

MISSION STUDIES.

Pioneer Mission Work Among the Women and Girls of India.

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(*Eighth Paper.*)

The first missionaries to India could not do much for even the low caste women, and nothing at all for those who were shut up within zenana walls. Their wives did what they could to instruct the families of the native converts, and Mrs. Marshman succeeded, in time, in establishing several girls' schools in Serampore. In Calcutta two girls' schools were opened, about the year 1820, by the wives of two missionaries, but the difficulties they met with almost drove them to despair. The girls had to be fetched to and from school, to be clothed, and even paid to attend. Still good was done, and some of these girls afterwards became the wives of native teachers and pastors.

In 1821 Miss Cooke, the first unmarried lady missionary to India, arrived in Calcutta. She had been invited to come by a society of Christian ladies in that city who were anxious to attempt regular mission work among women and girls. At that time it was quite impossible to get into the zenanas, the only women who could be reached were those of the lowest caste, miserable and degraded creatures who were to be seen in the streets and markets doing the most servile work, and treated by the men as if they were brutes. So miserable were they that they could not even imagine it possible for them to learn, and the only answer they would give Miss Cooke was, "Mem Sahib, we are like the animals, we can work and die but that is all." But if the women could not be got to listen the little girls could, and the story of the beginning of Miss Cooke's first school is so interesting that I must tell it to you. In order to help her to acquire the language Miss Cooke was attending a school for native boys, and one day she saw at the entrance door a poor little girl nearly naked crying bitterly. The teacher rose to drive her away, but Miss Cooke begged her interpreter to call the child, and, laying her hand gently on the little brown shoulder, she said, "Little