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SKETCHES OF
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SKETCHES OF SOME DISTINGUISHED INDIAN WOMEN.

BY

MRS. E. F. CHAPMAN.

WITH A PREFACE BY

THE MARCHIONESS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA.

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PREFACE.

In her Introduction, Mrs. Chapman expresses some fear lest people in England should begin to weary of the subject of Indian women, so much having been written of late concerning them and their peculiar trials. But this little book needs no apology; and I, for one, have never read anything more interesting or more likely to be useful to the cause of female education in India than this small collection of biographies.

No one will read these *Sketches of some Distinguished Indian Women* without a feeling of intense sympathy and admiration for the subject of each one of them; or without pride and pleasure in the fact that so much talent, perseverance, and determination should be found combined with so much gentleness, and with so many truly feminine qualities. One might, perhaps, have feared that women who had had to break through the hard and fast rules of caste and

custom would have lost their more lovable characteristics in the struggle; but one rises from the perusal of each one of these biographies with as much affection for the woman as admiration for the student.

But besides the almost dramatic interest of these lives, Mrs. Chapman's little volume is full of information, and her descriptions of the childhood of her different "distinguished women," and of the circumstances of their families and the religions of their parents, are not the least admirable part of her work; while, in her Introduction, she gives a short and most instructive account of questions affecting the welfare of Indian women, and of the various efforts made to improve their condition.

I am sure this little book will be read with interest by everyone who takes it up; while to all those who have thought of Indian women, or who have worked for their welfare in any way, it will come as a message of hope and encouragement, and, as such, will give them unmitigated pleasure.

HARRIOT DUFFERIN AND AVA.

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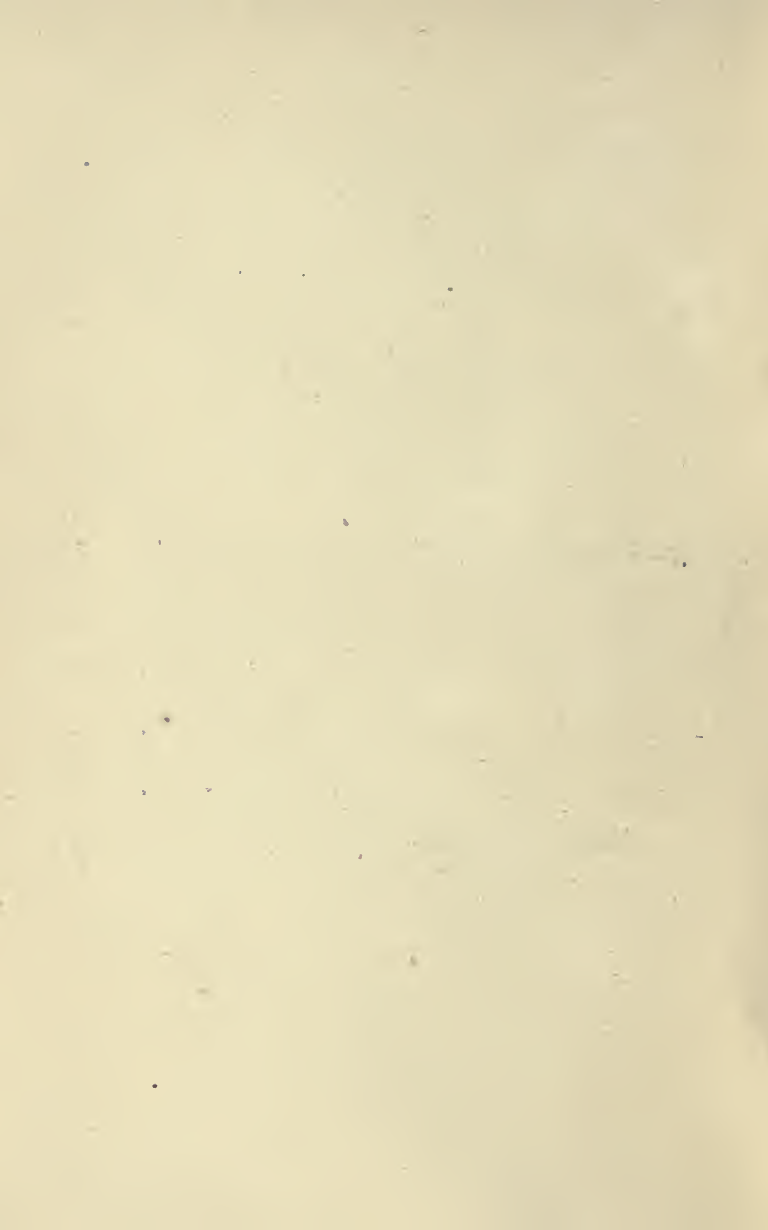

I.

INTRODUCTION.

So much has been written and spoken, during the last twenty years, on the sad condition of the women of India that people in England may be supposed to be fairly well acquainted with the general facts, and there is perhaps some danger of their becoming wearied by a too frequent repetition of the story.

Missionaries, philanthropists, educational and social reformers, have all made the condition of Indian women their theme, and have painted in dark and forcible colours the picture of their degradation, their helplessness, their ignorance, the cruel treatment and dreadful sufferings to which millions of them are exposed, and the dull, empty, colourless lives of even the happiest among them. Happily there is now a brighter side to the picture. The appeal to English sympathy and interest has not been in vain, and thanks to the energy, the courage, and the perseverance of many noble-minded

men and women, this sympathy and interest have found expression in many well-directed efforts to extend to the women of India the blessings of civilization and of education, and to secure for them at least a share of that liberty and honourable respect, which we are accustomed to consider as among the most valuable and incontestable "rights of women."

As the evils from which Indian women suffer are very various in character, so are and must be the efforts to meet and remedy them, and it may be well to glance briefly at the principal of them.

The first great blow struck in the cause of woman's welfare was the famous edict issued by Lord William Bentinck in 1829, after long and bitter opposition on the part of many members of his Government, though loyally supported by two or three, whereby the practice of "suttee" was prohibited throughout the British provinces, and the aiding or abetting of it was branded as a crime to be punished by death.

The practice of suttee, that is, the burning alive of widows on their husbands' funeral pile, was of great antiquity in India, although when and how it was introduced seems to be doubtful. It is certain that it is not sanctioned either by the Vedas, which are the most ancient of the Hindu Scriptures, nor by the Code of Manu, which contains the most precise

and elaborate rules of conduct for all classes of people, and particularly lays down how a woman is to live after the death of her husband.

It seems, however, to have been introduced by the Brahmans for some reason not easy to discover, and by lapse of time and the force of public opinion, it gathered the strength which always attaches to an immemorial custom.

M. Thevenot, a French traveller who visited India in 1669, found this practice of suttee very prevalent, and writes thus of it:—"The Indian widows have a far different fate from that of their husbands; they dare not marry again, but are obliged, *if they will not burn themselves*, to live in perpetual widowhood; but then they live wretchedly, for they incur the contempt of their family and caste as being afraid of death." After describing the ceremonies usually observed at the burning of widows, the same traveller goes on to say:—"The women are happy that the Mahometans are become the masters in the Indies, to deliver them from the tyranny of the Brahmins, who always desire their death, because these ladies being never burnt without all their ornaments of gold and silver about them, and none but they having power to touch their ashes, they fail not to pick up all that is precious among them. However, the Great Mogul and other Mahometan Princes having ordered their governors

to employ all their care in suppressing that abuse as much as lies in their power, it requires at present great solicitations and considerable presents for obtaining the permission of being burnt."

Lord W. Bentinck therefore, in prohibiting suttee, was only carrying out a reform which had previously been attempted by the Moghul Emperors. Yet, strange as it may appear, there were many people at the time (and some good and wise men among them) who held that, inasmuch as it was a religious rite, maintained and inculcated by the Brahmans, even although not sanctioned by their Scriptures, that the Government had no right to put a stop to it, the practice being on the same footing as others, less revolting though scarcely less mischievous, which were by common consent regarded as beyond the scope of Government interference. They even predicted that the new law would be resisted by force, and that it would lead to mutiny and rebellion. Happily, however, these timid counsels were over-ruled, and though it was long before the rite of suttee absolutely disappeared, still its downfall dates from that time, and no one would now dare openly to vindicate the practice, or even to maintain that it was inculcated by the Hindu religion.

Whether the lot of the Indian widow has been much improved by the reform, may at first sight

seem doubtful, for the merciful Government which has rescued her from a fiery death cannot save her from a life of oppression and misery. To be a widow, and more especially a childless or rather *sonless* widow, is to be the object not of sympathy and pity but of universal hatred and aversion. In the words of one, a Hindu widow herself, "Widowhood is throughout India regarded as the punishment for a horrible crime or crimes committed by the woman in some former existence upon earth. It is the child widow, or the childless young widow, upon whom in an especial manner falls the abuse and hatred of the community, as the greatest criminal upon whom Heaven's judgment has been pronounced." Again, "A widow is called an 'inauspicious thing'; if she appear on any occasion of rejoicing, she will bring ill-luck. If a man starting on a journey sees a widow on the road, he will postpone his departure rather than run the risk of neglecting so evil an omen." The relatives and neighbours of a young widow's husband are always ready to call her bad names, and to address her in abusive language at every opportunity. There is scarcely a day on which she is not cursed as the cause of their beloved friend's death. In short, the young widow's life is rendered intolerable in every way.

A widow cannot re-marry except at the risk of

becoming an outcast; she may not leave the home of her husband's people, she may not eat with them, she must have her hair cut off and wear wretched clothes, and she may only be employed in the lowest and most menial tasks; and when it is remembered that there were in India in 1881 no less than 669,100 widows under the age of nineteen, all of them doomed by the cruel and senseless customs of their country to lifelong seclusion and misery, the extent of the evil becomes appalling.

