

the toys, and in age as the slaves, of their lords and masters. Married at a very early age to men of twice or thrice their years, whom they had never seen before, their union was, with few exceptions, a loveless one on either side. Should the hapless woman be left a widow, her lot was indeed sad. If she escaped being burned alive upon her husband's funeral pyre, she was condemned to a perpetual solitude and seclusion, amounting almost to living burial. The strong arm of the British Government has been stretched out for the protection of the widowed daughters of India. Sutteeism has been forever abolished, and the possibilities of home and family ties and support have been given her. But even into the jealous seclusion of Oriental homes the blessings of Christianity, with its ennobling and elevating influence, have penetrated; and the Zenana Mission has opened up new possibilities of happiness and knowledge, of mental and moral development, to the daughters of that dusky race. One of our engravings shows the appearance of those Christian converts.

The following is a missionary's touching account of the fate of one-half the population of India:—

“On the day of her marriage the Hindu wife is put into a palanquin, shut up tight, and carried to her husband's house. Hitherto she has been the spoilt pet of her mother; now she is to be the slave of her mother-in-law, upon whom she is to wait, whose commands she is implicitly to obey, and who teaches her what she is to do to please her husband; what dishes he likes best, and how to cook them. If the mother-in-law is kind, she will let the wife go home occasionally to visit her mother.

“While she is young, she is never allowed to go anywhere else. When she becomes very old, if she makes a vow to go on a pilgrimage to some heathen temple, she is permitted to go to offer a sacrifice for herself, or for others, but this is only occasionally done; very, very few ever undertake it. She always has her Takoors, or household gods, on a shelf in the house, most frequently over her own bed, and to them she pays her daily devotions, offering them rice, and decorating them with flowers; and so at length she draws near the hour of death, and when it is thought her end is just approaching, she is carried down to the banks of the Ganges, there to breathe her last in view of that holy stream whose waters are supposed to be efficacious in cleaning away sin. As soon as the spirit has departed, the remains are taken to the Burning Ghat (the place for burning the dead bodies), and laid upon a pile of wood. In a few hours nothing remains but a little pile of ashes. This is then taken up and cast into the river Ganges.

“Such is the life and death of the happiest, the most favoured, amongst these Bengali women.