

over in one season, so that the seed never had time to germinate and grow and bear fruit; in caring for the forest trees, as if they had been tender saplings; in manuring soil already too fat, and watering pastures already too wet.

The farmer was positively astonished at the misplaced ingenuity, with which labor and seed and manure, skill and time and strength, had been wasted for *no result*. The very same amount of toil and capital, *expended according to his directions*, would have brought the whole demesne into culture, and yielded a noble revenue. But season after season had rolled away in sad succession, leaving those unbounded acres of various but all *reclaimable* soils barren and useless; and as to the park, it would have been far more productive and perfect had it been relieved of the extraordinary and unaccountable amount of energy expended on it.

Why did these laborers act so absurdly? Did they wish to labor in vain? On the contrary, they were forever craving fruit, coveting good crops, longing for great results.

Did they not wish to carry out the farmer's views about his property? Well! they seemed to have that desire, for they were always reading the directions he wrote, and said continually to each other, "You know we have to bring the *whole property into order*." But they did not do it. Some few tried, and ploughed up a little plot here and there, and sowed corn and other crops. Perhaps these failed, and so the rest got discouraged? Oh no! they saw that the yield was magnificent; far richer in proportion than they got themselves. They clearly perceived that, but yet they failed to follow a good example. Nay, when the labors of a few in some distant valley had resulted in a crop they were all unable to gather in by themselves, the others would not even go and help them to bring home the sheaves! They preferred watching for weeds among the roses in the overcrowded garden, and counting the blades of grass in the park, and leaves on the trees.

Then they were fools surely, not wise men? Traitors, not true servants to their Lord?

Ah! I can't tell! You must ask Him that! I only know their Master said, "Go ye into *all the world* and preach the Gospel to *every creature*," and that more than 1800 years afterwards they had *not even mentioned that there was a Gospel, to one half of the world*.

The Prayer of a Hindu Widow.

1884 was the Jubilee year of the SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING FEMALE EDUCATION IN THE EAST, the first founded in England, and probably in the world, with the special object of evangelizing by female agency the downtrodden and miserable women of heathendom, and especially of Japan, China, India, and Syria. The society was founded in 1834 in consequence of a warm appeal made on behalf of our Eastern sisters by an American Missionary, then recruiting his health in England, the Rev. David Abel. It has been the forerunner of many similar associations for taking the Gospel into the Zenanas and harems, where the ladies of those lands undergo life-long imprisonment, where millions languish out an existence which might move the hardest heart to pity.

Utter vacuity either benumbs or almost maddens the mental faculties of the Zenana lady. The benumbing process is the commoner, perhaps. Eating and drinking, dressing and smoking, comparing jewels, discussing

trifles; and beyond this, nothing to do, nothing to see, nothing to hear, nothing to learn, nothing to think of, nothing to hope for, nowhere to go, no one to expect from the world without; four walls with divans round them; no books, no music, no pictures, no ornaments; a court, with a fountain plashing monotonously, the only place in which "to smell the air," the envy, hatred, jealousy, and all uncharitableness arising from the institution of polygamy, which poison even the sweet springs of motherly and wifely love; the tears of them that are oppressed and have no comforter, for on the side of their oppressors there is power and immemorial custom; what can the common result be, but a deadening of the intellect, a hardening of the heart, and a general dull insensibility to a pitiless irremediable fate?

And yet perhaps the other alternative—madness—occurs more frequently than we suppose. Words like some which we shall presently quote may have gone up to heaven in ten thousand instances for one in which their sob has reached a sympathizing human ear. This is the sole ray of light which breaks the horror of such darkness. A Divine ear has heard! The Divine grace is omnipotent! We may one day find that many of those "who shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God" have been gathered out of such tombs of the living as that rich native residence at *Calcutta*, where the following prayer was lately penned; the outpouring of her complaint by an afflicted one, overwhelmed from childhood with the bitter sorrow and degradation of Hindu widowhood, who, through exceptional circumstances, has been taught to write, but not, as yet, to know the only Saviour!—

"O Lord," she says, "hear my prayer! No one has turned an eye on the oppression that we poor women suffer, though with weeping and crying and desire we have turned to all sides, hoping that some would save us. No one has lifted up his eyelids to look upon us, or inquire into our case. We have searched above and below, but Thou art the only one who will hear our complaint; Thou knowest our impotence, our degradation, our dishonor.

"O Lord, inquire into our case! For ages dark ignorance has brooded over our minds and spirits; like a cloud of dust it rises and wraps us around, and we are, like prisoners in an old and mouldering house, choked and buried in the dust of custom, and we have no strength to get out. Bruised and beaten, we are like the dry husks of the sugar-cane when the sweet juice has been extracted. All-knowing God, hear our prayer, forgive our sins, and give us power to escape, that we may see something of Thy world. O Father, when shall we be set free from this jail? For what sin have we been born to live in this prison? From Thy throne of judgment justice flows, but it does not reach us; in this our life-long misery only injustice comes near us. O Thou hearer of my prayer, if we have sinned against Thee, forgive; but we are too ignorant to know what sin is? O great Lord, our name is written with drunkards, with lunatics, with imbeciles, with the very animals; as they are not responsible, we are not. Criminals confined in the jails for life are happier than we, for they know something of Thy world. They were not born in prison, but we have not for one day—no, not even in our dreams, seen Thy world; to us it is nothing but a name; and not having seen the world, we cannot know Thee, its Maker. Those who have seen Thy works may learn to under-