

CASTE IN INDIA.

"The inconveniences that the people of India suffer through caste were brought home to me very forcibly during my administration of affairs at the time of the plague. Thousands of people had evacuated their houses in the city of Ahmednagar and were living in temporary shelters of the flimsiest character in the open fields, often on plowed ground. When plague appeared in the neighborhood the people realized that their turn would come next, and for a time the city was almost uninhabited. One morning, as I was making my daily rounds, a woman in one of these huts held up to me a baby who had been born in the night. She was a beautiful, intelligent woman, and the baby was as healthy as any child could be. As she was lying practically on the bare ground and had no clothes, even for the baby, I provided her at once with clothing and a cot on which to lie, and gave orders to my assistants to have her carried to a suitable shelter. There had been a heavy rain, the field was six inches deep in mud, and it was the coldest season of the year. A little later on her husband came to me in great distress and protested against the removal of his wife and child from the hut. He said that according to the rules of his caste his wife could not be moved for three days; that he had to worship this spot and perform certain other ceremonies that would require much time. I did everything I could short of resorting to physical force to induce the man to overlook the requirement of his caste, but he would not consent. I left the camp long after dark, fearing the worst, as it was very cold. The next morning early, on my arrival, I found a double funeral in progress. Both lives had been sacrificed to caste.

"In another part of the same field there was a little girl about twelve or thirteen years of age with her husband and father-in-law. These people belonged to the weaver caste, and had no relations whatever at Ahmednagar. The husband was taken first with plague, and died; his father was ill at the same time. On the death of the husband, this little girl was compelled by their caste fellows to pawn the loom and all the household effects in order to make a funeral feast in honor of her husband. A day or two afterwards the father died and another feast was demanded, and when I visited the camp I found the little girl sobbing as if her heart was broken because she could not comply with the demands of caste. She had not a cent of money; she had no property of any

kind except the garment she wore. They put her out of her caste—they excommunicated her and when I came the next day she caught me by the hand and begged me in the most piteous tones to take care of her, as she had nobody left in the world. I removed her to a suitable place, but in two or three days she also developed plague and died. So cruel is caste.

"Another day I found a man and his wife lying in a shed and both unconscious. The husband died shortly after; and as the wife showed considerable strength I had her removed to our Plague Hospital, in order that she might receive suitable nursing and proper care. On her arrival at the hospital I ordered milk to be given her, but on visiting her in her ward I found the milk in a cup by her side untouched. She made signs to me on my inquiry that the people who brought the milk were not of her caste, and therefore she could not take the cup out of their hands, nor had she strength to lift the cup from the ground to her lips. I raised her head myself and put pillows behind it, and held the cup in my own hands, but she closed her eyes and gave me such a look that I saw I had to do something else. After some search I found in the hospital a woman of her caste taking care of a member of her family who was also down with the plague. I sent this woman to give her the milk, but the moment she looked in at the open door of the ward she exclaimed, 'I can't touch her; she is in mourning for the dead!' and she went away. I then found this woman's little girl, and by offering to bring her a doll when I returned the next morning I induced her to hold the cup to the woman's lips so that she might drink. But I had to stand outside the door while she was drinking, as I was an outcast myself. When I returned the next morning with the doll in my pocket to fulfil my promise, the little girl was dead and buried."—The Missionary Herald.

THE EMPRESS DOWAGER MAKES A DONATION.

The Dowager Empress of China has given 10,000 taels, or \$14,000, to the establishment of a medical college in Peking. It is a large institution, founded and sustained by the combined effort of the London Mission, the American Board, and the Presbyterian Board, and is to cost \$50,000. It is hoped that the example of the Empress will be followed by Chinamen of rank and wealth. It may show a great change of mind in the Empire that she endorses and supports a missionary enterprise. Medical missions are proving the means of conciliating and opening the way to many minds and hearts.