

still in this land. The neighbours know it, educated men know it, editors know it, yet there is little public protest. If it were in England and America, the whole world would know it. Why are not these facts brought forward until the whole country is stirred and reform wrought?

It looks hopeless. It has gone on so many, many years. It was here the story of the Maine came to our mind and spoke courage and hope. May be some day some social Maine will come to our help—some social tragedy deeper and more terrible than Phulmani's, or more unjust than Rakhmabai's, that will so stir men's hearts and set forces in action that will in a short time bring womanhood a glorious deliverance. Men already say, that women are not ready or fit for a change, that they are only children. And they never will be aught else in the present position. Make the change, and then better the mistakes of freedom, a thousand times over, than the cruel wrongs of oppression and degradation.

The real difficulty of these wrongs, and what stands in the way of reform is this: that these wrongs are done in the name of religion and vindicated as custom. As long as a people's gods set an example of immorality and wife-beating, these acts are never going to have the semblance of crime or wrong to most of their worshippers. As long as the Shastras give a low estimate of woman, she is not going to have much honour or reverence from most of its readers. Manu says: "For women no sacramental rite is performed with sacred texts," thus the law is settled: women who are destitute of strength, and destitute of the knowledge of Vedic texts are as impure as falsehood itself, that is a fixed rule.

Ramabai says: "Such distrust and such low estimate of woman's nature and character in general is at the root of the custom of the seclusion of women. Those who diligently and impartially read Sanscrit literature in the original, cannot fail to recognize the law giver, Manu, as one of those hundreds who have done their best to make woman hateful. . . . I can say honestly and truthfully that I have never read any sacred book in Sanscrit literature without meeting this kind of hateful sentiment about women."

In profane literature, Ramabai found the following catechism.

1. What is cruel?  
The heart of a viper.
  2. What is more cruel than that?  
The heart of a woman.
  3. What is cruellest of all?  
The heart of a sonless, penniless widow.
- Again:
1. What is the chief gate to hell?  
A woman.
  2. What bewitches like wine?  
A woman.
  3. Who is the wisest of the wise? He who has not been deceived by women who may be compared to malignant fiends.
  4. What are fetters to a man?  
Woman.
  5. What is that which cannot be trusted?  
Woman.

There are hundreds of men in India who feel these questions deeply who go as far in reform as they dare,—who would nobly stand by any measure that would be

brought up, if they were alone. But any action on their part involves forty relatives and friends who have not their convictions, but who must share the reformer's ostracism and ill-repute. We would not be hard on them. Mr. Malabari who has said and written so much on these subjects is a Parsee, and Ramabai a Christian. Both of them can date the beginnings of their interest to sad scenes witnessed in their childhood in their native place. In a sketch of Mr. Malabari the writer tells how he heard the shrieks of a little girl like Phulmani Dasi, and those shrieks still ring in his soul. Ramabai tells how in one part of her father's house when she was but nine years old, there lived a poor family. The family consisted of a man of thirty years of age, his girl wife of sixteen, and his old mother. The mother-in-law was all the worst that is implied by that name in this country, a heartless old hag, always beating, abusing and cruelly treating her daughter-in-law. One day when the girl was spinning, a monkey stole her cotton. For this carelessness the girl was abused by the mother-in-law who nagged the husband on to beat her. Ramabai adds: "I was an eye witness to all this. Her piercing cries went right to my heart, and I seem to hear them now after nearly thirty years. My childish heart was filled with indignation. I was powerless to help. But I have never forgotten that poor girl's cries for help, and I suppose it was the first call I received to enter upon the sacred duty of helping my sisters according to the little strength I had. But I never realized the extent of grief and suffering and the need of my sisters just as long as I remained in darkness, and had no love of God in me."

That is the secret. The love of God kindled a heart and life to spend and be spent for her sisters. The love of Christ constrains men to suffer for others. "Hereby we love because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren!"

The public so soon forgets and needs to be reminded, that we felt perhaps all we could do was to review these wrongs one by one, and stir men's hearts afresh to remember the wrongs of Indian womanhood, and perhaps in this way give an added impetus to prayer and effort.

Bombay Guardian.

## MURALIS.

We have in our possession a small band of black cloth on which are sewn seven cowries, the necklace of the *Murali*. Our first knowledge of this class was given us years ago in a very practical way. A servant in whom we were much interested, had a little niece of about nine years of age who had been married to a sword. We had heard all about the wedding, and how the wee child had, at last, fainted through sheer fatigue during the long festivities.

But why was she married to a sword, and whose sword was it? Slowly the truth dawned upon us. We found that the sword or dagger belonged to the god, Khandoba, and that inevitable mortal ruin awaited the child. She was a *Murali*. We were shocked, but to our remonstrances, the servant had but one reply: "It is our custom." We became possessed with a desire to save the child from the life that surely awaited her. The servant finally brought her to us, and she was put in a school. A few years later, in spite of all our efforts to