

aving department—how he has been taken in the act of toasting bread for breakfast by holding it suspended over the fire by means of his *toes*, his hands meanwhile being occupied in preparing "Saratoga potatoes;" that your tea—delicious tea—is strained through the foot of one of your cast-off stockings, and when arraigned at the bar of English indignation how he defends himself, arguing that the stocking *had to be washed anyway*, and the cups were certainly sryed from leaves, if not sediment, of two evils the grosser being thus disposed of.

He may even ask you to *define dirt*. What is it? And probably if you are not argumentative you will turn away feebly suggesting something about "matter outside its legitimate sphere," and might be excused some indefiniteness too under the circumstances.

Rumour aside, however, our Hindoo has a great advantage over us in the possession of this, his *sixth sense*, as it is sometimes called, his *educated toes*.

Suppose a Canadian matron determines in the fulness of her hospitality to make her household happy with "custard for tea." Suppose also that during the egg-beating process she drops her fork, three distinct acts must be accomplished before the work can be proceeded with, independent of the loss of time. 1. She stoops to recover that fork. 2. She procures water to cleanse that fork. 3. She requires a towel to complete the operation.

Let the same accident occur to a Mohammedan cook, and observe how he will bear himself under the circumstances. Reaching out his foot, swiftly and firmly he seizes the fork *with his toes* and simply *hands it up from behind*, wipes it upon a small towel habitually worn over his left shoulder, and if necessity requires will select a *nutmeg*—probably from among the folds of his turban, where they have been secreted no doubt for safety and convenience—and should any dust remain all deficiencies are thus speedily covered and in due time, but with infinitely less labour, he also serves you a *very superior custard*.

Indian servants are extortioners by profession, yet some modes of *defrauding* are more bearable than others.

To most people nothing could be more irritating than to know that a dependent, is calmly, systematically and conscientiously (?) robbing him, and yet feel there is no possible escape.

Each servant is the purchaser of all the requisites for his own department, and daily, weekly, or monthly, presents his account, expecting it to be cashed at sight. Upon the value of each article thus purchased he levies a small tax per rupee, which he considers his rightful perquisite over and above his wages. The merchant patronized naturally strives to be polite and conciliatory to a "brother," who helps so essentially to make trade brisk for him. To this end he also levies a tribute of a certain per cent. per rupee on each rupee's worth of goods sold; this he pays over to cook, groom, or ox driver, as the case may be, but the burden of the whole is upon the European.

Not even here are their resources exhausted. To each civil and military appointment is attached a fixed rate of payment which is commonly known, but the prices of merchandise is neither known nor *stationary*, but runs along a gradually ascending scale according to the rank of the purchaser; for instance, a native sells an article to a lieutenant for say 2s. 6d., a captain is forced to pay 3s., a major 4s. 6d., a colonel 6s. 6d., and a general 10s. for the very same thing.

A protest would elicit nothing more perhaps than a reiterated "poor man, mem sahib," but no great advantage to you after all.

If by any chance payment cannot at once be made a ruinous rate of interest is charged. Daily contact with these peculiar phases of Eastern life causes one to grow gradually callous, but when after all this it is found that both weights and measures are shamelessly curtailed if the strictest surveillance is not observed, it is then the iron enters into one's soul and housekeeping is *realized*.

It may therefore be readily conceived how embarrassing the circumstances of either a family or society may become when to eat being imperative, the money to pay for it—scanty at best—is received at irregular intervals, and in such insufficient amounts as do not allow of keeping clear accounts with native merchants. Then, indeed, it becomes a grave position, and one much more harassing and humiliating than any Canadian can imagine who has not been taught the painful lessons of a very bitter money experience.

DEVOTIONAL EXERCISES AT THE ASSEMBLY.

MR. EDITOR,—I was in Kingston last week, and on Wednesday morning walked up to Queen's College to see the Assembly.

It would often do us good "to see ourselves as others see us." Hoping for good, I would like through your columns to reach the members of Assembly and tell what I saw.

At 10 o'clock I went into the hall of Assembly. The Moderator and clerks were in their places, and about eighteen or twenty members were in their seats. A psalm was sung, and the Moderator read a chapter, amid a constant interruption by the opening and shutting of the door, the noise of talking in the corridors, and the creaking boots of those who came in, and because late, must have a front seat.

Prayer was then offered, and was followed by a rush of members, heedless of noise, and of the fact that the minutes of the previous meeting were being read and that some wanted to hear.

I was foolish enough to think that so reverend a body as the General Assembly would have been more reverent during their opening devotions, and that ministers would have preferred joining in those devotions to walking and talking in the halls outside.

But, alas! those who stayed outside to talk were even more reverent than some who were in. One, I noticed particularly, who wrote during the singing and reading; and waited with pen in hand during prayer to resume the instant Amen was heard. Was this becoming?

At a later session I heard the Moderator remind the Assembly that prayers were offered at the opening of their meetings, "not by a committee, but by the whole Assembly."

If the business is of so much importance that members cannot afford time for the opening devotions, would it not be better to reverse the Moderator's version and have a praying committee, or take a lesson from the boy who suggested to his father that it would be a great saving of time if he would say grace over the whole barrel of pork, and not have to do it over each bit as it came to the table.

AN ELDER, NOT A MINISTER.

Toronto, June 21st, 1881.

CONFERENCE OF LADIES.

