

Lachmi now lives at the home of her husband's parents. Her mother-in-law is cold and stern. One day when Lachmi forgot Hindu etiquette so far as to raise her eyes in the presence of this new mother, she received such a beating that she will carry the marks of it as long as she lives. She has to do nearly all the work of the house. She scours the brass dishes, helps to cook the food, and draws water from the deep well that stands in the courtyard, though the heavy bucket makes her back ache terribly. At night, after the men have finished their ten o'clock dinner, and the women are allowed to have something, she is often too tired to eat, and only longs to rest her tired limbs on the rude little bed in the corner. But she could bear it all bravely if she just had the one thing for which her heart is most hungry, and that is love. She is naturally such a clinging, affectionate little creature that she would not find it hard to love her husband, in spite of his affliction, if he would let her. But his misfortune has soured his temper, and though his disease is only in its earliest stages, its shadow is always over him, and makes him more harsh and neglectful than he would otherwise be.

Seven years pass, and Lachmi, still a very young woman, looks old and faded. Her life is not a loveless one, for three little girls cling to her *sari* and call her mother. But her husband is cross and miserable because he has no son. "What are girls for?" he cries angrily; "I wish I had drowned them the day they were born."

Even to Lachmi the children are not the comfort they would have been once. Sorrow seems to be drying up the fountain of her heart. She scarcely knows what it is to feel deeply any more.

In the inner court of her home, fastened to one of the walls, is a little shrine. It contains the household gods, and every morning fresh water is placed there, and a small handful of rice and grain. One day, as Lachmi is making her usual offering, she gets to wondering whether these gods, whose wants she supplies so regularly, ever think of her. Do they know she is not happy? Are they sorry for her? The thought is so much in her mind that after awhile she ventures to speak to her mother-in-law about it. A scornful laugh is the reply. "Do you suppose the gods care for