

beating of drums and tomtoms at the temple, and many offerings made. The Sudras and uneducated people believe that the village goddess sends cholera and small-pox among them as punishment for neglect, and that if a festival is celebrated for some time it will cease. On the last day of the feast a buffalo is sacrificed, with loud beating of drums. Each Brahmin house will have black round stones, procurable in Gundulk, a tributary of the Ganges; also some metal idols of the Siva and Vishnu. Before their meals they bathe them and worship. The names of Siva are Samba, Rama, Linga, Markandaga, etc. The names of his wife are Parvati and Yuma. The names of Vishnu are Rama, Kasáva, Varagana, Govinda, Madhava, Kistna, and many others. His wife's name is Lutchmi, meaning riches. Among the Brahmims, Lutchmi is worshipped on Fridays, with the belief that she will give abundant riches."

I have no doubt that the above account is substantially correct, though I am not able to verify it from personal observation. May the time speedily come when all this shall be done away with, and when throughout all this land, spiritual worship in the name of the Lord Jesus shall be offered in Christian temples and in Christian homes to Him who dwelleth in the heavens.

TUNI, India, Feb. 17th, 1882.

G. F. C.

What is a Zenana ?

BY MRS. MURRAY MITCHELL.

I apologize to those who know, for explaining that the word is a compound of two Persian words, "Zanankhana," which means simply, the house of the women. Now, I think the name is significant,—*the house of the women*. This suggests that there is also the *house of the men*. It looks strange, indeed, to us with our happy united homes, so loved and prized, to think of two separate homes under the same roof, one for the fathers and brothers and sons, and another, and quite separate, for the mothers and daughters and all the female relations. So it is in Bengal.

What above all else constitute the strength and glory of our country? Certainly our Christian homes. But poor India has no home,—or rather it has a divided home, and no home-life. "Home, sweet home!" "No place like home!"—these are words which have no echo in India; they touch no chord in a Hindu's heart. Ere long, however, this boon will be given to India through the influence of our Zenana work; we shall, with God's help, train the women; and the women make the home.

A lady who paid a short visit to Calcutta told me, only yesterday, that nothing she saw had impressed her so much or so painfully as the miserable surroundings of the women in the zenanas. I don't wonder that she should have felt thus. One glance into their bare, ugly, comfortless rooms would fill any heart with a great pity, and, I think, a longing to help to make them different. There is nothing in the real zenana to make life lovely or attractive; nothing to interest, nothing to amuse, nothing to look at, nothing to do!

The Hindus live together after a patriarchal fashion. Grandfathers, sons, and sons' sons are all found dwelling under the old family roof tree. The sons bring home their young wives to their mother's zenana, and hence it is that so many women are often found living in the same house,—the mother and all her daughters-in-law, aunts also,—and always among them, the poor, disconsolate, despised widow.

It is not the case, as some have imagined it to be, that the large number of women residing together arises from Polygamy. Polygamy is allowed by Hindu law, but is seldom practised, except by the Kodin Brahman.

Every woman has an apartment for herself and her children. These rooms generally open off a veranda facing inward to a court. One room is a type of all the rest. It has a little matting on the floor, a low cot or bedstead at one end, bare dingy walls, and a small, high, grated window, affording hardly a glimpse of the beautiful, attractive world outside. It may reveal a streak of the pure blue sky overhead, but that is all. The verandas, off which the doors open, look on to a court or perhaps to a garden, with a few sickly, dusty trees, and a little tank of water in the centre, in which the women perform their ablutions.

And hard by, divided from the zenana only by a little door somewhere in the wall, are the apartments of the men, which often present a startling contrast to those of the women. You would probably find in them every comfort, every luxury,—but no woman is ever seen in this paradise, as it would seem to her. She lives behind the screen, and it is a disgrace for a high-born, high-caste woman to be seen by men with her face uncovered, or to be found outside her own zenana. When her betrothal takes place—generally at the age of eight or nine—she disappears into her prison-home, for the zenana is no better, and comes forth no more, except it be to be carried in a shut-up palki to the Ganges, to wash her sins away in the sacred waters; or to do Pooja (idol-worship); or perchance to visit another zenana as dreary and dark and miserable as her own. And, observe, the young child-wife does not live any longer with her own mother. From the time of her marriage she belongs absolutely to her mother-in-law; she lives under her roof, and she is subject to her in every sense. If the mother-in-law is kind and good the young creature may be comparatively happy; but if she is despotic or hard-hearted it will be very different. In any case, the stringent rules of Hindu etiquette, with which she has to comply, bind her in what many feel to be intolerable bondage.

I have spoken chiefly of Bengal; but though India is large, having many nationalities, creeds, races, languages, one thing is true of every part and every people,—woman does not receive the place which God intended she should occupy. Everywhere she is ignorant, and more or less degraded, enslaved, and unhappy. All the hundred and twenty millions of Indian women need our help, and are crying out to us in their need, "Come and help us."

Lack of Funds.

"These wounds, with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."—(Zech. xiii. 6.)

"Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Consider your ways." "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. WHY? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. THEREFORE the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit," &c., &c. (Haggai i. 4-10.) "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed ME." "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and PROVE me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of