

One of the first medical missionaries tells a sad story which will help you to understand how greatly even ladies of the highest rank often suffer because of caste prejudices and for want of skilful medical aid. She was called to see the wife of a native prince who had been suffering dreadfully for four days. The palace of the prince was twenty miles from the city where she lived, but in company with two other ladies she made the journey as quickly as possible. On entering the zenana they found the suffering princess lying on a low bed surrounded by sixty women, all gorgeously dressed, staring at her but doing nothing for the sufferer. Just then a message came from the prince to say that no Christian hand must touch his wife till her father gave his consent, and as he was sleeping they must wait. To do so while they saw the poor lady in agony was dreadful, so after enduring it as long as they could two of the ladies ventured into the apartments of the gentlemen and implored them to awaken the sleeping prince. After long delay and much entreaty this was done, and then the great man asked the doctor to examine the patient and report to him. This she quickly did, informing him that unless the lady was speedily relieved she would die. She was asked if she could relieve her without medicine, and when she said "no," the next question was, "Will your medicine positively cure her?" This she could not promise, and then from the lips of her own husband came these cruel words: "To take medicine from a Christian would break caste, and since you will not promise to cure her she must die," and the ladies were forced to leave without being permitted even to attempt to alleviate the sufferings of the young and beautiful princess, whose life might have been saved but for the cruelty of her own husband and father.

It has been truly said by one of themselves. "The Hindus show their piety in building hospitals for mosquitoes, snakes, and scorpions, but they allow their mothers, when attacked with some acute disease, to die a dog's death rather than to expose them to a doctor's gaze or touch." Happily this indifference to female suffering is, it is hoped, passing away. As is well known, there is now a National Association for supplying female medical aid to the women of India, and many of the wealthy natives support it liberally, but, as I have already said, the honour of being the first to attempt to alleviate the sufferings of Hindu