

Zenana Visitation.

FROM MISS CAMPBELL.

Neemuch, April 5, 1895.

My formal introduction to the work took place at Miss Duncan's prize-giving, that time, for it takes several days, long looked for by the women as well as the little ones.

The children's examination was not unlike such a day in a Canadian school with some difference in color, dress, posture and surroundings.

Six English ladies from the station were present and greatly enjoyed what they saw and heard.

Friday, the 22nd March, was the day appointed for awarding the prizes in the city zenanas. We set out at 7.30, hoping to get through before the sun would become too hot.

The streets of a native city are a bewildering jumble to a stranger. The houses seem to be dropped down wherever there is a space sufficient for four walls. The walls may or may not be at right angles and may or may not be parallel to any other object in the vicinity.

The entrances to the houses are as varied as are the length and width of the streets. Into some of the houses we stepped from the street through a door, and found ourselves in a dark little room with mud floor, mud walls, thatched roof and no furniture, unless a rude cot, which is usually thrown out in the day time, a small recess in the mud walls, a box and a few brass vessels may be called furniture.

In other places we had to pass through the apartment occupied by the family cow during the night and by the calf both day and night. The entrance to other houses is through a narrow passage into an open space. The single rooms, where live the several branches of the family, open into this yard. In such places live those women who are not allowed to go out on the street. The only air they get is in this narrow court-yard, the only things they see beyond their own family and the women who come in, the sky above, and it may be a sickly tree or flower they coax to grow in such unkindly atmosphere. It was into one of these places we had gone when, getting too close to some water vessels, I was warned by the Biblewoman not to go so near. My first thought was that she feared I should get my skirts into a mud-puddle near which they were sitting, but I knew on second thought that it was lest the touch of my dress should make their vessels unclean. A cot was brought and we sat down. Miss Duncan heard them read, asked questions, gave the prizes, and after singing and a word of prayer, we left.