To meet it, many noble efforts are being made in various parts of India by the more enlightened of the natives themselves. The nobles of Rajputana have formed themselves into a league to put a stop to child marriages, and in other places strenuous efforts are being made to induce men of good character and position to come forward and marry child widows, and to encourage their re-marriage by every possible means.

Only quite lately a movement was made by the barbers in Bombay, who refused any longer to shave the heads of widows, because, as they said, they believed it was contrary to the real teaching of their religion.

Other efforts are being made to give them instruction, so that they may have some occupation to beguile their weary hours of seclusion, or even that they may be able to earn their own living, and thus

be made independent of their relations, from whose unkindness they suffer so much. At present, however, the result produced in this direction has been very small, and it is only by looking back and seeing how much has been accomplished for Indian women on other lines during the last few years that we can have courage to persevere in the face of the enormous difficulties still to be overcome. Of the scheme for helping young high-caste widows, which has been started by the Pundita Ramabai, we shall speak hereafter.

The movement for the education of Indian women was initiated by the missionaries, and to the Rev. H. Ward, a Baptist missionary, is due the honour of having first enlisted the sympathy of Englishwomen in the degraded and neglected state of their Indian sisters. It was an appeal made by Mr. Ward in 1821 to the ladies of Liverpool which led to the embarkation of Miss Cooke, afterwards Mrs. Wilson, the first lady teacher, and to the formation of the Society for Promoting Native Female Education in the East.

In 1832 eight little schools for girls were established in Calcutta, the forerunners of hundreds now scattered over all parts of the country, where religious and secular knowledge is imparted to the children by lady teachers. In course of time other schools were established by private enterprise on a

non-proselytizing basis, of which the Bethune School in Calcutta was one of the earliest and the Victoria High School at Poona one of the most advanced and successful. So rapid, indeed, has been the development of female education in India, that the Indian universities actually threw open their degrees to women before any English university did so. The University of Madras threw open its degrees to women in 1876, Calcutta followed in 1878, and it was not till 1879 that the University of London accorded them the same privilege.

But although schools for girls are among the most successful means yet tried for elevating the characters of Indian women, it must be remembered that they touch but a very small proportion of the vast number who require teaching. Among respectable families no married woman is allowed by custom in most parts of India to attend school, and as girls are generally married at eight or nine years of age their school days are cut short just as they are beginning to profit by them.

It is for this reason that the employment of lady visitors to the zenanas forms such an important part of all schemes for women's education, and especially of missionary work; and to these zenana teachers have been due the first rays of light and hope brought into many a dark home.

In 1866 Miss Mary Carpenter, after a visit to India,

undertaken chiefly for the purpose of finding out for herself what was the real condition of the women, and in what way they could best be helped, came to the conclusion that nothing was so much needed as a supply of properly trained women teachers to visit the zenanas; and it was chiefly as the result of her endeavours that the Government Normal Schools were established, and they have undoubtedly done much to spread elementary knowledge and civilizing influences.

It was also, we believe, through the visits of ladies to the zenanas that English people became aware of the terrible sufferings to which women were exposed, and the immense number of lives that were sacrificed owing to the impossibility of their obtaining proper medical attendance. The rigid seclusion to which the higher classes of women are kept, precludes them from calling in the assistance of medical men, and it became evident that only through medical women could their suffering condition be ameliorated.

Here again the missionary societies took the lead, and prepared the way for other workers, both English and American. Before long, however, it became evident that the work of a few individual ladies, or of one or two missionary societies, valuable as it was, could not hope to cope successfully with the tremendous need that existed.

In 1885 was established "The National Association

for supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India," which may be said to owe its existence to the direct initiative of Her Majesty the Queen-Empress, who personally commended the matter to the care of the Countess of Dufferin when she, before her departure for India, took leave of Her Majesty.

Lady Dufferin, after her arrival in India, lost no opportunity of studying the direction in which action could most readily be taken for ameliorating the condition of native women, and she came to the conclusion that the full requirements of the case could only be met by a bold attempt to arouse the conscience and the imagination of the public at large, and so to bind together in one common effort all parts of the empire and all classes of the community. To this end the National Association was started, with the object of the teaching and training in India of women as doctors, hospital assistants and nurses; of establishing dispensaries and cottage hospitals for women and children; of instituting female wards in hospitals; and, where possible, of founding hospitals for women, and for supplying lady doctors and nurses to visit women in their own homes.

It has now been working for five years, and has obtained a large measure of success, not the least important work that it has achieved, being that it has enlisted the interest and sympathy of all races,

classes, and creeds throughout India in a common object, and obtained once and for all a public and national recognition of the right of women to help and cure.

The great difficulty in the way of all those who are anxious to raise the condition of women in India, is the rigid seclusion in which they live.

In ancient India women seem to have occupied a far more honourable position in society than that accorded them in modern times, and they enjoyed a very considerable degree of liberty. The practice of immuring them in one particular portion of the house, and of not allowing them to see any men except their nearest relations, seems to have been introduced at the period of the Mahometan invasion, and was no doubt adopted partly as the means of shielding them from the conquerors, partly in imitation of the custom of those conquerors themselves. At the present time, however, it is the universal custom, at least among the upper classes, in nearly all parts of India, and is regarded as the absolute condition of respectability among married women of all ages.

Centuries of seclusion and of oppression have taken from them, for the most part, the very desire for liberty or of independence of any sort. They have been taught from their earliest days that a woman's hope of happiness in this world, or the next, lies in her implicit obedience to the will of her

husband or other male relatives. They have been brought up to consider a life of seclusion as not only the safest but also the only respectable one, and to look upon a breach of any of their national customs as a crime. Even when the men of the family, having imbibed something of European ideas on the subject, are willing to allow a measure of freedom to the women, these latter themselves will not unfrequently refuse the proffered boon, the older ones among them over-riding the inclinations of the younger, and denouncing in unmeasured terms the proposed innovation.

We all know, even in England, how great is the force of old-fashioned prejudice and of received notions of propriety, and how difficult it is for anyone, especially for women, to set themselves in opposition to them. Of late years, indeed, the authority of Mrs. Grundy has been frequently and successfully defied, and women can now do and say many things with impunity which fifty years ago would have brought upon them social ostracism. Bearing these facts in mind, we shall be better able to understand the difficulties that lie in the way of Indian ladies, who wish to lay aside the restraints with which a thousand years of unbroken custom has bound their sex, and to accept the education and the social freedom and independence which we are so anxious to offer them, and we shall be better able to appreciate

the courage and the force of character possessed by those who have succeeded in carrying such a design into execution. In the pages that follow will be found some particulars regarding a few of these pioneer women, women who are indeed worthy of all true honour and respect, both from their own countrywomen and from us who have for so long enjoyed the advantages they are only just beginning to taste.

It will no doubt be noticed that most of these ladies are Christians, and as a consequence far less trammelled than if they still belonged to the Hindu religion; but we should remember that the Pundita Ramabai had made her stand for freedom before she accepted Christianity, and that Miss Sorabji had to contend, if not with domestic opposition, yet with the full current of popular objection to female education.

There is one other point to which we wish to direct the reader's attention, and that is, all these remarkable women have owed very much to their parents. In every case, in a greater or less degree, the work of education and enlightenment has been begun in the previous generation, and Ramabai, Toru Dutt, and Cornelia Sorabji have all borne witness to the debt they owe to their mothers.

May we not find in this fact a real source of encouragement and ground of hope? If the result of

all the efforts hitherto made to further the cause of woman's welfare in India appears very small, and leads some people to question its value, let us not despair, but remember that patience is needed. If those who sow are not rewarded by seeing the fruit of their labours, they must comfort themselves with the reflection that fruit there will be sooner or later, and without doubt a plenteous harvest will be gathered in, in due time.

The Indian ladies whose lives are briefly sketched in the following pages, have been selected as being more or less typical instances of the results of civilizing and educational influences on different races and classes in society. They do not, however, by any means exhaust the list of those whose influence may be reckoned upon as a valuable factor in the cause of the enlightenment and regeneration of Indian society. It may, perhaps, be well to mention briefly a few more names, so as to make it evident how various and widespread are the influences which are at work; and the ultimate result of which, though it may seem slow, cannot be really doubted by any thoughtful observer.

Almost all English people who have visited Simla during the last ten years are more or less acquainted with the Kunwar Rani Harnam Singh, though as she and her husband lead a very quiet, retired life only a few really enjoy the privilege of her friendship. This

lady was born of Christian parents, her father, the Rev. Golak Nath, being a pastor of the American Presbyterian Missionary Society. She had, therefore, the advantage of a Christian bringing up, and she was for some years at a large English boarding-school for girls at the hill station of Musoorie. It is probably in part owing to this that the Kunwar Rani is both in speech, in mind, and in manner so thoroughly English; partly, too, it is no doubt due to her birth, for the natives of the Punjab are both physically and morally of a stronger and more robust type than the inhabitants of more enervating districts, and seem to have more in common with men of Anglo-Saxon race.

This lady married the Kunwar Rajah Harnam Singh, a member of the ruling family of Kapurthalla, a small principality lying between Lahore and Umballa. The name or title of "Singh" means a lion and denotes Sikh origin, the Sikhs being a warlike race in the Punjab who, about 200 years ago, under the leadership of a religious fanatic, Guru Govind, threw off the yoke of the degenerate Mahomedan rulers and formed themselves into a nation distinguished for their courage, their martial prowess, and their fierce fanaticism. Since their final conquest by the English, fifty years ago, the Sikhs have proved themselves as loyal subjects as they were previously redoubtable foes. They are almost all very

fine-looking men, and are distinguished for their manly bearing and courteous demeanour.

