

## THE LONDON PAPERS AND INDIA'S WOMEN.

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An impression prevails that many of the stories concerning the evils of child-marriage and enforced widowhood in India are somewhat exaggerated. Upon opening a recent India paper, I read the following : " In one of the largest cities of Southern India a marriage was recently arranged between a young man of twenty-three years, suffering from white leprosy all over his body, and a bright young girl of only twelve. The girl was bargained for, and rupees five hundred were paid down in hard cash. She of course knew nothing of the arrangements made until told by her father, when she quietly submitted to her fate with a resignation characteristic of a Hindu maid."

Turning over the page, another item fell under my notice : " On Saturday last a young girl-wife, aged eight years, was admitted into the hospital suffering from burns all over her body, caused by her husband having branded her with a hot iron because she was absent from the house rather longer than usual." Still another : " A marriage has been celebrated within the week in which the bridegroom (name given) is aged 35 years, to an infant nine months old !" A marriage was recently performed between a Brahman and fourteen girls belonging to one family. The correspondent of a native paper says : " We learned that fourteen Misses Bannerji were to be given away ; I went to the spot out of curiosity. I saw the bridegroom older than a grandfather, seated on a painted wooden seat, and fourteen girls, varying in age from three to twenty-six years, seated about him in the form of a crescent. The ladies were veiled, and faces cast down, as if they were cursing their parents for shambling them in this fashion." This was not done a century ago. It was done in the latter half of this year of grace, 1890.

Instance after instance could be given, but these facts, a few of many occurring within the last few months of 1890, will surely prove that the statements have not been exaggerated. Then another item attracts our attention : " The number of persons who died by violence or accident in the Bengal Province alone this past year was between thirty and forty thousand ; more than ten per cent of these deaths were from suicide, and the greater number of suicides were among women." Poor women, with life so intolerable it cannot be borne !

For several years past the London *Times* has most ably discussed these evils in its columns. At one time a series of articles appeared giving most startling facts in regard to existing customs, and demanding a reform in the interests of humanity, and when it became known that these articles were written by a Hindu woman, who knew from bitter experience whereof she wrote, a most profound sensation was created.

In a recent issue of the paper a very able editorial appeared, headed, " The Fundamental Problem," in which it explains the origin of the social condi-