

A Plea for Zenanas.

What is Zenana work—this work of which such frequent mention is made in connection with missionary operations in India? To answer this question in many private circles has been the pleasure and privilege of the writer of this short sketch; but she is induced to adopt the present mode of giving information on the subject by the earnest desire of several upon whose judgment she can rely, as well as by her own anxiety to awaken as widely as possible the concern of English ladies for their less favoured, yet most interesting, Indian sisters.

It is not easy to describe to persons in this country the condition of Hindoo domestic society. In England, as a rule, every family sufficiently opulent possesses a habitation peculiar to itself, and, on marriage, a son literally "leaves his father and mother" to establish a home of his own. The house of a respectable Bengal, on the contrary, is seldom the abode of one couple only. It is rather the dwelling place of an aggregation of families: father and sons, with cousins and grandsons, often reading together in one domestic community. The family inheritance even is not divided amongst the sharers; but a patriarchal bond unites the several members of the household, and preserves the deference and subordination which nature and custom dictate to them.

In every respectable Hindoo house a range of apartments is found set apart for the occupation of the women. This is called the Zenana, from the Persian word Zen, women. To this part of the house no man has access, except the fathers, husbands, and sons of the family; and from it no female member of that family beyond the age of childhood is allowed to pass unguarded. The apartments of the zenana are usually dreary, ill-lighted, ill-ventilated, and miserable-furnished rooms, so constructed that no curious eye can overlook them, and that their inmates may see as little as possible of the outer world. In some cases the number of women thus immured is very great; and the same patriarchal system which regulates the relation of the men of the family prevails also amongst the women. The aged mother of the household is supreme, and the other women rank according to their husband's relative positions. How monotonous and wretched a life passed in such circumstances must be, need hardly be remarked. These poor women enjoy little of their husbands' society—they do not even sit or eat with them; and having received no education—unable to read books—with no knowledge of any useful or elegant art of needlework or other pleasant occupation to beguile the wearisomeness of their lot—they are shut up to utter indolence. The survey of such jewels as they may possess, the care of their little ones, and the discussion of any family gossip, or of whatever items of news find their way to them from the outside, are their only amusements; and great is their delight when a marriage takes place, or when some idolatrous festival or ceremony is celebrated, and they have their share in the stir, the feasting and the illuminations which attend it. Such occurrences are their gala days, and form the only breaks in their monotonous lives.

According to Hindoo custom a girl must be married before she is ten years of age, but usually the ceremony takes place at a much earlier period. Though married, she generally lives with her parents until she is twelve or thirteen years old, when she is regarded as quite fit to take her place in the family of her husband; and thenceforth she remains in his zenana, never being allowed to leave it but on very special occasions, and then only in a carefully closed carriage or palanquin, and with the additional protection of the darkness of night. Such a position as this is sufficiently revolting to our English ideas of social comfort and domestic bliss. What, then, must be the condition of the widows in such households? Now that an intemperance practice has been prohibited by our enlightened Government, and the widow may not voluntarily or by compulsion be immolated, her life is usually rendered as bitter as possible. If she is the mother of sons, she has a status which secures her from many of the petty degradations and annoyances which befall the childless widow—often herself a child. When a girl becomes a widow before she has entered her husband's dwelling, she is yet transferred to that home as soon as she has reached the age when, had she been alive, she would have gone there. Unwelcome to his family, who thenceforth have to support her, she becomes but too often the drudge and servant of all, and thus has the desolation of her lot most painfully and perpetually kept before her. By Hindoo law her food is limited to one meal a day, and that of the coarsest kind; and she may never wear an ornament of any description whatsoever. The re-marriage of widows is now sanctioned by legal enactment, but the sentiment of the people is against it.

It has been said above that the Hindoo women are wholly uneducated. It does not appear that they were always so. In the literature of the country mention is made of the women who were proficient in every department of learning. For ages past, however, custom has denied all its action to the daughters of India. It has even been thought disreputable for a woman to be able to read and write. Thus it was that when missionary enterprise found its way to India, and efforts were made to give the people the blessings of Christian knowledge, for a long time it was impossible to teach any but the lads and young men of the community. They might be benefited by learning; it would be to them an introduction to profitable employment; whilst to girls it could be nothing but an injury and degradation. So the Hindoos reasoned, and thus the efforts of Christian philanthropy were baffled for many years. It was the honor and privilege of the agents of the Baptist Missionary Society to make the first successful attempt towards native female education in 1810; but the children of the poor alone could be reached by these efforts, and the results did not go far to alter the national feeling. That it has now

been altered, is, we think, attributable to the influence of English education upon the men.

Western literature has been effectually taught to the young men of India in the many Government and missionary schools. That their mind have been to a wide extent enlightened by it. The dense ignorance of the women was no disadvantage to their husband whilst they were themselves untaught, or instructed only in the absurdities of Hindooism; but now that their minds have been stimulated by the possession of true knowledge, and are prepared to enjoy intelligent conversation, they find it to be no small evil that, in their homes, there can be no sympathy with their pursuits, as there is no power to appreciate their choicest acquisitions. Besides, with knowledge, there has come to the young Bengal an impatience of the restraints of caste and a disregard of the prescriptions of idolatry which are leading him on to great, and it is hoped salutary, social reforms; but for these his household, while uneducated, must be altogether unprepared.