UNION MEETING OF ALL THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

The late union meeting of the Woman's Missionary Societies of the Presbyterian Church at Kingston was the first of the kind which has been held, and proved a very interesting and successful gathering.

The representatives from the various Societies in other places were as follows.

Woman's Foreign Mission Society of the Western Section—Mrs. Harvie, Mrs. Reid, Mrs. Gregg, Toronto, Mrs. Crozier, Port Perry, Mrs. McInnes, Lancaster; Miss McKay, Kurton; Miss Moscrop, St. Mary's, Mrs. Ure, Goderich.

Montreal Woman's Board of Missions (undenominational)—Mrs. McDougall.

Ladies' French Evangelization Society—Mrs. Campbell, Mrs. Warden, Mrs. Graham, Montreal.

Ladies' Missionary Association, Scarborough—Mrs. McGillivray.

Indore Mission Society, Quebec—Miss Peebles.

Gananoque Auxiliary of Kingston, Woman's Foreign Missionary Society—Mrs. Gracey, Mrs. W. S. Macdonald, Mrs. Byers, Mrs. Mathew, Mrs. McCammon.

Amherst Island Auxiliary—Mrs. Fleming, Mrs. Tugwell, Miss Spiers.

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of Halifax and that of St. John's, Nfld., were represented by written papers. Mrs. McKay, of Formosa, was also present.

The meetings were held in St. Andrew's Hall, which was tastefully decorated with flowers. The music was led by ladies of the choirs of St. Andrew's and Chalmers Churches. All the proceedings were marked by great order, and the audience listened with close attention.

OPENING PROCEEDINGS.

In the absence during the forenoon of Miss Machar, President of the Kingston Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Mrs. Dickson, Vice-President, presided. The meeting was opened by Mrs. Harvie with an appropriate prayer, and a cordial address of welcome

was given by Mrs. Dickson, greeting the representatives who had come from other places to meet in sympathetic conference concerning their common work and aims. Mrs. Graham, Mrs. McDougall, Mrs. Harvie, Mrs. McInnes, and Mrs. Byers, responded. A short letter of greeting from Miss Machar was also read.

SOCIETY OF THE WESTERN SECTION.

Mrs. Gregg, Toronto, read the historical sketch of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, Western Section. It was organized in 1876 by the Rev. Dr. Topp and Rev. Prof. McLaren. Its aim was to form an auxiliary to the Foreign Mission Board for the purpose of meeting the expenses incurred in our missions, to women more especially. Its organization is modelled on the Philadelphia Society of the United States, the general Society having its headquarters in Toronto, with Auxiliaries throughout the Western Section. Its annual meeting is held in April, and the monthly meeting of the Board of Management on the first Tuesday of each month. They receive, regularly, interesting letters from Canadian missionary ladies, of whom several have been and are still maintained in the field by this Society. It has now in connection with it two Presbyterian Societies, forty-nine Auxiliaries, and nine Mission Bands, the average number of members in each Auxiliary being twenty-five. It has adopted the practice of observing the Sabbath evening hour of private prayer for missions, in which it was readily joined by the sister Societies in Kingston and Quebec. Its total amount of contributions is upwards of \$6,000 during the past year.

MONTREAL WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS (UNDENOMINATIONAL).

Mrs. McDougall, of Montreal, then read the sketch of the Canadian Woman's Board of Missions, Montreal, which has just completed its tenth year as an organized society. It was organized during the visits of one of the secretaries of the Boston Society, and was at first auxiliary to it, but it became an independent Board in 1876, appealing to Canadian ladies for support. Its first Foreign Mission work was a school in Pasumalai, India, since transferred to Madura. It also assists a school at Beirut, Syria, and has for some years maintained a lady missionary in Ceylon. The other mission enterprises aided by it most uniformly have been Labrador Missions (Congregational), Missions in India and Formosa (Presbyterian), the Society for the Jews (Anglican), and the Waldensian Church. Its catholicity of working is still further shewn by aid extended to other mission work in India, Japan, Greece and Constantinople. It has a large and flourishing Juvenile Missionary Society supporting a school in Calcutta. Mrs. McDougall also read a brief sketch of the South Georgetown Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, connected with the Canadian Woman's Board of Missions, the interest and contributions having grown steadily since its formation. It assists mission work in Indore, Formosa, Labrador, and a girl's seminary in Syria.

HALIFAX SOCIETY.

Mrs. W. S. Macdonald, of Gananoque, read the sketch of the Halifax Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, organized in July, 1876, which owed its origin, in a great measure, to the earnest words of the Rev. J. F. Campbell. They have six Auxiliaries and a Mission Band—most of them aiding mission work in India. The central Society early assumed the support of Miss Blackadder in Trinidad, she being a Nova Scotian. Her work among the coolies has been most satisfactory—her school educated many children to read in English the Word that maketh wise unto salvation, and carry it into their coolie homes. The monthly meetings are held on the first Friday of each month, and are seasons of much pleasant interchange of Christian sympathy and interesting information. Mrs. Macdonald then read the report of the St. John's Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, also with that of Harbour Grace, prevented by distance from sending a representative.

SCARBORO' LADIES' ASSOCIATION.

Mrs. McGillivray, Scarborough, read a sketch of the Scarboro' Ladies' Association, existing for a good many years past. It originally aided the work of educating orphans in India, and now contributes to that of Zenana Missions generally.

INDORE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Miss Peebles, of Quebec, gave a verbal sketch of