

During supper-time there was but little conversation; our hearts were too full to talk much. Afterwards we united in family worship, and I need scarcely say that hearty thanksgivings were rendered to our God and SAVIOUR for the mercy shewn to our new brother, and fervent supplications put up in his behalf, that he might be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Soon after prayers, it being time to retire to rest, I conducted him to his room, and, with some anxiety, left him for the night. I say with some anxiety, for I knew that in the silence and solitude of his own room, thoughts of what he had done, and the consequences it must entail, would crowd on his mind. The excitement of the act itself over, he would then feel how he was among strangers, and an alien from his own house and people. He told me afterwards that he was unable to sleep: but beyond that anxiety and sorrow which it would have been unnatural not to have felt, he seems to have been undisturbed by any doubts or regrets.

The next morning the duty of informing his wife and relatives of what he had done was to be performed; which, as he knew, would be followed by painful and harassing interviews. Accordingly he addressed a letter to them, briefly acquainting them with his being under my roof, and for what purpose, and begging that his wife would join him. Subsequently he drew up another letter stating more at large his reasons for embracing Christianity. A letter of similar import was also sent to the bishop, in compliance with the rubric prefixed to the service for the baptism of those of riper years, informing his lordship of his desire to be received into the Church of CHRIST.

About two hours after, being informed that some of his people were come, I desired them to be shewn into my own room, as both for Streenavasa's protection and comfort, it was advisable that I first should see who they were, and what was their intention, and so give him the opportunity of deciding whom he would or would not see. In a minute or two, a young man accompanied by three female relatives came in. I shall not soon forget their appearance. The young man, Streenavasa's brother, was a tall fine youth, and his face and whole deportment betokened indignation and grief. The women looked heart-stricken and dejected. To those unacquainted with the pride of family and caste in this country, it is not easy to realize the feeling of deep calamity and dishonour with which such an event as Streenavasa's conversion would afflict a Brahmin's family. They would regard it not merely as a religious apostasy, but as a degradation of the worst description. This feeling shewed itself plainly in the faces of the relatives now introduced. Indignation, for the time, overpowering sorrow, the young man stalked into the room, and coming fiercely up to me, exclaimed, "Where is my brother? I want him; let me see him, he must come!"

I told him that Streenavasa had come to me of his own accord, that he was free to go or to stay, and that if he liked to see any of his relations, he was at liberty to do so; that I simply intended to give him protection. "What have you done to him? Why is he here?" were questions that followed. I replied that Streenavasa had come to me to be put under instruction for baptism, and that the previous evening he had eaten and drank with us. He looked amazed and incredulous at this, he could not bring himself to believe that his brother could have voluntarily, and in his senses, cast himself down from his lofty position as a Brahmin. "What!" said he, "did you sling water into his mouth and spoil him?" by which he meant to ask whether we had by force made Streenavasa drink some water and so destroyed his caste. Again I told him that his brother had acted purely of his own accord, that it was only within the last four days that I had become acquainted with him. "Are you speaking truth?" he again vehemently asked; for he thought that his brother must be the victim of some well-plied arts, and that I was the person who had ensnared and deluded him. And I may here mention that so strange does it seem to the high-caste Hindoos that any of their number should embrace a new religion and break their caste, that wherever such a case does occur, they attribute it to magic or to the administration

of some drug which renders the party subject to the will of the proselytizer. To give you an amusing instance of this. A friend of mine, a layman, was talking with a Brahmin about Streenavasa's conversion. The latter expressed his incredulity as to its reality, saying, "Well, I cannot understand how a Brahmin can become a Christian, it can only be under a delusion or by a snare." My friend advised him to call on me and ask to see Streenavasa, and so to judge for himself whether his conversion was a genuine affair. This he declined with a look of almost terror, saying, "I go to see Mr. Symonds? why he will, perhaps, put powder into my mouth and make a Christian of me."

But to return to my narrative. After some further conversation with the brother, I told him that I would go and ask Streenavasa if he would like to see him and the other relatives. On doing so, Streenavasa told me he would rather not see any that day, as he naturally felt much agitated, and would prefer to be quiet; but that if his mother or wife came, he would see them. I told this to the brother, who seemed dismayed to find that Streenavasa would not see him, for he fully calculated on being able to persuade him to come back. And now the indignation that had hitherto kept him up, began to give way to anguish, and going out of the house, he sat himself down in the dust, covered his face with his cloth, and wept. The women, too, at the same time began to wail and lament, rendering the scene altogether one most painful and affecting. After a while they arose and went out of the Compound,* every now and then turning round to look at the place where they believed their brother was worse than entombed. Mingling gestures of despair and anguish with expressions of indignation, and imprecating curses upon us, as the authors of their misery, they departed.

This, with other painful scenes that followed, which I shall afterwards describe, will serve to shew your readers both the strength of the tie by which high-caste Hindoos are held to their religion and connexions, and also how much a new convert needs the sympathy and prayers of the members of CHRIST'S Church. For him to embrace Christianity is indeed a taking up the cross. In this case, our Lord's words apply in their full force and meaning,—“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” Such an one has of a truth need to count the cost.

In the latter part of the same day, several other Brahmins came and wished to have an interview with Streenavasa, but he declined to see them. I had conversation with some of them, and with difficulty persuaded them that he had acted on deliberate choice in embracing Christianity. They were filled with amazement when I told them that the evening before he had taken supper with us. "Do you really mean to say," said one, "that he ate your food—did it go down his throat? did it not make him sick?" "Why did he not tell us," said another, "that he was going to be a Christian?" "And what," I asked in reply, "would you have done if you had suspected that he was coming to me? You know that if he had told you, you would never have allowed him to come; that you would sooner have killed him than let him become a Christian." "No," he said, "we would not have killed him, but we would have tied him up and beaten him." There is no doubt, however, that had his people got intelligence of his design, they would have stopped short at no measure whatever to prevent it. You can scarcely realize the excitement that Streenavasa's conversion caused throughout not merely the Hindoo community of Madras, but of the country round. The news in a few days was talked of in towns and villages far away from Madras. At Combaconum, for instance, a town nearly 200 miles from this, where we have a Mission, the affair was discussed among the caste people with as much interest as if it had happened there. Our own Missionary heard one of them say, "Ah! that fellow won't live long, he will soon be

* Compound means the enclosure in which the Mission-premises stand.