

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. VI.

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HINDU WIDOWS.

This picture shows a group of Hindu widows rescued by the British Government from the cruel rite of sutteeism, that is, from being burned to death.

One of the greatest obstacles to Indian civilization is the degraded condition of women. It is impossible to raise the moral status of a people without raising that of its women. And here the Gospel has shown itself the best friend of the women of India, as well as of womanhood throughout the world.

Till the advent of Christianity they were regarded in youth as 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, who 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.

This picture is one of about thirty illustrating "our Indian Empire—its cities, its palaces, its people," now appearing in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* for August, September, and October—the most magnificently illustrated series of articles ever published in Canada. It will be of great interest to Sunday-schools, and is full of missionary information. A fine steel portrait of the late General Superintendent of our church, the Rev. Dr. Rice, goes with the volume, July to December, price only \$1. The portrait alone sells for 50 cents. For other

attractive features see advertisement on last page.

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RESIGNATION to God's sovereign will in trying times displays wisdom and secures comfort.

the same. I noted his handsome face set with dark hair and eyes so expressive, his cheeks bespeaking perfect health. A lady at an opposite counter, while paying a bill, let fall some fractional currency, such as was then in circulation, that fluttered and fell to the floor and was picked up by the

soul, with a sickening thought on my mind—"What will be the end!"

I went swiftly to him, and whispered in his ear, "Boy, will you sell your soul for a paltry twenty-five cents? Don't you know perfectly well that he money is under your foot? Restore it, and never, never do such a thing again."

The boy turned deadly pale, stooped and picked up the money.

"Lady," he gasped, "don't tell on me, I pray—I beg—and I never will do so any more. Think of my mother!"

I presume he thought I knew him. I did not then, but afterward found out who he was; and, from the fact that he stayed with his employer several years and was trusted with a high position, I think the offence was never repeated. God had used me to save him from sin.

Boys, the first theft is the longest step you take toward prison; the first glass of liquor takes you nearer a drunkard's grave than all you can swallow after; the first oath clinches often the habit of profanity; a stained soul is hard to purify. There are virtues you can lose, but once lost, they are forever gone.—*Eliza Gilbert Hurd.*

DO YOUR BEST.

The great secret of success in any enterprise lies in the thoroughness of the work performed. It matters little whether the work be of hand or brain, if it is well done it seldom fails in its object, but if it is done in a heedless, slovenly manner, only a change of circumstances can render it successful; and that success reflects less credit on the doer than on the favourable circumstances which render it passable. If man be a common labourer, he can gain such respect by doing his work well that his labour will be sought for, and himself will be honoured for his fidelity. Such men will not be long out of

employment even in hard times, while those who are known to perform their labour with the least possible trouble to themselves, or unskillfully, will always be complaining of the hard times.

If you are a maid in the kitchen, do your work so well that you will be invaluable in a household. A faithful servant is a friend, and will be consid-



HINDU WIDOWS.

A CHEAP SOUL.

SOME years since I was sitting in a large dry-goods store in Chicago waiting for a friend. It was storming a little outside, and the clerks were not very busy.

Not far from me stood a cash-boy with his back against a pile of prints and his elbows carelessly resting upon

gentlemanly clerk in attendance, except one, a twenty-five cent piece, which noiselessly skimmed along the floor and fell near the cash-boy I have alluded to. Without changing his position, he set one foot upon the money and seemed unconscious of everything except the skylight, and stood gazing up into the open space while search was made for the money. I watched him stain his