

"NO HOPE."

One morning in the cold season, with a heart sore from recent bereavement, I wandered into a village near our camp to try and do some work for the Master. Through the open gateway of a small enclosure, seeing a woman sitting on the ground grasping her knees before a mouldering fire of dead leaves, I entered and said, "Salaam." She neither arose nor noticed me, but pulling her *chaddar* more closely about her, continued to stare into the fire with a sullen, intense gaze. Accustomed to the polite and cheerful salutation of the village women, in astonishment I asked a man, standing near: "what is the matter with this woman?" He sorrowfully replied: "O Mem Sahib! yesterday the funeral pile of our only child, a boy, was lighted, and since then she has neither spoken nor eaten, but has refused to be comforted."

I looked at the poor creature. Her coarse, scant garments were indescribably filthy, her dishevelled hair was in the wildest disorder; but as she sat there, with that stony, pitiful expression in her poor eyes, I felt she was my sister "in the fellowship of suffering," and my whole heart went out to her as I said: "Just a fortnight ago our only child was laid in the grave." Instantly her eyes sought mine, as she anxiously inquired, "And you mourned?" "Yes, but with the hope of meeting her again." A variety of emotions, perplexity predominating, passed over her countenance, and she silently awaited an explanation of this, to her, wonderful statement. I tried in a brief way to give her an idea of our Christian belief and its blessed assurances concerning the future of children. It must have been a marvelous revelation to her, whose paganism taught that the spirit of her child was, even then, in some living creature, perhaps a loathsome reptile or vile insect, and that it must pass through countless transmigrations until at last, losing all personality, it would be absorbed in the Deity.

Before I left she seemed somewhat comforted, though she sadly exclaimed: "I never, *never* expected to see my boy again! I thought he was gone forever." I have frequently thought of this incident, and nearly always in connection with the verse, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others,

which have *no hope*." I never fathomed the meaning of "*no hope*" until I beheld the dumb agony of that Hindoo mother! No wonder the kind heart of the apostle hastened to enlighten the once heathen Thessalonians concerning "them that are asleep," that the dark cloud of sorrow might be bright with hope on the heavenward side. If death is known amongst us as the King of Terrors, what dread title will convey what he is to heathen India?

Here the ghastliness of death, under the ministry of loving hands, gives place almost to the semblance of natural sleep. Beautiful flowers adorn the satin-lined casket, and reverently the dear form is conveyed to its last resting place. The mourning heart is not only sustained by loving Christian sympathy, but, what is infinitely better, may confidently claim the consolations of Him who has said: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so I will comfort you." As our sainted missionary, Mrs. McHenry, wrote me after the death of her little daughter: "Oh, how *He can* comfort! The Lord revealed to me by His spirit, the day Aimee died, that she had not gone far away from me, but just withdrawn from sight. Afterwards I found it written in the Word, in Heb. xii. 22-24. Read it. We *are* come, not *shall* come. I have not lost a sense of my glorious companionship since."

How different in India! The body, often in a horrible condition from lack of attention during an entire illness, is placed on the bare ground, until the low-caste men arrive with a small cot to carry it to the burning place. With but a sheet thrown over it, they put the bed on their shoulders, and move off as carelessly, and are as unconcerned about jolting, as if they were carrying a dead dog. The family and community generally, if not always, regard the bereavement as a mark of their god's displeasure, and incited by fear of still greater calamity, use every endeavour to propitiate it. Who can picture the sorrows of bereavement under such circumstances! And the dear one is gone for ever. "No hope!" "*No hope!*"—*Sel.*

THE SIMPLICITY OF PROPORTIONATE GIVING.

Consider how simply the thing could be done. The greater number of God's people receive weekly wages. Were they to exercise forethought and economy in