

ing his threats, had not taken from her. Presently, scarcely three weeks after her baptism, came joyful news; her husband wrote, and asked her to return to him, and sent money for her journey. All looked very fair, still there was a lingering doubt how she might be treated; but her Christian friends all encouraged her to hope, and she herself never hesitated in her conviction that if he would receive her, her duty was to return. So on Christmas Eve she travelled up with a party of Christian friends to the new Government Station, which he had chosen for a home.

In her own quiet corner of the railway carriage, quietly and unobtrusively, she sat busy over the pages of a new Bengali Bible, the gift of her missionary teacher, which had replaced her favorite, but destroyed, treasure. She had left with the clergyman who had baptized her several solid gold earrings, one for each of several Mission objects, one, the heaviest and most costly, for the Mission to her countrywomen.

But round her neck she still wore a massive gold chain broken however, and injured in front. 'What have you done to your chain?' asked one of the party; 'how sadly you have spoilt it!' 'Ah!' she replied, 'do you know what hung there?—the images of two idols; you might have worn it unbroken, it would have been nothing to you; but I have worshipped those idols. I could not wear them now.'

But we must hasten on. The young husband that Christmas morning (it is a fact that it was Christmas morning 1871), received back his Christian wife, and for a while treated her lovingly and kindly as before. He even allowed her to cook for him again, and also invited another Christian missionary lady to visit her.

The Rev. T. V. French, now Bishop of Lahore, mentions her in one of his journals thus:—'She is maintaining her position as a wife, and adoring her Christian profession, though her husband still continues a heathen outwardly. She is fond of reading, and is a diligent Biblical student.'

Some little time afterwards a young Babu, a friend of Keroda's husband, was also baptized, and Bishop French in writing of his baptism, says:—'Among those present and seemingly interested was the husband of the Bengali lady. I had some talk with him afterwards. He rather admired his friend's courage, and said his convictions were strong, but his courage weak.'

And again sometime afterwards,—'I went to call on the Bengali lady, and sat with her and her husband for some time. It is curious to see a wife a Christian and the husband not! She opened her mind very frankly before him, which surprised me, describing experiences which an old English Christian might,—such as alterations of frames of mind, faith and unbelief, joy and gloom, deep sense of being a great sinner,—words such as you very rarely hear from Hindu lips.'

This strange, bright episode lasted two full years. Then what happened? Having resisted all conviction, Keroda's husband began to hate his Christian wife, and husband and son returned to threats and cruel persecutions. By and by, coaxed by apparently long invitations, accompanied with assurances that her religion should be respected, and she with regard to it be quite free and unmolested, Keroda returned to her father's house—alas! only to find herself caught and trapped, a more closely guarded Zenana prisoner than ever.

Once or twice after this, communications by letter from Keroda reached her former missionary teacher, who, in telling this part of her story says, 'My heart bleeds for my poor friend. I hear from her sometimes

still, and I firmly believe that in all her trials God is with her, and will not suffer her even to appear to renounce her faith. Her father's family have industriously circulated reports of her having done so, and of her being again "a Hindu;" but I do not know if she is aware of this in any way, or in the least suspects it. I have a very poor opinion of her husband, and fear his present conduct, and the way in which he allowed her to be carried off to her father's house, prove that he is quite unreliable.'

Again and again, after this, efforts were made by Christian missionary ladies to reach and visit her, but, for a long time all in vain.

Then, again, for a very few visits, one missionary lady was admitted, and to her Keroda poured out a very full heart, assuring her that amidst all these sorrows and trials Jesus was with her as her one Lord and only Saviour, Supporter and Comforter, and that by His grace nothing should make her deny Him. But one day this missionary was met with the assurance that she could not that day be received; that Keroda 'was gone somewhere else, on another visit.'

'Where?'

They could not say where. Somewhere; to other friends. That she was not a Christian now, so was gone amongst other Hindu people, etc. etc.; and so poor Keroda was lost to us.

But we knew she was safe in the Lord's hand, and that that none could pluck her thence; but we grieved to think what she might be suffering. Rumors floated once or twice in other Zenanas of resistance, and persecution, and even of death; but actually we knew nothing.

Sometimes we hoped she was indeed safe in the heavenly mansions—at home and at rest—with Him who knoweth all hearts, and to whom no secrets are hid.

But it was not so. Again the Zenana door was opened to the visits of a Zenana missionary, and there she found Keroda still patiently witnessing for Jesus, and shedding a light which could not be hid.

Others in that house are learning now, but who shall tell of the sorrows and woes that those dreary walls have so long hidden, and so surely yet contain?

True, there are rays there—rays from the Sun of Righteousness—and Keroda and her Zenana sisters are 'prisoners of hope,' whilst around them on every side are, alas! the same Zenana prisoners, and without the hope.

Listen, listen, Christian sisters,
Hear an Indian sister's plea,
Grievous trials, dark ills revealing,
Depths of human woe unsealing,
Born across the deep blue sea
We are dying day by day,
With no bright, no cheering ray,
Nought to lighten up our gloom—
Cruel, cruel is our doom!

English Christian sisters, can you stand by and see these millions of Indian sisters captives with a double bondage, mind and body cruelly enchained, and make no effort to set them free?

Our Christmas appeal is in the Name of Him who left His throne 'to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and to set at liberty them that are bruised;' and Indian sisters are all this—broken-hearted, bruised captives.

Come, share the joy of your Lord, and on this His Bethlehem birthday, help us to set these captives free.—*The King's Message.*