When the Rajah of Kapurthalla died some years ago without children, his brother Harnam Singh was his nearest relative, and it seemed as though it were possible that a Christian prince should be acknowledged as ruler of a native State. It turned out, however, that the Rajah had availed himself of a family custom, and had adopted an heir, and as this child was immediately acknowledged as Rajah by the Indian Government, the Kunwar Rajah took his place as his subject, and as the manager of his landed estates in Oude.

It is on this property, not far from Lucknow, that Harnam Singh and his wife usually reside during the cold weather, but in the summer they live at Simla, where they have a charming house built and furnished in European style, where they live in thoroughly English fashion. They have paid several visits to England, the last one during the Jubilee year, when they left their two eldest boys in London under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Gray, of the Church Missionary Society, intending that they shall go later to Eton. They did this with the full conviction that a good English education would be the greatest advantage they could give their sons, and the Kunwar Rani spoke with tears in her eyes of the parting with her children, and of her anxiety about their health,

making one realise that a mother's self-sacrificing love is the same all the world over.

The Kunwar Rani is a remarkably well read woman, and quite as able to hold her own in intellectual society as the majority of English women, while the respect and esteem in which she is held by all who know her, testify to her high moral qualities and her charm of mind and manner. Almost all her relations are Christians, her brother being a missionary of the American Presbyterian Society, and one of her sisters is married to a Bengali missionary, Mr. Chaterji.

In Calcutta there are several native ladies who, having been well educated themselves, are now devoting their time and their abilities to helping their fellow countrywomen.

Mrs. Wheeler is the widow of an English clergyman and the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Bannerji, formerly a well-known and esteemed missionary; she holds an appointment under Government as an Inspectress of girls' schools, and her work as such is very valuable.

Mrs. Chandramukhi Bose, having taken the M.A. degree in 1884 at the Calcutta University, is now the Lady Principal of the Bethune Girls' College, where she herself received her education. This school, founded about forty years ago by Mr. Drinkwater Bethune for the education of high-caste Bengali

girls, has done very much for the cause of female progress, and its pupils have of late distinguished themselves in many ways.

Mrs. Kadambini Ganguli has taken both the B.A. and M.B. degrees in Calcutta, and is now in full and very successful medical practice in that city.

The sad story of Rakhmabai is well known, and has excited general sympathy and interest in England. She was married when she was eleven years old to a man nine years older than herself, but remained in her father's house till she was sixteen, being well and carefully educated by him. On his death her husband claimed her, but as he was idle, ignorant, and vicious, she refused to live with him, on the ground that the marriage having been arranged before she was of an age to have a voice in the matter, it could not be considered as legally binding upon her. The man then brought a suit against Rakhmabai, which was tried in the High Court in Bombay, and decided in her favour. This decision caused great anger and dismay throughout India, among the party opposed to all reform of the marriage law. They collected a sum of money, and, determined to make it a test case, they lodged an appeal, on the ground that the matter was one which ought to be settled purely on the grounds of Hindu law and custom, with which the Government was bound not to interfere. After a lapse of two years the case was

re-tried, and a decision obtained ordering Rakhmabai to live with her husband within a month, or go to prison for six months. Still she refused, and determined to appeal to the Privy Council in England. The opposing party had, however, got weary of litigation, and through the mediation of some friends a compromise was effected, and the man signed an agreement that he would not force her to live with him against her will. Soon after she came to England, where she still remains, hoping, after a time, to return to her native country and endeavour to help other women.

The work of emancipating and educating the women of India, of breaking down the barriers of prejudice and social custom by which they are surrounded is, indeed, a vast one; and time, patience, and perseverance are needful for its accomplishment. There are, and must be, many failures and many disappointments, but on the other hand there are many encouragements and many proofs that those for whose benefit these efforts are being made are not ungrateful.

Were it possible to entertain a doubt on this subject, it would be dispelled by such a sight as that which was witnessed in Calcutta in December 1888, when nearly eight hundred native ladies came together at Government House, to present to Lady Dufferin an address signed by over four thousand women in

Bengal, expressing their deep regret at her departure from India, where she had proved herself such a true friend to them, and their grateful appreciation of all she had done for them.

Such a sight had never been seen before, and it was one never to be forgotten. The great throne-room in Government House was filled from one end to the other with women of all ages, most of whom had never in their lives been inside a European house, while many of them had hardly seen a European face. To all it was something strangely new and exciting to find themselves in a crowd.

Old and young were there, dark and fair; a few wearing a modified European dress, but the immense majority attired in native costume. Some in silks and satins, and cloth of gold, and rich embroideries, others in brightly coloured cottons, and a few in the plain white dress and saree that betoken widowhood. Some coquettishly drawing their veils over faces of rare beauty, others who might with advantage have made use of veils to hide the ravages of time. Some startling one by the almost classic simplicity of their drapery, and by the graceful poise of their small heads, others proclaiming their oriental character by the superabundance of barbaric jewellery which glittered on their fingers, arms, necks, noses, ears, forehead, and heavily-laden ankles.

Only a small number of them could speak English,

yet all showed themselves ready and willing to converse by signs and smiles where words were wanting. They were all overflowing with curiosity with regard to their novel surroundings, as well as animated with real gratitude to the English lady who, during her short residence of four years among them, had initiated and carried out a scheme fraught with so much benefit to them and to their children.

Such a gathering as this must do a great deal towards the breaking down of the wall of seclusion and exclusiveness with which Indian women are surrounded, and there can be but little doubt that more frequent opportunities of social intercourse with cultivated Englishwomen would prove most helpful to them. But, apart from all question of prejudice or custom, the difference of language proves an insurmountable difficulty in the way of such intercourse.

Only a very few Indian ladies can speak English, and very few English ladies, except those actually engaged in mission work, can speak any of the native languages. For it must be remembered that although those who have been some time in the country master sufficient Hindustani to be able to manage their households, yet this patois is very different from the Hindustani spoken by educated gentlemen; and this, again, is quite distinct from Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, and other languages, a knowledge of one or

other of which, varying with the district, is absolutely necessary for those who wish to converse with high-caste women in their own homes. This is so much a recognized fact that all who take up medical or mission work, are expected and obliged to learn one or more native language, according to the part of the country that is to be the scene of their labours.

An Englishwoman going to reside in France or Germany, and being anxious to cultivate friendly relations with the inhabitants of the country, would, as a matter of course, be prepared to speak the language, otherwise the projected intercourse must be of a very restricted nature. There are many Englishwomen in India who would gladly make friends with Indian ladies, but when they go to visit them they find themselves utterly at a loss as to what to say. Even if they are able to exchange with them the few preliminary civil sentences which may be learnt by heart, they are soon obliged to fall back on smiles and signs for the remainder of the interview.

This is surely a wrong state of things, and one which might easily be remedied. It is considered necessary that a well-educated girl should be able to speak French, German, and Italian, even though the probability of her ever residing in those countries for more than a few weeks is a very remote one.

Yet it never seems to strike parents whose daughters are fated to spend the best years of their life in India, that it would be to their advantage to know something of the languages of the country. The time and trouble necessary to master thoroughly any one common Indian dialect would be richly repaid by the possibilities of friendly social intercourse it would open out, and even those who may be inclined to doubt this assertion may, perhaps, be influenced by the consideration of the larger sphere of usefulness which would assuredly be theirs, if they were thus able to converse in the vernacular.

In the following pages will be found a short account of two Marathi ladies, two Bengali ladies, and one Parsi. It is to be regretted that no Mahometan lady can be included in the list. There are, indeed, in some parts of India, notably at Hyderabad, some Mahometan ladies who are desirous of sharing in the educational advantages now being offered to them, but the Mahometan community as a whole have been backward in availing themselves of educational advantages, and are even more conservative than the Hindus in their views respecting women.

A Mahometan gentleman holding a high official position in Calcutta, was lately asked whether any of the ladies of his family had learned English. He replied that they had not, and added that it was not

thought a good thing by his co-religionists to encourage them to learn English, though they were well instructed in Arabic and could read the Koran.

It is to be hoped, however, that as more liberal views respecting women gain ground generally in India, their influence may spread to the Mahometan section of the community.

It would be impossible to close this brief survey of the woman question in India without alluding to the very great sympathy and help shown to Indian women in America, and by American ladies in India. American missionaries and lady doctors are working hard in India itself, and the United States have become a second home to more than one brave Indian woman.

It was in America that Anandibai Joshee received her medical education, as well as the generous welcome and sympathy which enabled her to go through it. It was in America that the Pundita Ramabai found the help she so sorely needed to start her home for young widows, and it is to two American writers that the public in general is indebted for all they know about these two ladies. Ramabai's work on *The High-caste Hindu Widow* was written and published in America, and prefaced with an earnest and touching appeal by Dr. Rachel Bodley, who told the Pundita's story in a way to touch all hearts.

Mrs. Joshee's life has been written by Mrs. Dall,

and is published by Trübner. It should be read by all who care to know as much as possible of the story of this brave woman.

Still more recently, the United Kingdom Branch of the National Association for Supplying Medical Aid to the Women of India, which has hardly as yet received the support it is entitled to expect in England, has received a generous gift of £100 from a gentleman in New York; only one among many proofs of the genuine interest taken by Americans in the cause of Indian female welfare.

Surely these things should stir up the hearts of English men and women to emulate the generosity shown on the other side of the Atlantic, towards those who have so much greater claims on us, and are bound to us by so many ties of duty and of common interest.

II.

THE PUNDITA RAMABAI SARASVATI.

In spite of all the attacks that have been made upon it from time to time, by Buddhism, by Mahometanism, and by Christianity, in spite of the undermining influences of education and of civilization, Hinduism still reigns supreme over the minds of millions of the people of India.

