

## PUNDITA RAMABAI.

*From the Witness of 5 mo., 12.*

At a crowded meeting in Queen's Hall, at which Sir William Dawson presided, that gentleman, in introducing the lady lecturer, said :— His Excellency the Governor-General, on the occasion of his recent visit to this city, remarked, in answer to a reference in an address to his approaching assumption of the Government of India, that he hoped it might lead to an additional interest in Indian affairs and to greater mutual community of feelings in these widely separated portions of the Empire. In this connection he referred especially to the progress of education in India, and in particular to that of women. He farther intimated that Lady Landsdowne was preparing to take up the noble work begun by Lady Dufferin, and which I have been informed by my son, Dr. R. Dawson, who was in India last month, and visited some of the large hospitals, has taken so deep root that it will surely go on and extend under the fostering influence of her noble and kindly successor. It is a singular coincidence that on this occasion so large and representative an audience meets here to welcome a lady who has devoted herself to the promotion of this great object. That mighty empire of which it is our privilege to be subjects extends its fostering care over nations in all parts of the world and of all races of men. Like the Christian faith which it professes, its subjects are a great multitude of all nations and peoples and tongues, bound together by the common enjoyment of safety and freedom, and among whom no distinction is known except those which proceed from their own inherited beliefs and customs, or voluntary choice. In such an aggregate, whether as Christians or as British subjects, every individual and every separate people should be willing to aid in the advancement and elevation of all, and this without any undue interference with the peculiar ways of any. We have much to learn

from the old and long civilized populations of the East. They have much to learn from us. There is room for improvement on both sides, and this without obliterating harmless peculiarities or special national virtues. We can be mutually helpful under the banner of a broad and liberal Christianity and of British freedom ; and it is in this spirit, I hope, that we shall listen this evening to our honored visitor, the Pundita Ramabai.

The Pundita, clad in a single white outer garment, with red and white roses on her breast, spoke for about an hour and-a-half with perfect self-possession, ease and fluency. She was humorous, indignant and pathetic, by turns, as these alterations of feeling best emphasized her subject. Her fine powers of sarcasm were hardly appreciated at their just merit, the display being scarcely palpable enough to reach a general audience. The lady described the life of the women of India, first as wives, and then as widows ; the ignorance in which the former were purposely kept, their abject submission to [their husbands, whom they were taught to regard as gods ; the indignities heaped upon them by their mothers-in-law ; their enforced seclusion, and the absence of affection in the marital relation, marriage being a religious act, performed solely for the purpose of saving the woman through the instrumentality of the man. Educated herself by an enlightened father, she early saw and felt for the woes of her countrywomen. She recognized that the first necessity was education upon a broad non-sectarian basis. She conceived the notion of a woman's college. It was in vain to appeal for help in her own country. The men were wise. If the women were educated they might no longer think them as gods. She went to England. She was cordially received there. She made many friends ; but still she did not receive that amount of aid which she might have expected. Some very good people seemed afraid that because the school was to be of a non-sectarian