It will be readily understood that the task of instructing Hindoo women in their own homes, under the circumstances above described, is innumerable by no few difficulties. The labour cannot be economised by collecting the inmates of several houses together, and each family presents pupils differing widely amongst themselves in age and capacity. Visits, too, must be adjusted to the family convenience; and it has been found that the afternoon, from one to six o'clock, is the only time when attention can be expected. Thus, if a Christian lady were able to give her full strength to this work, she could probably teach twice a week in at most ten or twelve houses only. Regular daily instruction can only be secured, even within such a limited sphere of labour, by the employment of native Christian women as assistant teachers. Before the work of a European lady is passed over, we may call attention to the amount of self-denial required for the discharge of it. The journey to the houses she has to visit, made in the very hottest part of the day, and taking her through dusty and aqualid thoroughfares, is of itself very fatiguing. To sit and teach in the close and dirty apartments, or in the ill-screened verandah where the women congregate around her, is attended with no small inconvenience and exhaustion. Yet the eagerness with which such visits are welcomed, the delight at any new information acquired, the joy as increased facility in needlework is gained, and the loving gratitude for the care and interest bestowed, which the women evince, are sufficient to make it a Christian visitor oblivious of discomfort and weariness; and not until she is returning to her own home is she aware how severely both mind and body have been taxed by her labour of love. Nor does her task terminate here. Work must be made ready for her next visit, and very much time and patient industry are required for this purpose.

As a mere philanthropic effort, such a work must commend itself to Englishwomen; but when, in addition, the higher aim of carrying life—eternal life—to those who are now so evidently sitting in the shadow of death is considered, we believe we shall not appeal for help in vain.—Female Missionary Intelligence.

Fashions for Spring, 1876.

Affections are cut close, are worn by old and young, and are equally becoming to all. They are useful for every-day wear for hill-climbing, and rock-scaling. They come mostly in the old decided colors, and are worn long or short to suit the taste or convenience of the wearer.

Honor is beginning to be considered a somewhat antiquated goods. Several large houses are selling out below cost, preparatory to going out of business, "as there is no profit in it," they say. Large stocks have accumulated on their hands, as they found few purchasers for even the finest quality. Some apparently heavy dealers have failed entirely, and closed up for want of capital.

Generosity was much worn at the holiday season. It is not an imported goods, but of home manufacture, and comes in all prices and grades.

Intellect is much sought after at certain shops, where it is supposed to be found.

A "shoddy" article is often palmed off upon shoppers, a quality with a cotton back and a satin figure. But those really desirous of purchasing can always find a genuine article, and it is within the means of the poor.

Fraud, though not as popular as it was last year, is occasionally worn as a *neglige* by those retiring into bankruptcy; and at the reception of creditors by their two per cent. debtors.

There is another garment shown at the openings which promises to be as great a favourite this spring as ever. Its common name is Love. It comes in suits, prices ranging from one hundred to many thousand dollars per suit. It is made to order when desired. Sometimes much profit is realized on the sales. Many who have purchased say that it can be turned and made over for another season. There is much counterfeit in the market. It requires a practiced eye to detect the false. Only the real will wear; the frail imitation soon gets shabby by dust and friction. I am told that some of our leading fashionable invest in the cheap material, and trimmed up nicely it is thought to look as well as the genuine.

Policy is one of the most popular overgarments of the season. It seems to be worn by all ages and classes. It is considered "the correct thing" for court, business, or society. Some skill is required in wearing it, so that the lining, which is often of a different texture, shall not show. Those designed for ladies are often trimmed with a bewildering combination of puffs, bows, and folds; those for gentlemen are ornamented with red tape.

Orthodoxy is not so high or straight as in former seasons, nor buttoned so closely. Hereby is very popular, especially when worn with white neckties. Creeds are not so much imported as at one time, but are home-made, which caused a great variety.—Eric-a-Brac; Scribner for May.

Thanks "From the Depths of the Heart."

WELLINGTON, LORAIN CO., O., Aug. 24, 1874.

Dr. R. V. PIERCE, Buffalo, N.Y.:

Dear Sir,—Your medicine, Golden Medical Discovery, Dr. Sagar's Catarrh Remedy, have proved of the greatest service to me. Six months ago no one thought that I could possibly live long. I had a complication of diseases,—scrofula, manifesting itself in eruptions and great blotches on my head that made such sores that I could not have my hair combed without causing me much suffering; also causing swollen glands, tonsils enlarged, enlarged or "thick neck," and large and numerous boils. I also suffered from a terrible Chronic Catarrh, and in fact I was so diseased that life was a burden to me. I had tried many doctors with no benefit. I finally procured one-half dozen bottles of your Golden Medical Discovery, and one dozen of Sagar's Catarrh Remedy, and commenced their use. At first I was badly discouraged, but after taking four bottles of the Discovery I began to improve, and when I had taken the remaining I was well. In addition to the use of Discovery I applied a solution of Iodine to the Goitre or thick neck, as you advised in pamphlet wrapping, and it entirely disappeared. Your Discovery is certainly the most wonderful blood medicine ever invented. I thank God and you, from the depths of my heart, for the great good it has done me. Very gratefully,
Mrs. L. CHAFFEE.