The old superstitions still bear sway, and the old ceremonies and institutions are maintained in much the same form as that in which they were practised a thousand years ago. Not the least remarkable of these are the annual pilgrimages to the banks of the sacred rivers, such as the Ganges, the Nerbudda, and the Godavery, or to some particular temple or shrine of more than ordinary sanctity. To these holy places flock hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the country. The rajahs and rich men arrive in their carriages or on gorgeously caparisoned

horses, surrounded with a brilliant following; the poorer pilgrims come in "ekkas," little two-wheeled carriages, and bullock carts, while others, who cannot afford a conveyance, tramp wearily along in the dust. Men, women, and children of all ages take part in these pilgrimages and meet with a common purpose, for all alike, rich and poor, young and old, healthy and diseased, come to bathe in the purifying waters, or to offer their prayers on a spot whence they believe they gain immediate access to the gods.

Many of the pilgrims travel hundreds of miles to the appointed spot, and meet there others who have done the same; and the occasion is often taken advantage of by a Hindu father, to arrange that which is ever uppermost in his thoughts, namely, the marriage of his daughters. Although it is nowhere so stated in the Hindu Scriptures, it is a popular belief that a woman cannot obtain salvation unless she has been married. It is considered a sin and a shame for a father to have marriageable daughters on his hands, and it is therefore hardly to be wondered at that parents are not very difficult to please in the matter of suitors, and jump eagerly at any opportunity of disposing of their daughters.

Once upon a time, that is, about fifty years ago, a Hindu father set out upon one of these pilgrimages, taking with him his wife and his two little girls, aged respectively seven and nine. In the course of their

journey they halted for a day or two, to rest, in a town on the banks of the Godavery. In the early morning the father went down to bathe in the sacred river, and while he was there he perceived another pilgrim who came down to perform the same duty. After the conclusion of their ablutions, and of the devotions which followed, the two men entered into conversation.

The father inquired of the stranger, who was a striking-looking man, who he was and whence he came. Having learned that he was a Brahman, of a very high class, and that he was a widower, he without any further preliminaries offered him his daughter in marriage. The offer was accepted, and the very next day the marriage ceremonies were performed, and the little girl of nine years old was handed over to her husband, and departed with him to his distant home, never seeing her parents again. Happily for the child bride, she had fallen into good hands. Her husband was a Brahman pundit, Ananta Shastri by name, a man of good family, of high character and of great learning, and what was more remarkable, he was a man who believed in women, and held the opinion that they ought to be allowed to share with men in some at least of the advantages of education, and to cultivate their intellects and their talents. Such a doctrine was totally opposed to the received tenets of the Hindus, and

when Ananta Shastri tried to put it into practice by attempting to educate his first wife, his other female relations interfered and succeeded in thwarting him.

He was, however, determined to try the experiment again with his second wife, and as soon as he reached his home, which was in the Mangalore district in Western India, he set to work to teach Lakshmibai Sanskrit. Again his mother and the other members of his family raised their voices in protest against this breach of time-honoured custom, but the pundit was resolved not to be baffled this time.

He broke up his home, and taking his child wife with him, he journeyed away far into the jungle. There, in the middle of the forests which clothe the slopes of the Western Ghauts, near the fountain head of a sacred river, he took up his abode. A rude dwelling of branches and mats was soon constructed, and here in the forest solitudes, with the roar of the tiger and the howling of the hyæna breaking the silence of night, Ananta Shastri made his home, and devoted himself to the education of his wife. Day by day he taught her to read Sanskrit, the language in which the sacred books of the Hindus are written, and then as her intelligence developed he opened out to her the stores of Hindu poetry and philosophy; but not of religion. The sentences from the Code of

Manu are considered too sacred for women to utter, and even Ananta Shastri, with all his liberal views, could not go so far as to allow his wife to peruse the sacred texts.

As the years went on Lakshmibai became the mother of a son and two daughters, and shared with her husband the task of educating them. Although, as we have seen, Ananta Shastri held far more advanced views than the majority of his countrymen with regard to women, he was still an orthodox Hindu, and well content to comply with the social customs of his race. Accordingly, when his elder daughter, though still a mere child, was sought in marriage for a boy very little her senior, he consented, on condition that the boy bridegroom should be kept with him to be educated. To this the parents agreed, but no sooner were the marriage ceremonies concluded than they forgot their promise and took the boy back with them to their own home, where he grew up not only in ignorance but in vice and brutality as well. When the girl had developed into a beautiful and intelligent woman, the man returned to claim her as his wife. She refused to go with him and maintained her opposition till the case had been taken into court, and a verdict obtained, which, in accordance with the law of the country, condemned her to live with her husband. Sad, indeed, might have been her fate, tied for life to a man totally unworthy

of her, whom she could neither love nor esteem; but from this she was saved by an early death.

In the meantime the younger daughter, Ramabai, born in 1858, was growing up, and her education devolved chiefly upon her mother. How well that mother performed her task may be guessed when we find her daughter, now learned in the lore both of the East and West, looking back to the lessons of her childhood, and recalling in reverent affection the mother "whose sweet influence and able instruction, have been the light and guide of my life."

But now a time of sorrow came for this happy little family; their hospitality to the students and pilgrims who had visited them in their jungle home had exhausted their small means and involved them in heavy debt, to pay which they were obliged to sell their land and to wander forth, homeless, on a never-ceasing pilgrimage.

For seven long years they wandered from one holy place to another, the learned Brahman holding forth to the pilgrims who gathered round him, and obtaining from their offerings a scanty subsistence for himself and his family. Then he became totally blind, and at last he died, his devoted wife following him within a very few weeks.

Ramabai was sixteen at the time of her parents' death, and under their able instruction she had already developed into what was considered to be,

for a woman, "a prodigy of erudition." She was thoroughly conversant with Sanskrit, and learned in all the sacred books of the Hindus. Besides this, she knew Marathi, which was the language of her father's people, as well as Kanarese, Hindustani, and Bengali, acquired colloquially during their travels. For her sake her parents had defied the tyranny of custom, and had allowed her to remain unmarried. Left alone in the world with her brother, these two continued to travel. They made their way as pilgrims, often in want of the common necessaries of life, from one end of India to the other, and wherever they went they advocated the cause of female education, maintaining that all women should, before their marriage, be taught Sanskrit, and be able to read and write in their own language, whatever it might be. At last they came to Calcutta, where the young lady lecturer attracted a great deal of interest and attention, and the fame of her learning spread rapidly through the city. The pundits or learned men of Calcutta could scarcely believe the reports that reached them, and they summoned Ramabai to appear before them. She did so, and underwent a long and searching examination, passing with high honours, and receiving in recognition of her merit the distinguished title of Sarasvati.

But just when she seemed to have reached the pinnacle of earthly happiness and success, a crushing

sorrow came to her, in the death of her beloved brother, her only near relative. As he lay dying his thoughts were all for her, and he was grieved and troubled to think how unprotected she would be when he was gone. Most English brothers would have felt the same under similar circumstances; but for a Hindu it must indeed have seemed terrible to think of leaving a young unmarried sister alone, and almost friendless, in the country where women are entirely dependent upon their male relations. Happily, however, Ramabai was not left long unprotected; six months after her brother's death she married an educated Bengali gentleman named Bipin Bihari Medhavi. Like herself, he had thrown aside the old Hindu beliefs, without having embraced the purer truths of Christianity. This is the case with a very large proportion of the educated natives of India, especially among the Hindus. As they learn more and more, they get to see the folly, the absurdity, and the falseness of their old religion, and they become ashamed of the senseless, degrading teaching of the Brahmans. But as their education is purely secular there is nothing in it to lead them to adopt Christianity, and they drift either into a cloudy, undefined Theism, or into avowed and absolute unbelief. The former is, perhaps, the most common, and it seems to have been the state of mind of Ramabai and her husband. They believed in

God as the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, and they even believed that He cared for them, and could help and guide them. When grief came, they bowed in humble resignation to His Almighty will, and they thanked Him reverently for all their happiness, for both joy and sorrow came to them in their married life. First a little daughter was born to them, and instead of repining and weeping, as an orthodox Hindu mother would do, that the child was a girl and not a boy, Ramabai rejoiced and called her baby "Manorama," meaning "Hearts-joy." Only a few months later came the sorrow, when the husband was taken ill with cholera and died within a few hours.

Once more was Ramabai left unprotected to face the world, and this time in the condition of all others which is a sad one for a Hindu woman, that of a sonless widow. To add to her desolation and loneliness, she had committed the unpardonable crime of marrying out of her own caste, and thereby incurred the wrath and contempt of all her relations and friends. Her husband had been of an inferior caste to herself, but it was the fact they were not of the same caste which constituted their marriage a crime, and caused them to be shunned by all their belongings. The hardness and coldness of their relations had been hard enough to bear when they had their mutual love and help to sustain them, but now

that Ramabai was a lone widow, it added a fresh drop of bitterness to her cup of sorrow. To this time of heavy trial she thus refers in a letter to an American friend :—

"My husband being of low caste, my marriage was altogether against the country's customs, and we were despised and shunned by all our most intimate friends and relations. So much was this the case that my husband's brother would not write to him, for fear of losing caste. Under such circumstances we had no intercourse with many, and were too proud to ask any favours. I therefore resolved to do what I could to take care of myself and my baby, independent of all friends and relatives. I made this promise to my dear husband before he left me."

