

reading and study, sewing and fancy work; music and painting, etc.? Not many of them. In most zenanas there are a number of women, grandmothers and mothers, aunts and young girls, and very few of them are ever taught to read or sew. A few men among the Hindoos have followed their girls, when small, to learn to read when their brothers were being taught, but it is usually thought a disgrace to be able to read, as the only girls who are by common consent taught to read and write, belong to the dancing caste, and use their learning in their life of shame.

While visiting a zenana woman in Bimli a Brahmin, her granddaughter, one day came into the room, and I said to her "I have a nice caste girls' school in the town, where the little girls are learning to read nicely, wont you come and learn too?" She looked at me as if she were very much astonished, and quite insulted, and in a very injured tone enquired "Do you think that I am a dancing girl?"

The women in the Zenanas then must spend their lives in a great measure in idleness; most of them do some cooking for their husbands, brothers and themselves, but beyond this, their time is spent in idle gossip, telling stories of their gods, dressing in their jewelry and quarrelling and sleeping. Some of their lives are very bitter; especially, is this the case with the widows, and these widows may be eight, six, or even four years of age. If the betrothed one die, no matter how young the girl is, she is ever after a widow, and is the drudge of the household, and on her comes the blame for all the misfortunes that befall the family. They are not allowed to wear jewels or nice clothes, or to eat as good food as the other women, and is it any wonder that there being no hope of anything better in this life, they often commit suicide?

My sisters, we are permitted to see very little of the inner life of these Zenanas, but we know there are sins hidden away there, there are sorrows, there is suffering, there is hopelessness, such as is scarcely possible in our highly favored Christian land, and which is only truly known to Him whose eye penetrates the darkest gloom, and from whom nothing is hidden. And can we do anything to mitigate this suffering, to dispel the darkness, the moral and spiritual darkness of these Zenanas, to bring light, peace, and joy, to these sorrowing, hopeless women, our sisters in the East? We can, dear sisters, and this high, noble, holy employment is what we call *Zenana work*.

We are now permitted to enter many of these zenanas, for the men of India are waking up to see the necessity of educating their women, and they will allow us to come and teach them to read, and sew, and do other useful things that will employ their hands and minds, and with this we may teach them of the Great Burden Bearer, of Him who sympathizes with us in all our trials, of Him who loves us with an everlasting love, and of the thrice happy hope that He has prepared for those who love Him, for them as well as for us, where all sorrow and sighing are forever unknown. O sisters, is not this work worthy to engross an angel's heart, and an angel's time? And yet the Lord has not given it to angels to do. He has given it to us saved sinners; to you and to me to do, and shall we not praise Him for such a privilege? We know the joy and peace there is in casting our sins and burdens on Jesus, and shall we not hasten to tell others of this joy? We know the sweetness of the hope beyond the grave, and shall we not do all in our power to give the knowledge of such a hope to those sitting in darkness and despair? Many of us mothers know the sorrow, the crushing sorrow of laying a darling child away in the cold

and silent grave, so do these mothers in India, but with our sorrow is mingled the joy, the sweet assurance of meeting the loved one again. This they know nothing about, loved ones gone are gone forever, and they have no hope of ever meeting and clasping them again. One of the most heart rending sounds we hear in India, is the wailing for the dead, for the lost one, lost forever. They will call and call over the name of their dead, in such a hopeless despairing wail, but no answer, and to their hearts no hope of any future meeting come to temper the heart-breaking sorrow.

And this work, the bringing of life and light and salvation into the homes of thousands and thousands of our Indian sisters, can never be done except we, the women of Christian lands, do it. These women can never even hear of Christ unless we teach them, or unless native women of India, Christianized, trained and sent by us, carry the good news into their secluded homes.

Our dear sister, Miss Frith, your representative, is carrying on this work in Cocanada, and while you are supporting her with your means, oh do not forget to pray often and earnestly for her and her work. I know something of it. I know how discouraged we often feel. We go to the women with hearts full of love, and desire that they shall learn of this Jesus, who is such a fountain of joy in our lives, and we frequently meet with such utter carelessness and indifference that the tears start unbidden to our eyes. We realize there, as perhaps we cannot so fully realize here, that nothing but the Spirit of God can cause them to accept this great blessing that we carry to them; and this Spirit is given in answer to your prayers, dear sisters, as truly as in answer to ours.

A knowledge of medicine is a great help to a lady in doing zenana work. Very many of these women are sick and suffering, and although wealthy they would rather die, than allow a male doctor to enter their rooms, and many of them do die whose lives might be prolonged. I remember an instance told to me by an eminent physician, when visiting the hospitals in Madras. The previous night a zenana woman was sick and the husband sent for him; he went to the house but was not permitted to go in to see her. Her hand was put through a hole in the wall that he might feel her pulse. He knew by enquiries what was needed and saw by her pulse that she had not long to live unless he could go in to do it, he told them so, but the woman refused to allow him to enter. He waited awhile, and the woman, becoming somewhat unconscious, the husband at length told him to go in, and her life was saved; but, as he said, only to be a life of unhappiness and wretchedness. The husband would cast her off as forever disgraced, and take another wife, because the doctor had entered her room, though at his bidding. Now, said the doctor, if you had been there, you could have gone in and done for her what I did, and she would always have looked upon you as her very best friend. I know there are women in Bobbili who will always welcome me to their homes, and listen to my words, as they never would have done, if I had not been able to help them in times of sickness and suffering. I was called in to see a Brahmin woman one day, did what I could for her, and two days after her husband came saying that she was very ill, and wanted me to go and see her again. I went down in the evening, and there she was in a room nearly dark, all alone, except her infant crying in her arms, and needing help badly enough, but neither mother, sister, or aunt, would go near her, for fear of defilement. I went in and attended to her, and when she was suffering less, I asked her, why I, a stranger, would leave my own babe at home, and do for her