Most medicines which are advertised as blood purifiers and liver medicines contain either mercury, in some form, or potassium and iodine variously combined. All of these agents have strong tendency to break down the blood corpuscles, and debilitate and otherwise permanently injure the human system, and should therefore be discarded. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, on the other hand, being composed of the fluid extracts of native plants, barks, and roots, will in no case produce injury, its effects being strengthening and curative only. Sarsaparilla, which used to enjoy quite a reputation as a blood purifier, is a remedy of thirty years ago, and many will give place as it is doing, to the more positive and valuable vegetable alterative which late medical investigation and discovery has brought to light. In Scrofula, or King's Evil, White Swellings, Ulcers, Erysipelas, Swelled Neck, Goitre, Scrofulous Inflammations, Indolent Inflammation, Mercurial affections, Old Sores, Eruptions of the Skin, and Sore Eyes as in all other blood diseases Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery has shown its great remedial power, curing the most obstinate and intractable cases. Sold by all dealers in medicines.

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SYMPTOMS OF WORMS.

The countenance is pale and leaden-colored, with occasional flushes, or a circumscribed spot on one or both cheeks; the eyes become dull; the pupils dilate; an azure semicircle runs along the lower eye-lid; the nose is itched, swells, and sometimes bleeds, swelling of the upper lip; occasional flatulencies, with burrowing or throbbing of the face; an unusual secretion of saliva; slimy or furred tongue; breath very foul, particularly in the morning; appetite variable, sometimes voracious, with a gnawing sensation of the stomach, at others, entirely gone; fleeting pains in the stomach; occasional nausea and vomiting; violent pains throughout the abdomen; bowels irregular, at times costive; stools slimy; not unfrequently tinged with blood; belly swollen and hard; urine turbid; respiration occasionally difficult, and accompanied by hiccup; cough sometimes dry and convulsive; uncasy and disturbed sleep, with grinding of the teeth; temper variable, but generally irritable, &c.

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Persons laboring under this distressing malady, will find Hance's Epileptic Pills to be the only remedy ever discovered for curing Epilepsy or Falling Fits. The following certificates should be read by all the afflicted; they are in every respect true, and should they be read by any one who is not afflicted himself, if he has a friend who is a sufferer, he will do a humane act by cutting this out and sending it to him.

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PHILADELPHIA, June 29th, 1867. BETH HANCE, Baltimore, Md.—Dear Sir: I received your advertisement for Hance's Epileptic Pills in the Philadelphia Press. I was attacked with Epilepsy in July, 1863. Immediately my physician was summoned, but he could give me no relief. I then consulted another physician, but I seemed to grow worse. I then tried the treatment of another but without any good effect. I again returned to my family physician and he prescribed several different remedies. I had from two to five fits a day, at intervals of two weeks. I was often attacked in my sleep, and would fall over so that I would be wholly unconscious, and was severely injured several times from the falls. I was attended so much that I lost all confidence in my own physician. I was induced to try your Epileptic Pills, which I had seen advertised in your issue. I purchased a box of your Pills, and only had two attacks after wards. The last one was April 18th, 1865, and since that time I have been free from the disease. I have always your Epileptic Pills, and I have always recommended them, and in no instance where I have had a chance of hearing from your effect, have they failed to cure. Yours, etc., WILLIAM ELDER.

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The subjoined will answer. THE SUBJOINED WILL ANSWER.—Dear Sir: You will find enclosed five dollars, which I send you for two boxes of your Epileptic Pills. I was the first person who tried your Pills in this part of the country. My son was badly afflicted with fits for two years. He was cured by your Pills, and he has never had a fit since. He is now a healthy man, and he has written to me from Alabama and Tennessee on the subject, for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of their good effects. He has always recommended them, and in no instance where I have had a chance of hearing from your effect, have they failed to cure. Yours, etc., G. S. GRADY, Yalobusha County, Miss.

ANOTHER REMARKABLE

CURE OF EPILEPSY; OR, FALLING FITS.

By HANCE'S EPILEPTIC PILLS. MONTROEVILLE, TEXAS, June 20th, 1867. To BETH HANCE.—A person in my employ had been afflicted with Fits, or Epilepsy, for thirteen years; he had three attacks at intervals of two to four months, and often times several in quick succession, sometimes continuing for two or three days. On several occasions they lasted until his mind appeared totally deranged, in which state he would continue for a day or two after the fits ceased. I tried several remedies prescribed by our resident physicians, but without success. Having seen your advertisement, I concluded to try your Pills. I obtained two boxes of your Pills, and gave them according to directions, and they effected a permanent cure. The person is now a stout, healthy man, about 30 years of age, and has not had a fit since he commenced taking your medicine, ten years since. He was my principal wagoner, and has, since that time, been exposed to the severest of weather. I have great confidence in your Pills, and would like every one who has fits to give it a trial. B. L. DEFAWRE.

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