

good language. She came to America with the purpose of awakening an interest in behalf of her countrywomen, and securing money for the establishment of a school for Hindoo widows. Her reception has been most cordial. She has not only received endorsement and practical co-operation from the National Woman's Christian Temperance Union, but many prominent persons, including Joseph Cook and Edward Everett Hale, have given her aid in planning for the accomplishment of her object. At the recent International Council for women, she was given a prominent place, and read a paper on "The Women of India," in which she showed their degradation and their possibilities. In one of her lectures, she said: "As a Hindoo widow, I am supposed to be just fit to sweep the streets of India; and that is what I am going to do. I am going to sweep and sweep, until I have swept away the cobwebs and rubbish of old superstitions and customs."

It was her hope to raise \$70,000 in America, for the establishment of her Hindoo Widows' School, and she has raised nearly that amount. Ramabai Circles have been formed in many places to further her work, and all the profits of her book above referred to go for the same object.

Although the school which Ramabai purposes to found will not be a missionary school, in the sense in which we use that word, it will be a most valuable auxiliary to missionary efforts. Probably nothing can do more to hasten the advance of Christianity in India than blows struck at the caste system and at the centuries-old custom of degrading widows. With the downfall of these, other hoary systems and beliefs will tumble. It is therefore with the deepest interest that all thinking people will study the results of Ramabai's radical efforts in behalf of her country-women.

Missionary Items.

The Times of India affirms that in Formosa the people regard murder as necessary, for unless they kill some people their own families will not recover from sickness. Young men also, according to custom, must kill some one before they have a right to obtain a wife. As of old, "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty."

It is reported that Joseph Rabinowitz, the Christian reformer among the Jews, has recently been warned by the Russian government to cease from his missionary labors among his brethren in the south and west of Russia. The work he had begun was most promising, and a great movement toward the Christian faith on the part of Russian Israelites seemed just at hand. Shall it be hindered by the interference of anti-Christian rulers?

PAPERS from India give a sad report of what we must call the complicity of the English government with the debasing ceremonies of Hinduism. During a *mela*, or religious festival, at the junction of the Ganges and Jumna, on two different occasions, four hundred fakirs, entirely naked, marched in procession to the bathing-place, while thousands of Hindus, men and women, lined the road to see them, and even to worship them. It is bad enough that such a performance should be permitted, but it is worse to be obliged to say that an English officer on an elephant headed the procession. Doubtless it would be claimed that this was for the purpose of keeping order; but surely the government, instead of seeking to make

such a procession orderly, should have suppressed it. Educated Hindus are ashamed of such proceedings; and though it might cost the government a good deal, these public sources of corruption should be suppressed, as the suttee has been suppressed, by the strong arm of the law.

A MEETING was held in Tokyo, on February 3, to celebrate the completion of the translation of the Bible into the Japanese language. Dr. Hepburn presided, and in his address gave the history of the work of translation which was begun by a committee appointed by the convention of Protestant missionaries, held in Tokyo in 1878. This convention was held in pursuance of a call originally issued by missionaries of the American Board. A permanent committee was appointed; the ablest men, both foreigners and Japanese, have been employed in the effort to make this a worthy translation of the Word of God. Dr. Hepburn said of it: "We have every reason to believe the pure native and simple style and language of this sacred Book, so easily understood by the most unlearned, so chaste and free from Chinese and foreign terms, and read by the millions of this people, will have a powerful influence in preserving the native tongue in its purity, much like what has been done for the English language by the pure Anglo-Saxon of the English Bible." And better than this, it is believed that the new version will lead many to speak the pure language of the kingdom of God.

ONE of the signs of the times is the multiplication of courses of lectures on missionary topics in connection with the theological seminaries of the land. Rev. Dr. A. C. Thompson has just concluded a second series of lectures before the Hartford Theological Seminary, and now, at Andover Seminary, Rev. Edward A. Lawrence, who has recently returned from an extended tour among the missions in Asia, is giving a course of ten lectures, covering the principles underlying missionary operations, and basing his observations upon what he has seen in China, Japan, India, and Turkey. Such courses of lectures must prove of great interest and value to theological students. *Missionary Herald*.

Marriage Customs of the Moors of Ceylon.

At a meeting of the Ceylon branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, held on January 27th, Mr. Corbet read a paper upon "The Marriage Customs of the Moors of Ceylon." He said that it had been written by Mr. Ahmanadu Bawa and had been kindly communicated to them by the author's son, Mr. P. W. Bawa, the talented young advocate who made a brilliant *debut* at Kurunegala before the Supreme Court the other day. Neither of these gentlemen were present. The paper commenced by remarking, if the pun might be excused, that matrimony amongst the Moors of Ceylon was merely a matter of money, love and courtship playing no parts as factors in the great social institution. This fact was full accounted for by the seclusion and ignorance in which the girls were brought up, the religious restrictions upon social intercourse between the sexes, and the total subjection of the youth of the community to their parents and guardians in all that related to matrimonial affairs. Among the Moors overtures of marriage invariably originated with the relatives of the prospective wife, the amount available as dowry and the caste of the lady being important points to start with. As a rule a girl was considered eligible for marriage at twelve, and a boy at sixteen, for at eighteen a girl was