Only one woman was brave enough to hold out a helping hand to the lonely outcast, or to send her a message of sympathy. This was a kinswoman of her own, Anandibai Joshee, then living with her husband at Serampore, not far from Calcutta. She invited Ramabai, whom she had never yet met, to go and stay with her ; but the generous offer was proudly, though gratefully, declined. Ramabai's brave heart did not fail her, and she once more resumed her former *rôle* of lecturer, urging more than ever the emancipation of the women of her race from the degraded condition into which they had fallen, and

which she demonstrated, by quotations from the Hindu Scriptures, to be contrary to the real teaching of their religion. Leaving Calcutta, she lectured in different parts of the country, but it was in the Bombay Presidency and among the people of her own race that she found the readiest response to her efforts; and here she toiled hard, going from city to city, and stirring up the hearts of the people by her eloquence and her earnestness. In Poonah she founded a society called the Arya Mahila Somaj, having for its object the promotion of women's education and the discouragement of child marriage. In 1881 she gave most valuable evidence before the Education Commission, presided over by Dr., now Sir, W. Hunter, laying particular stress on the evils resulting from early marriages, and of the need that existed for supplying medical aid to women.

But while thus working hard for others, Ramabai was beginning to feel the need of further help and guidance for herself. Like others of her race, her longing eyes turned to England, believing that there alone she could find the instruction and the assistance she wanted. Yet it was some time before she could gather up sufficient courage to leave her native land and all her friends, and cross the sea, the "black water" of which the Hindus have a religious horror. At last, in the summer of 1883, accompanied by her child and by one friend, she took this great step,

which was to prove, in more ways than one, the turning-point in her life's history.

In the Home of the Sisters of St. Mary at Wantage, the Hindu widow found a warm and loving welcome, as well as simple, earnest instruction in the Christian faith. For some time before leaving India Ramabai had been contemplating the possibility of embracing Christianity. As we have already stated, she had long abandoned orthodox Hinduism, and found refuge in a vague form of Theism, which, however, failed to satisfy either her heart or her intellect. While living in Calcutta she received from Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen, the leader of the sect of the Brahmo-Somaj, a copy of one of his books, which consisted of moral precepts drawn from the sacred books of many religions. The larger number of these extracts were from the New Testament, and their lofty moral tone attracted Ramabai's attention. She then studied the Bible for herself, first in Sanskrit and then in English, and by degrees she became convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and after four years of anxious thought and consideration she was baptized at Wantage, in September 1883, together with her little girl.

She then set to work diligently to perfect herself in English, and when sufficiently proficient in it she went to the Ladies' College at Cheltenham, where she acted as Professor of Sanskrit, at the same

time studying mathematics, English literature, and natural science. Here she had educational advantages of the highest order, by which she did not fail to profit to the fullest extent, as well as by the daily intercourse with noble and highly-cultivated Christian women, whose sympathy and wise help she found invaluable. She remained at Cheltenham College from 1884 to 1886, and it was then her intention to return to India at once, and if she could obtain an educational appointment under Government, which it seemed almost certain she would do, to devote herself to imparting to her countrywomen some of the knowledge she had gained in England.

Before, however, she could complete her college course, a different direction was given to her plans by an invitation which she received from America to go there in order to be present on the occasion of her cousin, Mrs. Anandibai Joshee, taking her degree in medicine at Philadelphia. It was this same cousin who had given her such a friendly invitation to go to her at Serampore nearly five years before, and Ramabai felt a longing now to return her kindness by showing her interest in her success. She also had for some time had a great desire to visit America, but, on the other hand, she felt great reluctance in relinquishing her studies, and in giving up her plans for a speedy return to India.

It seemed to her, however, that the invitation to

America was a call from God, and she believed that in thus taking a long voyage in order to show her sympathy with her cousin, she would be, in truth, acting for the welfare of her countrywomen at large.

She might, perhaps, have echoed the words of the poet Wordsworth—

> Stepping westward seems to be
> A sort of heavenly destiny.

At any rate, she felt it her duty to go; though, when leaving England, she fully intended to return after a few months and to resume her studies.

Once in the New World, however, the attraction which it seems to have so strongly for the oldest races of the world, began to work upon her. American manners and society, American institutions, and still more American schools, interested her greatly. New ways of helping her countrywomen presented themselves to her mind, and the Kindergarten system, in which the training of the hand was combined with that of the head, struck her as peculiarly suited to the wants of Indian women.

A correspondent of a Chicago paper, who after the manner of the country "interviewed" Pundita Ramabai, inquired of her the reason why she devoted so much time to the study of the Kindergarten system in Philadelphia. Her reply was as follows: "I wish all the educators would understand Froebel as I do. I see in his system the true means of re-

forming the old ideas of religious and secular education. In the first place, Froebel's system enables a child to think; all his senses are trained by it, and this is just what education means to do. In the second place, an intelligent thinker will not accept or submit to any belief without taking time to think whether it is profitable, or whether it is true. Truth is the spirit of Froebel's teaching, and I think if the Kindergarten system were introduced into India, in secular and religious schools, it would give to the people not only an advanced mode of thinking, but would also dispel the illusion of many superstitious beliefs, the wrong ideas that now keep women and children in subjection. My idea is to reach the minds of the mothers. You know that nothing will attract the mother's attention so strongly as the welfare of her children, and if there are some women in our country, as I know they are to be found everywhere, who are opposed to their own progress and education, the Kindergarten system, when presented to them in its true light, will convince them that the welfare of their children depends mostly upon themselves, and if they are not as intelligent and judicious in training as they are in loving, they will do more harm than good."

With the enthusiasm and thoroughness characteristic of her nature, Ramabai was not content with studying the Kindergarten system from the outside;

in September 1886 she enrolled herself as a pupil in a training school for Kindergarten teachers, and lost no time in finding out how the various toys, or "gifts" as they are called, could best be adapted to Indian ideas. She was much struck by the superiority of the books provided in America, both for the instruction and the amusement of children. In England she had paid very little attention to the subject, but in Philadelphia she found that even the school-books were printed on excellent paper, in beautiful type, and adorned with illustrations, each of which was in its own way a triumph of art. When she saw these fascinating little books, and compared them mentally with the books supplied to Indian school-children, which are almost all, and more especially those in the vernacular, badly printed on thin discoloured paper, and destitute of any embellishment, she could not help feeling that even in a small matter like this her own people were at a great disadvantage. But this did not discourage her. She simply set to work to prepare a series of primers and lesson-books in Marathi, and to collect illustrations for them, so that they might be put into print as soon as she landed in Bombay, for they could not be printed in America, owing to the absence of Marathi type.

By the end of the year 1887 Ramabai's plans and ideas had taken a definite shape. She had come to

the conclusion that she could best help her country-women, not by taking up the higher education in high schools and colleges, but by founding native schools, where the poorest, the most helpless, and the most oppressed members of society, the young widows, could find a home and learn how to gain a respectable livelihood independent of their families. Herself a high-caste widow, she determined to devote her life, her boundless energy, and her rare intellectual gifts to the task of educating and enlightening other high-caste Hindu widows. And this she determined to do apart from all questions of religion.

Although a true Christian herself, she felt convinced that no good, but rather harm, would ensue from making the acceptance of Christianity by the young widows a condition of their admission to the Home she had determined to establish. From her own personal experience, she felt sure that many suffering and down-trodden Hindu widows, the very ones perhaps who most needed her help, would not come to such a home if they were obliged to give up their own religious customs or were compelled to study the Bible.

Missionary homes and schools already existed for those who would use them; but Ramabai's aim was to provide a refuge for those who would not, for such orthodox women as, unable to bear the cruel

hardships of a widow's lot, would commit suicide by drowning themselves in the sacred rivers, rather than lose their caste by putting themselves under the care of people who would teach them a strange religion and try to convert them.

The Pundita's idea was to open homes, where young widows of good family could take refuge without losing their caste or being disturbed in their religious belief, and where they might have entire freedom of action with regard to caste rules, such as cooking their food, &c. In these homes she proposed to train them, according to their several tastes and capacity, in such branches of work as might enable them in time to earn a respectable livelihood.

Her proposal met with considerable opposition, many good people thinking she was making a mistake in attempting to work such an institution on non-missionary lines; but she had fully considered the question, and had made up her mind on the subject.

"I admire greatly missionary work," she wrote to the editor of the *New York Evangelist*, "but that does not make me shut my eyes to the many wants of my sisters that cannot always be met by missionaries. . . . Although we cannot enforce the study of religion in our school-home for widows, we shall encourage them, if they choose, to be acquainted with the teaching of Christ. Christian literature will be placed in our school library; be-

sides, each pupil will have a copy of the Bible given her, with a request to read it for herself. And then we must leave the work of their conversion to the Holy Spirit."

The next step was to collect the necessary funds to start such a home. With this object a society, called the "Ramabai Association," was started in Boston in December 1887, and continues to work up to the present time, all its efforts being devoted to further the cause of Hindu child widows. In order to make the work better known, and to enlist public sympathy by letting people really understand the condition of Indian women, Ramabai wrote *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, a book which could hardly fail to produce a deep impression, or to awaken a wide-spread interest in her work. Here for the first time was recorded, in earnest but temperate language, the complete story of a Hindu woman's life—her position as defined by religion and by custom, her joys, her sorrows, and her needs. From her very birth a woman, we are told, is exposed to unkindness, to contempt, and to cruelty. So unwelcome is a daughter in most families, that it is not surprising that means of removing them are gladly seized, and that the practice of female infanticide, although sternly prohibited by law, yet flourishes in secret in some parts of the country. To quote the words of the Pundita herself, "The census of 1870 revealed

the curious fact that three hundred children were stolen in one year by wolves from the city of Umritzur, *all the children being girls*, and this under the very nose of the English Government."

"Childhood is the heyday of a Hindu woman's life," but as almost all girls are married before they are twelve, these happy days of freedom are few in number. With her marriage begins a life of hardships, and oppression at the hands of her mother-in-law and other female relations of her husband. If she has sons there is some hope of happiness for her; but if not, her life is made miserable by the angry reproaches of her husband, and the knowledge that he can, if he chooses, discard her and take another wife. Then, if she becomes a widow her cup of bitterness is full.

