

Young People's Department.

INDIA.

"UNCLE PHILIP, will you tell me something about India? I always like to hear you talk about it."

"Yes, Charlie, I will. But what would you like to hear about it? I suppose as you mean to be a clergyman and perhaps a missionary, you would like to hear something about the good that has been done by the Christian religion there."

"Yes, uncle."

"Well then let me tell you that there were a great many horrible and cruel things that were done about seventy years ago that are not done now, and they were stopped by the influence of the Christian religion."

"But I think you once said that many such things were stopped by the English Government and that was force, was it not?"

"Well, it was just such force as is used to maintain laws. Force has to be used sometimes. But generally speaking it was the Christian missionary that called the attention of the British Government to such things and made them listen to the cruelties described and so got a stop put to them. If you go to India now you will see some strange people, especially in their priests and temple worshippers, their fakirs and mendicants. There is the sun worshipper, for instance, who tortures himself by standing on one leg with the other turned up in a cramped position. It must take long practice to enable him to do it, and what pain it must be! But that is nothing to the things that were once done but now prohibited. Have you ever heard of Sutteeism?"

"I think I have, but I am not sure."

"Well, you know, in India it used to be the custom when a man died that his widow was to be burned with his body. She was bound to his dead body on a large funeral pyre of wood. Heavy things were placed over her so that she could not move. Drums were beaten and the people shouted

so that the cries of the poor thing could not be heard, and the fire crackled and burned, and soon everything, the wood, the dead body and the living body were all a heap of ashes."

"How dreadful!"

"Yes, and the worst is that sometimes the widow was a mere child who had never been really the dead man's wife, for often a little girl is a promised wife, and therefore a wife, in India. But then you know about the Indian mother who used to throw her little child into the River Ganges to be eaten by crocodiles or drowned in the water."

"Yes, I have heard of that."

"Well, that was done up to about seventy years

ago. And then perhaps you have heard of the goddess Kali. She was a hideous looking idol; but she was just as dreadful as she was ugly. Before her, young men and maidens, decked with flowers, were killed and cut to pieces. Fancy doing such a thing as that in a temple!"

"And why did they do it?"

"Simply because they thought that by it they were pleasing the god of the soil. But that was not as bad after all, as the Car of Juggernaut. You have heard of that, Charlie, I am sure. It was a great big, heavy car that was rolled along the streets in India, and people were taught that they would be forever happy in another world if they could only die under its heavy wheels as it

passed along. And by the crowds they fell beneath it as it rolled on its dreadful way. Human bodies were crushed to atoms and no death cries were heard, for the wild shrieks of the living so mingled with the drums and clashing cymbals that only one, wild sound of a moving pandemonium was heard."

"And they never do that now?"

"No, thank God, that is now a thing you will look for in vain in India. And then there are other things. Lepers used to be buried alive in India. That is never done now. Silly people, for the sake of their religion, used to starve themselves



INDIAN SUN WORSHIPPER.