

thumbs to their foreheads, bowed in worship and went away laughing. For doing this they hope to be freed from fever and the itch for one year, when they will come and worship again. The bananas thrown upon the roof tumbled down and were greedily devoured by any who succeeded in grabbing them. Worship?"

Is there anything of comfort or joy for this life to be found in Hinduism? And the other religions of India have nothing better to offer. Would we be willing to change places with these people?

Would we not, in their place, welcome the news of salvation, as they do when they understand it! Listen to what one man said to a missionary: "Do you know why we have so opposed Christianity? Just because we did not know it; now that we find it a religion of love, we can no longer war against it." For the life to come these millions can have no hope, yet they are our brothers and sisters: "For God hath made of one blood, all nations, for to dwell upon the face of the earth."

(2nd) Now, my sisters, let us look into the lives of the women of India and compare our lot with theirs, and see if we would be willing, for one day, to exchange places with them. We have seen how they are unwelcomed at birth, and we find that they are, in most cases, unloved and uncared for through life and unwept at death.

They are no better than slaves, or, at the best, playthings; are not credited with having brain or soul, in many cases. The sacred books teach that all their tendencies are toward evil, that they must be eternally watched and guarded, lest their evil nature cause them to throw off all restraint. When they are older their lives are more tolerable; as mothers of grown sons, they exert considerable influence and have a certain amount of power in the family life.

Education is becoming more and more general in India; among the upper classes, boys and girls are now usually well educated; the courses of study in their colleges are long and severe, but until recent years *nothing* was done toward female education.

Comparatively few, as yet, of the girls and women of India are able to read; there are still twenty times more males than females receiving education. Yet public opinion is changing; old customs in India are fast giving way, and along with other signs of progress is to be found this: that opposition to female education is growing beautifully less.

As women, the lives of our Indian sisters are not to be envied, for they are not, as we are, looked upon as the equals of their husbands and brothers; but as widows, their lives are shrouded in the blackness of misery and despair. Here are 22,000,000 of widows, 64,000 of whom are under nine years of age. If the husband die, though the wife may never have seen him, but has been betrothed to him by her father—perhaps in her infancy—she must be considered his widow; he may have been an old man, may have

other wives, yet she is looked upon as causing his death, because of some sin committed, perhaps, in a former state of existence. As soon as the husband dies, his widow is pounced upon, her jewels torn off, her head shaved, then, when her husband's body is to be burned, she must remain in the river, where she has been pushed, until the ceremonies are over; then she is pulled out and must remain for thirteen days in the same clothes.

Only once each day is she allowed food, and then only bread and water. Woe to the wife on whom her shadow may chance to fall,—she would soon be a widow, too. All are warned to keep out of the way of the accursed thing; the drudgery of the household is put upon her; she is cruelly treated, even her parents consider themselves disgraced, and say: "Unhappy creature, I wish she had never been born!" What wonder that many of them put an end to their lives, or enter upon a life of sin far worse than death!

Fifty years ago, the sum of one thousand pounds was offered to any respectable Hindu who would marry a widow, but no one took up the offer. In 1856 the Indian Government passed an Act removing all legal obstacles to such marriage, and thirty years later only sixty re-marriages had taken place in all India.

Sisters, are we doing all in our power to send out women (for they can only reach women) to teach those 22,000,000 of downtrodden ones of happiness and peace, such as they never dreamed of, to be had here, and of a heaven beyond where He, who has known their griefs and carried their sorrows, waits to welcome them? Let us put ourselves in their place.

(3rd) And now let us put ourselves in the place of the native Christian and see some of the obstacles that might hinder us (were we in his place) from confessing Christ. If he be the first in the home to wish to be a Christian, he must meet a most bitter opposition; he is often turned away from home and his business forfeited; he must literally give up all for Christ's sake. He is coaxed, threatened, drugged, beaten, sometimes slowly poisoned. What wonder if he is for months, even years, almost persuaded to be a Christian, and sometimes fails even to confess Christ openly. But God's grace triumphs in most cases and the native Christian dares risk the loss of all things to gain Christ. Here is an instance reported by a missionary among the Telugus: J. Naidu had heard a word while a lad, forty five years ago, but the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in, had prevented him from surrendering to the Lord. At last, however, his will was broken and he came, saying: "I dare not longer delay, I must confess Christ cost it what it may. He is my Lord and Saviour!" We baptized him and persecutions began; his wife was counselled by her friends to throw herself into a well and thus flee the disgrace he had put upon them all. She compromised, by refusing to eat with him.