Much of all this, indeed, was known before Ramabai wrote her book, but it had never been stated so clearly, nor with such authoritative knowledge of the whole subject; and there was in some people's minds a tendency to regard the accounts given by missionaries and others as highly coloured and exaggerated. The matter of this book is highly valuable, but it is not less remarkable from its style; the strong, nervous English and the calm, masterly treatment of the subject would do credit to a highly-trained and experienced English author; and a perusal of it must add to the respect felt for the writer, as well as

to the sympathy felt for those whose cause she advocates so powerfully.

During the two years that Ramabai spent in America, she devoted her time and energy without ceasing to the work of helping her fellow-countrywomen. She visited different parts of the States, and spoke frequently at public meetings; and wherever she went her eloquence attracted a crowd of listeners, and her courage and perseverance commanded universal respect. A lady who was present at one of her meetings, wrote thus of her:—"Ramabai is strikingly beautiful; her face is a clear-cut oval; her eyes, large and dark, glow with feeling. She is a brunette, but her cheeks are full of colour. Her white widow's saree is drawn closely over her head and fastened under her chin."

Having at last collected sixty thousand rupees, a little more than four thousand pounds sterling, Ramabai considered she had sufficient to make a beginning. She therefore left America, and reached Bombay on the 1st of February 1889. She lost no time in setting to work, and on the 11th of March opened her first home for widows, which she called Shardu Sadan—the "Home of Learning."* She is

* This has since been removed to Poona, and at the present time there are sixteen young widows in residence, mostly Brahmans, and an American lady has joined the Pundita, and is assisting her in the work.

working hard, but it is up-hill work, and there are very many difficulties and discouragements to be faced. She has a large circle of sympathizers and friends; but many even of her well-wishers think that she must fail, and point to the small number of widows whom she has as yet induced to come to her as a proof of the truth of their predictions.

It may, indeed, be so, though it is early days to talk of failure; but even if this particular effort *should* fail, it will, without doubt, lead to others, and in the end success must be attained. It may not, perhaps, be granted to Ramabai to see the fruits of her labour in this world, but fruit there will assuredly be in due time, and the day will come when hundreds and thousands of Hindu women shall learn with good cause to bless her name.

III.

DR. ANANDIBAI JOSHEE.

In the story of the Pundita Ramabai, reference has been made more than once to her kinswoman Anandibai Joshee, between whom and herself there existed a tie stronger even than that of blood, the bond of a common purpose and a common aim, that aim and purpose being nothing less than the amelioration of the condition of Indian women, and their emancipation from the state of bondage to which an absurd tradition had condemned them.

Both these women belong to the Mahratta race, which has played such a remarkable part in Indian history. Lord Macaulay, in his essay on Clive and Warren Hastings, thus refers to the rise of the Mahratta power :—

" The highlands which border on the western seacoast of India, poured forth a formidable race, a race which was long the terror of every native power, and

which, after many desperate and doubtful struggles, yielded only to the fortune and genius of England.

"The original seat of that singular people was the wild range of hills which runs along the western coast of India. In the reign of Arungzebe the inbitants of those regions, led by the great Sevajee, began to descend on the possessions of their wealthier and less warlike neighbours. The energy, ferocity, and cunning of the Mahrattas soon made them the most conspicuous among the new powers which were generated by the corruption of the decaying (Moghul) monarchy. At first they were only robbers. They soon rose to the dignity of conquerors. Half the provinces of the empire were turned into Mahratta principalities."

The rapid successes of the Mahrattas were due to their warlike character, to their pluck and hardihood, all of which contrasted strangely with the indolence and effeminacy of the inhabitants of the plains. Although considerably modified by time and circumstances, their descendants still retain most of these characteristics, which are shared in some degree by the women of the race. Amongst the Mahrattas, women have always been treated with more respect, and are allowed a greater degree of freedom than is the case among most other Indian races, and as a consequence they are remarkable for their courage, their perseverance, and their strength of character.

Among the Mahratta freebooters who distinguished themselves in the earlier wars of their people, was one of the name of Joshee, who, as a reward for his services, received from his chief the grant of a large tract of land and several villages in the neighbourhood of Poonah, and here his descendants continue to reside to the present day.

It was in the old palace at Poonah, which had been the home of many generations of Joshees, that the subject of the present sketch was born in March 1865. Her father, Gunpatrao Amritaswar Joshee, was a rich landowner of Kalyan, a town lying a little to the north of Bombay, and was a man looked up to and respected by all his high-caste neighbours. He had married a kinswoman of his own, Gungabai Joshee, whose father and uncle lived in Poonah. The uncle was a distinguished physician, and it was in order to have the benefit of his advice that Gungabai Joshee had returned to her old home. Here her little daughter was born, and here she was named Jamuna, or Jumna, after the sacred river, a name which means the "daughter of the sun."

Her childhood passed happily enough between her grandfather's house at Poonah and her father's house at Kalyan, and in both she was a great favourite, showing even in her earliest days a bright and intelligent disposition. Her father was peculiarly devoted to her, and had her constantly with him. He was

one of the large class of men in India who, though they do not care to break openly with their national religious customs, yet have ceased to have any real belief in the teaching of Brahmanism, and no doubt it was from him that Jamuna learnt, while still quite young, to realise the absurdity and falseness of the worship of idols. She was of an imaginative temperament, and both she and all her family appear to have been greatly impressed by a dream she had as a child, and in which, as she believed, her famous Mahratta ancestor appeared to her, and told her that she alone of all his descendants had truly inherited his spirit and his talents, and that she was destined to achieve some great thing.

When she was but five years old, the family party was increased by a young man, another member of the Joshee clan, named Gopal Vinyak Joshee, whose coming was destined to have a great influence upon her life. He was a clerk in the Government Post Office Department, and a fairly educated man. He took a great fancy to Jamuna, and finding her most anxious to learn, he undertook to teach her Sanskrit, and continued to give her lessons for three years.

At the end of that time Gopal was transferred to the post office at Alibag, and his little pupil's grief at the prospective interruption to her studies knew no bounds. She fancied that she would never have any further opportunities of learning, and her thirst for

knowledge was insatiable. Her mother had never approved of her studies, and was not at all sorry that they should be brought to a conclusion; in fact, as she was eight years old, and according to the national custom of a marriageable age, she thought it was time to arrange a match for her.

In order to enter at all into the feelings of the little Jamuna, we must remember that in India women develop, both physically and mentally, earlier than they do in Europe. A girl of eight or nine is as much advanced intellectually as an English girl of twelve or fourteen, and at thirty she is already considered an old woman. This little girl, who with us would still have been in the nursery and only just able to read and write fairly, was in India looked upon as old enough to become a wife, and with her marriage all prospect of any further education would have come to an end.

We can hardly be surprised that one who had already shown such enthusiasm for study, should have felt dismayed at the idea of never being able to learn any more, and we can believe how delighted she must have been when her kind old grandmother smoothed her path for her by offering to go and live at Alibag, and to take Jamuna with her and make a home for her, so that she might continue her Sanskrit studies.

Thus the matter was arranged; though how all the

social difficulties were got over is not quite clear. According to some accounts Jamuna was betrothed to Gopal before leaving her father's house, and this would, of course, have made things easy for her; at any rate, whether there was any formal ceremony or not, it is evident that it was understood that they should eventually be married, and, owing to the grandmother's having to leave Alibag the following year, their marriage actually took place in March 1874, the day that the bride completed her ninth year.

According to Mahratta custom, Jamuna changed her name at her marriage, and was known henceforward as Anandibai, meaning "Joy of my heart." The wedding festivities lasted several days, and were similar to those usual among high-caste families; there were feastings, fireworks, illuminations, and a regular "tamasha," as the natives call it. Gunpatrao Joshee was, as we have already said, very fond of his daughter, and very proud of her, and he also believed firmly in the intimation of her future achievements given her in the dream. He therefore loaded her with presents, quantities of beautiful clothes, of silk, muslin, and embroideries such as are worn by the richest Indian ladies, as well as many ornaments, many of which were heirlooms in his family, and were of great value. Hindu women of all classes are very fond of ornaments, and

if they are too poor to buy gold ones they content themselves with silver ones, or even with imitation things made of gilt wire and glass, while in some parts of the country bangles of glass or brass are always worn by women of the lower classes. The ornaments of a high-caste and wealthy lady are very numerous and often of great beauty, both in design and workmanship; bangles and anklets, head ornaments and armlets, nose-rings and ear-rings, as well as rings for the fingers and toes, are indispensable, and their value, when made of pure gold and set with stones, is often prodigious. Those given by a man to his daughter on her marriage form, in fact, the principal part of her dowry.

After their marriage the young couple moved to Cutch, where Gopal had been appointed postmaster. In her new home Anandibai occupied herself in her household duties, as well as continuing her studies under her husband's superintendence, but she greatly missed the affection and sympathy of her own family, especially as at Cutch there seems to have been no one with whom she could make friends, or from whom she could look for sympathy and help. The town and district of Cutch had long had a bad name as one of the most backward and uncivilized places in British territories, and the inhabitants were for the most part a low, ignorant set of people. Female infanticide was practised to

such an extent in this town that at the time when the Joshees went to Cutch there were only thirty native-born women, in a population of nearly twelve thousand; all the rest of the women came from other places, and were sunk in indolence and vice.

Of this period of her life Anandibai always spoke sadly, as having been very unhappy, and she was greatly relieved when her husband was at last transferred to Bombay.

In 1878 her only child was born, but it lived only a few days, though the sorrowing mother was convinced that it might have been saved had it been possible for her to obtain proper medical advice, and from this time her thoughts were turned to the need for women doctors in India, and she conceived the idea of studying medicine herself, with the purpose of devoting her life and energies to alleviating the sufferings of her fellow-countrywomen.

