by providing for them a better way. . . . In the name of humanity, in the name of your sacred responsibilities as workers in the sacred cause of humanity, I summon you, true women and men, to bestow your help quickly, regardless of nation, caste, or creed." M. C.