

stood conditions that the religious prejudices of the inmates should not be offended, that the Christian Scriptures should not be taught, that religious topics indeed should have no mention. This, for convenience, I will call the conversational era of the Zenana Mission. The conversation was necessarily confined to general themes. It was a sufficiently scanty privilege, but of even this the visitor of a few years ago was glad to avail herself. It was a very circumscribed field not enough to satisfy her sacred ambition, but it was all that was possible then, and she was obliged to be content. This was succeeded by a teaching era, in which the lady visitor was permitted to teach her pupils to read and write in their own tongue; but, even then, the books admitted were simply instructive, not religious. This, again, was succeeded by a working era, in which the ladies taught them to find relief from the weary tedium of idle confinement in the practice of lace-making, embroidery, and other ornamental work. Before I pass on to the present, which I will call the Christian era, and which combines and fulfils all the preceding, I wish to record my most earnest conviction that in doing only as much as they could in those early times they acted wisely and well. I say this rather because I have heard strong objections urged against it. Had they refused to do the less and lower because they were not permitted to do the greater and higher work, the doors of the Zenanas might not, I think would not, have been opened to them this day, and had they hastened more they might have so violently offended the prejudices of those whom they sought to win as to close the doors of the Zenanas against them for ever. They did as much as they were permitted to do. They carried with them the experience of a wider and purer world. Without actually speaking of the doctrines or claims of the Christian religion, they were able to manifest its effects upon the life, to exhibit in their gentleness and sympathy, their unselfishness and devotion, the influence and power of the gospel. Their visits infused a new interest into very dreary lives. They brought the contagious influence of an active Christian life to refresh and invigorate women jaded and sated with their narrow world. They spoke to them of a nobler womanhood than that into which they had sub sided, and with which they were dimly discontent. If, happily, they were married they could speak to them of a love which is more than physical, of a companionship closer than that of mere bodily presence, of a loving and confident trust in each other which could bear separation without suspicion. We cannot wonder that the secret of this difference between these lonely women and their visitors should have been eagerly asked, and more eagerly told. It was for the most part in some such way as this that the women of the Zenanas became anxious to hear the gospel which had wrought so much for the women of Christian lands. I am glad that era has passed away—at least in Delhi. But because it may exist, and necessarily exists in some newer fields, I have thought it necessary to vindicate it. That you may the better understand the significance of the change which has passed over the people, I may say that, notwithstanding the ladies of the Zenana Mission in Delhi steadfastly decline to visit any house where the Word of God may not be taught, there are nearly three hundred women who are, with the full knowledge and consent of their relatives, under regular and systematic instruction. This even does not measure their willingness to hear, but only the ability of our staff to visit. So many and importunate have been their requests to be taught that, if the number of workers could be increased ten-fold, I have no doubt the number of readers and

hearers would be immediately increased in like proportion. Little as I like to speak of the results of Christian work, I cannot refrain from saying that I have had the high privilege of baptising three Mahomedan ladies from these Zenanas, who have been strengthened to come out boldly, and to publicly profess their faith in and love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides this work, specially known as Zenana work, frequent meetings are held among the Chamar women in their castes. These meetings differ little, if at all, from the meetings which we ourselves hold, except that English Christian women are the preachers, and Indian heathen women are the specially invited hearers. This work has only recently been begun and it is too soon to speak of direct results. I believe a great future awaits it. It is much to carry the Gospel to those who dare not venture out to hear it, but in my opinion it is more to carry it among those women who are not precluded from their station or caste from freely mingling with others, or from taking their part in the active duties of life. This particular work arose out of a grave difficulty, which began to be seriously felt in our native Christian Church. A considerable number of our converts were already married when they received and confessed the truth. It was their earnest desire to banish every form of idol worship or sacrifice, and every superstitious observance from their homes. But it was found that, sometimes openly, but often secretly, their wives, remaining heathen, continued to observe the idolatrous practices in which they had been trained. It was felt that to meet this special difficulty special work had to be done, and thus these meetings were begun. Another great difficulty was to furnish Christian wives to our unmarried Christian young men. Quite a considerable number of these have been obliged either to seek wives from some distant mission station, or to marry amongst the heathen, or, worse than all, to remain altogether unmarried. This is being gradually met by our Native Christian Girls' School. Many of the girls from this school have been happily married, and Christian wife with Christian husband are helpers of each other's faith, are training their children in the fear of the Lord, and are, in several instances, labouring together to spread the light and truth around them. I cannot speak too highly of the work of the lady who devotes, not her time and talents only, but her whole self to the training of the next generation of Christian women in this school. Hers is work of the very highest order, of that spiritual living kind which must continue. Nor can I speak in terms of praise too high of the noble work done by our lady medical missionary. She works with singular skill and success, and is so evidently filled with loving sympathy for their pain and sickness, and inspired with zealous desire for their eternal peace, that she has won the hearts of both patients and pupils alike.

Beside their own abundant labours these ladies superintend the work of the native women employed in Delhi and its suburbs, and in the distant towns and villages. They visit and examine their pupils and supplement their teaching. They gather once a week all the native workers, Zenana visitors, Bible women, and school teachers into the new home, where an address is given and prayers for help and guidance are offered. In this way the Christian women who have gone forth from this country, strive to impart to the Christian women of that country the fruits of the mature experience, the firm faith, the fuller knowledge, and the more fervent devotion, which they themselves possess. I am especially anxious that you should understand some of the