Her husband offered no opposition to her plans, but, on the contrary, did his best to further them, and agreed with her that, if possible, they should both go to America, where she would have the best opportunities of obtaining a thorough medical education.

With this object in view, Gopal Vinyak Joshee addressed a letter to the editor of a missionary paper in America, asking for some assistance to enable him and his wife to proceed thither. Apparently his

letter did not produce a very favourable impression upon his correspondent, who, having seen a good deal of young Hindu students in America, felt it his duty to discourage others from going there, and he refused the assistance for which Gopal had asked. It happened, however, that a copy of the magazine in which this correspondence appeared, fell accidentally into the hands of Mrs. Carpenter, of Roselle, whose sympathies were stirred by the idea of the young Indian woman's craving for education, and she forthwith entered into correspondence with Anandibai. The latter, meanwhile, had been making the best of the few opportunities that came in her way to acquire fresh knowledge. In Bombay she attended a school established by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and she always spoke with affectionate regard of the lady teachers, and of the enthusiasm which had led them to come out to India and devote themselves to the work of teaching. She complained greatly of the system pursued in this school, where all the scholars were forced to read the Bible on threat of expulsion, which she considered an unwarrantable interference with the rights of conscience. In consequence, she left the school for a time, but was persuaded by her husband to return, as he argued that the teaching she obtained there was too valuable to be refused on any but the most serious grounds. She frequently,

in after years, referred to her experiences at the school, and maintained that the tone adopted by the missionaries towards the religion of their pupils was far too contemptuous, and really wanting in consideration for their feelings. "How absurd it would be," she wrote, "if I were to say to a Christian, 'All that you believe is nonsense, but all that I believe is just and true.'"

That this opinion is held even by Christians, is evident by the following extract from the report of a conversation between the Pundita Ramabai and an American friend, reported in the *Daily Inter-Ocean* of Chicago, of Decemher 10th, 1887 :—

"I understand you to say that it is your idea that, in teaching Christianity, the wisest way for the missionary to begin is not by showing them that Christ despised the ancestral faith of the Hindus, but by pointing out all the truth which the Hindu religion has in common with Christianity, and thus leading the mind of the Hindu from his own belief, which has in it much of good, as far as morality is concerned, and many spiritual truths as well, up to the highest revelation, which is that of Christ?"

"*Ramabai.*—That is just what I think, and I can prove by the New Testament that it is the wiser way to do, for did not St. Paul, when he stood on Mars Hill in Athens, say: 'As I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscrip-

tion, To the unknown God: whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you'? I must say that those missionaries who begin to denounce in strong language, good and bad equally, whatever is said in Hindu religion, gain nothing by it, because they themselves are ignorant of what is said in the religion of this people whom they go to teach, and hence arouse the indignation of the people, who have great love and reverence for their ancestors and their ancestral faith."

This, indeed, is what seems to have happened in the case of Anandibai Joshee, and though in later years she was fortunate enough to meet with many missionaries whose zeal was more wisely tempered by discretion, and from whom she received valuable assistance, yet her experience in Bombay was never forgotten, and was referred to with mingled pain and anger.

In 1881 Gopal Joshee was transferred to the Post Office in Calcutta; but here neither he nor his wife were at all happy or comfortable. The damp, enervating climate is very depressing to most people who are not natives of Bengal, and both the Joshees suffered in health, while it was with the greatest difficulty that they could procure the kinds of food to which they were accustomed. The social manners and customs also were quite different from their Mahratta ones, and when Anandibai walked about in the

town with her husband, unveiled, she was rudely stared at by the passers-by, and sometimes even exposed to open insult.

There was some departmental trouble, too, in regard to the non-delivery of an important official letter, and this probably was the reason that before long they were moved, first to Barrackpore and then to Serampore, small stations a few miles distant from Calcutta, the one on the left and the other on the right bank of the river Hooghly.

It was during their residence at Serampore that the invitation already referred to was sent to the recently widowed Ramabai, and, for the reasons given, was gratefully declined.

During all this time Anandibai Joshee had been in constant correspondence with Mrs. Carpenter, who was doing everything in her power to arrange for her visit to America, but there were many difficulties in the way. It was decided that it would be useless for her husband to go to the States, and that he would help her best by remaining in India and following his profession. It was, therefore, necessary to secure an escort for her, and money also was needed, both for the expenses of her journey and for her support during her residence in America.

At last matters were all arranged. Gopal Joshee consented to her leaving him. An escort was found through some missionary friends, and a sum suffi-

cient for her immediate needs was raised. A subscription was got up for her in Calcutta by the kindness of Mr. James, the Postmaster-General, and some of the leading English people in Calcutta, and to add to her funds she sold some of the jewels her father had given her.

With a brave though aching heart she sailed from Calcutta in April 1883 for England, whence, after a very short stay, she went on to America, arriving in New York early in June, being the first high-caste Hindu woman to visit the United States.

She was most warmly welcomed by Mrs. Carpenter, who took her to her own house in Roselle, New Jersey, where she was treated with the greatest kindness and consideration. She always said that the months spent under this lady's hospitable roof were among the happiest of her life. Her pleasant manners, her readiness to be pleased, her modesty and light-heartedness, made a favourable impression on all who came in contact with her, and it was impossible not to feel respect for one who had the courage to take such an unusual step, and who, at the same time, was endeavouring faithfully to carry out the duties enjoined upon her by her national traditions.

A very touching picture of her way of life is given by her biographer, Mrs. Dall, who tells us how careful she was to observe the national rites, and of the

way in which, every morning, she repeated the precepts teaching a wife's duties, and marked her forehead with the spot of paint which showed she was a married woman. Before leaving India she had told her own people, "I will go to America as a Hindu, and come back and live among my people as a Hindu." And this brave resolve she carried out unflinchingly. She wore her native dress, refused to eat anything but the vegetable food allowed by her religion, and endeavoured in every way that was possible, during the whole period of her residence in the States, to conform to the customs of her people.

In the autumn of 1883 she commenced her medical studies in earnest. She had been offered a scholarship in the Homœopathic College in New York, but after much consideration it was decided that the best thing she could do was to enter on the regular four-years' course at the Women's Medical College in Philadelphia. Mrs. Carpenter took her to Philadelphia and introduced her to Dr. Rachel Bodley, the Dean of the College, who at once took a warm interest in her, and became one of her most valued friends. Dr. Bodley held a reception for her in her own house, when she excited great interest and curiosity by her native dress and jewellery, and everyone felt drawn to the young stranger, who matriculated at the College in October of that year.

From that date she devoted herself, with the steadiness and perseverance for which she was remarkable, to her medical work, throwing herself into it with enthusiasm, and working sometimes as much as fifteen or sixteen hours a day. It was not easy work at all, and the severe application, as well as the trying climate, told much upon her health. In February 1884 she nearly succumbed to a severe attack of diphtheria, and during the whole remainder of her stay in America, she suffered constantly from headaches or from colds on her chest.

During the spring of 1884, Mrs. Joshee, as she was now usually called, was asked to deliver a lecture before one of the missionary societies on the subject of "child marriage," and surprised and disappointed her audience by speaking in terms of approval of the custom. Her lecture raised quite a storm of controversy, and no doubt alienated from her the sympathy of a good many people, who could not understand the position she took up on the subject. If they had been better acquainted with the history of her own life, and with the traditions among which she had grown up, they might perhaps have been able to judge her more leniently, and might have felt able to offer her their sympathy in what she had been able to accomplish, while at the same time regretting that her emancipation from the thraldom of custom was not more complete.

In 1885 Gopal Joshee arrived in America, but his coming only proved what her friends had feared it might do, a source of embarrassment to his wife. He began talking and writing in a quite unaccountable manner, speaking slightingly of women and their capacity for education, and, at the same time, showing himself quite ready to take every advantage of his wife's exertions, and of the kindness which her friends showed him for her sake. His presence added to his wife's difficulties in every way, and his conduct and conversation were calculated to strengthen the belief already held by many people, that the *average* Hindu is not likely to be benefited by visiting Europe or America, and that it will take years of education and experience to counteract the effects, on the minds of Indian men, of the belief in their absolute superiority to women, in which they have been trained for so many generations.

In March 1886, Anandibai Joshee took her degree as Doctor of Medicine in Philadelphia. Eye-witnesses describe the scene as a most striking one. The brave Hindu woman was surrounded by many friends and sympathisers, conspicuous among whom was Ramabai, who had come over purposely from England in order to be present on this occasion, which was the first on which the degree of Doctor of Medicine had ever been conferred on a Hindu woman. It seemed, indeed, that a brilliant and useful

career must now lie before this brave, patient woman, and the compliments and congratulations and presents which were showered upon her, seemed only as the forerunners of many assured successes. But this was not to be. Mrs. Joshee's health was already very delicate, and during the visits that she paid with her husband in the course of the summer, she caught several severe chills, which fastened on her lungs. It had been her intention to have passed some time in practical work in the hospitals, especially the New England Hospital for Women and Children, and the Blockley Hospital at New York, but a new direction was given to her plans, by the offer of an appointment as resident physician to the female ward of the new Albert Edward Hospital, established at Kohlapur. The salary proposed was Rs. 300 a month, rising to Rs. 400 or Rs. 500, and she was to be allowed to practise privately in her spare time. Many considerations induced Mrs. Joshee to accept this offer. She longed to be at work, and to use her knowledge without delay for the benefit of her countrywomen; her health she felt was failing, and she fancied that perhaps a return to her native land might restore it, and to add to these, there were family reasons which seemed to point to the advisability of a speedy return to India. Mr. Joshee had resigned his appointment in the Post Office Department, and it was necessary that some-

one should undertake the care and support of his mother and other near relatives.

