

righteousness to soften them, then the wheels of prayerful practice will smooth them down.—*Presbyterian Record*.

Extracts from Dr. Jessica Carleton's note book, Ambala, India.

April 3rd.—The goddess of small-pox is propitiated. Fine feasts are given to the Brahmins and to unmarried girls. \* \* \* \* At Sunday service came three such skeleton-like figures that I said, they belong to this starving land. Few are fully fed, but I find they are Brahmins. Two deaths in the family have required the women to fast for a year. Many die under this custom. Down country some castes are abolishing this fasting on the part of women.

Thibet, almost all of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Beloochistan, nearly all of Arabia, the greater part of Soudan, Abyssinia, and the Philippine Islands are still without a missionary. Besides this, large districts of Western China and Eastern and Central Congo Free State, large portions of South America and many of the Islands of the sea, are almost or altogether unoccupied.

In Japan, for every Christian disciple there are too *Buddhist priests* and six *Shinto temples*, and 10,000 more head priests of Buddha than the entire number of followers of Christ.

On the West African Coast the habitations of cruelty still abound. Near Lagos 200 human beings were lately offered in sacrifice. Christendom has introduced 70,000-gallons of rum to every missionary.

More than one half of those who die in Calcutta have no medical attendance whatever.

India has 21,000,000 widows and 50,000,000 Zenana prisoners. No wonder that a society of native women in Bombay has for its motto, "The world was made for woman too."

Korea has but one missionary to every 800,000 people.—*Miss. Review*.

In the above extracts we may have called what may be said to be the dark side of the work. But it is well to look at it. Well to read these, and then this "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall set over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing."

## ZENANA WORK.

Feb. 4th, 1893.

History has established the fact that the zenana system, or seclusion of women in India, was the result of the oppression of the Moslem conquerors of the Hindoos.

The word zenana is from two Persian words *zen* women, and *ana*, abode; literally "the abode of women."

The zenana is more carefully guarded in Bengal than in any other part of India. It is the most inaccessible part of the house. Very often it took all the courage I could summon,—not to enter the zenana—but to pass through the reception room of the lord and master of the house, and bear the scrutiny of the native gentlemen present. Gladly one enters the dark winding passages, even though they be filled with unpleasant

odors. By a circuitous route, bobbing one's head here and there to prevent bumping as we enter the low doorways, we arrive at last at the inner court. Off this open square, we find many small compartments. If the family be a large one, they are dark and unventilated. If there is any opening at all beside the door, it is a latticed aperture about two feet square.

In these miserable homes the women live. I used to visit the family of a native government official in Balasore. His wife was ill. Suggesting that fresh air would be better for her than medicine, the reply was, "I suppose it would, but that she cannot have."

The high caste women never go out except to visit their relatives, and this in a closely covered palanquin.

Many of the most beautiful women I have ever seen are in these zenanas.

At the Decennial Missionary Conference in Calcutta in 1882, it was my privilege to hear from the lips of the pioneer worker, Rev. J. Fordyce of the Free Church of Scotland, of the origin of zenana work. In 1852 Dr. Duff, then in Scotland, proposed that Mr. Fordyce go to India and plead from the pulpit, platform, and through the press, the cause of educating the women of the zenanas. In 1853 Mr. and Mrs. Fordyce arrived in Calcutta. The matter was laid before the Calcutta Missionary Conference. Dr. Thomas Smith then showed an article of his, published years before, proposing a plan for zenana teaching. The Conference deemed the plan impracticable. However, in 1855, Dr. Smith introduced to Mr. Fordyce several native gentlemen. Mrs. Fordyce visited the zenanas as a pioneer. No gentlemen are allowed admittance.

On February 2nd, 1855, Miss Toogood, with a native assistant, began teaching in the zenanas of Calcutta. The story of Mrs. Mullens and the slipper was of later date.

Teaching in the zenanas is now mostly done by native Christian women, under the superintendence of lady missionaries. The teachers go every day from zenana to zenana. Mats are spread on the floor for the "patha ma" or "mother of books," as the teacher is termed. Then the instruction begins in reading, writing, and the simple rules of arithmetic. This is all done in the vernacular, whatever that may be. Needlework is also taught and religious instruction given, if allowed. Now and then, one wishes to read English. I made it a rule never to teach, if the *Scripture* were not allowed. The lady missionary is on a constant round, visiting zenanas and examining the pupils to see if they improve. There are also zenana or purdah schools, where the little child wives are taught. Ten, twelve, or twenty of these little ones gather in the inner court of the zenana. Besides the secular teaching they learn texts of scripture, catechism, and sing hymns. Pictures illustrating the scripture stories are used.

I have had the zenana doors fly open to see the pictures when nothing else would avail. The last few years of my stay in India was devoted to evangelistic work in the zenanas of the high caste, as well as among the poor women, to whom we have free access on the streets and in villages. Work on the streets very often opened to us the zenanas long closed. No matter how much we may wish to enter a zenana, we dare not lift the curtain or purdah unless an invitation is given.

Just opposite to where I lived was a brick house occupied by a native gentleman in government employ.