Before, however, the final arrangements could be made, Mrs. Joshee was taken very seriously ill, and it became evident that she was suffering from consumption, and that even with the greatest care her life could not be prolonged many months. It was with aching hearts that her American friends bade her good-bye, feeling that they would never see her again. She and her husband sailed from New York in October, and after a painful voyage reached Bombay, where she was received with much respect by people of all classes.

The second Annual Report of the National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India contained the following allusion to her :—

" The committee take the opportunity of tendering their congratulations to Mrs. Anandibai Joshee for having so successfully taken her degree at the Yeomans College at Philadelphia, in the United States of America. Mrs. Anandibai Joshee, who is a Maratha Brahmin lady, and a native of Kallian, proceeded to America with her husband, matriculated in October 1883, and entered upon the three years course of medical instruction. After a few months stay at the college she obtained a scholarship of 400 dollars. In March 1885 she presented herself for

final examination in the fundamental branches, anatomy, physiology, and chemistry, and passed these examinations creditably, ranking eighth in her class, which consisted of forty-two ladies. She has since taken her degree, and has now returned to her native country."

The above lines had hardly appeared in print before Mrs. Joshee's career, which had given promise of so much usefulness, was brought sadly to a close.

On her arrival in Bombay she had been received with marked honour and respect, even by the Brahmans and Pundits, who it was expected would have denounced her breach of caste rules in crossing the "black water," and it must have been some consolation to her, when she felt her strength and life ebbing away, to know that her countrymen appreciated the sacrifices she had made. She remained a short time in Bombay and its neighbourhood, in order to get the best medical advice, but the doctors there failed to give her substantial relief, and it was determined to move her to Poonah, in the hope that in her native air she would revive.

There, in the house in which she had been born, Anandibai Joshee passed the last few weeks of her life. She was surrounded by all nearest and dearest to her—her mother, brother, sister, and grandmother—and everything that affection could suggest to

soothe her sufferings was given her. Daily inquiries were made after her health by all the principal people in the city, and her husband spared neither time nor money in endeavouring to perform the customary religious offices. Although they had both lost caste by their visit to America, their offence was not beyond redemption, as it would have been had they, for instance, married out of their caste, and it was possible to obtain forgiveness and restoration. For this purpose Gopal Joshee offered sacrifices, performed penance and paid a large sum of money, in the hope that the vengeance of Heaven might be averted and her life prolonged, or, at any rate, that she might be restored to full caste privileges and entitled to the last rites, without which Hindus believe that future happiness cannot be obtained.

Day by day Anandibai Joshee wasted away; her sufferings were terrible, but were borne without a word either of complaint or impatience, and with a cheerfulness that astonished those around her. It was on the 27th February 1887 that the end came, and that the brave, patient spirit of the young Hindu woman was released from her suffering body. Her death caused a feeling of profound sorrow, not only in her own family circle, but throughout her native city, as well as in the far-off country where she had made so many true friends. According to Hindu

custom, after death her body was bathed and anointed, and then arrayed in her most beautiful garments and ornaments; it was publicly cremated, the funeral pile being lighted from the sacred fire, and all the ceremonials of an orthodox Hindu funeral were observed by the priests. In one particular only was the ordinary custom departed from; for her ashes, instead of being consigned to the Ganges or some other sacred river, were collected by her husband, and sent over to America to be buried there.

Thus closes the life-story of Anandibai Joshee. Almost her last words, as she knew that the work for which she had been preparing herself could never be hers, were, "I have done all that I could do." How few of those blessed with fuller light and more ample advantages could honestly say the same! Yes, indeed, "she hath done what she could"; and are we not justified in believing that the Lord, who in these very words commended the humble self-sacrifice of His Jewish follower eighteen hundred years ago, will accept and acknowledge the efforts of this brave Hindu woman, even although in this life she did not attain to the blessedness of knowing Him as the great Physician of souls?

She was not quite twenty-two when she died; and yet in her short life how much she had accomplished.

She sacrificed her life in the endeavour to bring help and relief to her suffering fellow countrywomen, and who shall dare to say that her sacrifice was in vain, or that her early death may not stir others up to follow in her footsteps, and so a rich harvest may spring from the seed she sowed in love and hope and patience?

IV.

THE MAHARANI OF KUCH BEHAR.

Among the many illustrious visitors who came to England during the summer of 1887, to pay their respects to our gracious Queen on the occasion of her Jubilee, there were few who were received with more marked attention by Her Majesty, or who attracted more general interest and sympathy, than the Maharajah and Maharani of Kuch Behar.

That these attentions were paid to them on personal rather than on political grounds cannot be doubted, for among the native Princes of India the Maharajah of Kuch Behar holds but a very subordinate position.

The fact that for the first time a ruling Indian Prince had brought his wife to England and introduced her into general society, was sufficient to arouse genuine sympathy among those who understood how great were the difficulties that lay in the

way of such a step, and what an important influence it might possibly exert on the future of Indian women.

An additional interest was felt in the Mahârani as being the daughter of Keshub Chunder Sen, who had visited England some years previously, and who had been known and respected by a large circle of cultivated Englishmen.

The story of the Maharani's life is so closely connected with the most remarkable social and religious movement that has taken place in India in modern times, that it will be necessary to glance briefly at the history of that movement.

Ever since the days when the first great tide of Aryan invasion swept down from the highlands of Central Asia, and drove the aboriginal inhabitants to the hill fastnesses or the forest depths, the plains of India have from time to time been the battle-ground of opposing civilizations, though in almost every case the ultimate victory has rested with the Brahmans. If, on the one hand, the influence of Greek thought may be faintly traced in Buddhism, there can, on the other, be no doubt that the Greek philosophers owed not a little to India; and though the Mahometans established their empire in the very heart of Hindoostan, their attempts at proselytism were hardly successful, and the Mussalmans of India have borrowed far more from the Hindus than these latter have from their monotheistic conquerors

Once again a great contest is being waged between two civilizations, between two schools of thought, two philosophies of life and conduct. Here once more have met two branches of the great Aryan race, one still in the vigour of manhood, full of life and abounding energy, furnished with all the newest discoveries of science and philosophy; the other showing signs of the decadence of age, and strong with the strength of immutability rather than of life; and it seems hardly possible that in such a contest the victory should again rest with the Brahmans.

The religion of the Hindus can boast an antiquity little less, perhaps, than that of ancient Egypt, and it can lay claim to a conservatism unequalled in any other part of the world. The unchanging custom of centuries has crystallized into social forms, which may be destroyed, but can scarcely be modified, and so closely bound up are the religious and social systems, that an attempt to alter the one must inevitably involve an attack upon the other.

The young Hindu who has studied under European teachers, and imbibed something of Western ideas, finds his belief in the religion of his fathers assailed from every point. Physical science pronounces many portions of the old-world system to be both grotesque and impossible. History lets in a flood of light, which reveals the hollowness and poverty of much that had previously appeared noble and worthy of

reverence. The purer morality of the West makes the student blush with shame at much that claims divine sanction: a more robust philosophy sets him free from the trammels of old-world ideas. He finds himself drifting into a general attitude of doubt, if not of scepticism: his faith in the religion of the Brahmans is destroyed before he is prepared to accept in its place the religion of Christ.

But the Indian mind is naturally a religious one, to which free-thought or atheism in its hopeless selfishness is repugnant, and it clings to the hope that, when stripped of the superstitious and degrading accretions which have gathered round it in the course of centuries, the religion of Brahma may yet be found to contain something capable of satisfying the heart without offending the intellect.

Such a *via media* many deem they have found in the system of the Brahmo-Somaj. The word Somaj means a society or association, so that it corresponds very nearly to our word "Church," and its members frequently speak of it as the Theistic Church of India. This society or sect owes its origin to Rajah Rammohun Roy, who founded it about the year 1828, with the object of reviving the primitive Hindu religion. According to Professor Monier Williams, "it ushered in the dawn of the greatest change that has ever passed over the Hindu mind. A new phase of the Hindu religion then took definite shape, which

differed essentially from every other that had preceded it. No other reformation has resulted in the same way from the influence of European education and Christian ideas."

The following account of the movement was given by Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, in one of his lectures in England. "At first this Brahmo-Somaj, to which I belong, was simply a Church for the worship of the One True God, according to the doctrines and ritual inculcated in the earliest Hindu Scriptures. The members of the Brahmo-Somaj in its infancy were simply revivalists, if I may so say. Their object was to restore Hinduism to its primitive state of purity, to do away with idolatry and superstition, and caste if possible, and to declare once more throughout the length and breadth of India the pure monotheistic worship prescribed in the Vedas, as opposed to the idolatrous teaching of the later Hindu Scriptures. The founder of the Brahmo-Somaj had for his sole object the restoration of the primitive form of Hindu Monotheism. By numerous quotations from the Hindu Scriptures he succeeded in convincing a large number of his misguided countrymen that true Hinduism was not to be found in the later Puranas, which taught idolatry and superstition, but in the earlier books, which taught the worship of the One True God."

By degrees, "after careful, honest, and dis-

passionate inquiries," it was discovered that even the Vedas themselves could not be regarded as containing nothing but pure truth, as they inculcated some of the worst forms of nature-worship and some absurd doctrines and ritual; so that the members of the Brahmo-Somaj were forced to abandon the position of a return to primitive doctrine, and to take up that of pure Theists, acknowledging no infallible teacher, no revealed standard of life or doctrine. Naturally, divisions soon made themselves apparent in a society thus constituted, and the Brahmo-Somaj is now broken up into three sects, of which, however, the most important is that which, under the title of the "New Dispensation," maintains the principles and teaching of its founder, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, who is, without doubt, the most remarkable figure in the history of modern Hinduism.

He belonged to a very good high-caste Brahman family in Bengal, the members of which had been for several generations men of high character and intellectual culture. His grandfather, Ram Comal Sen, was the intimate friend of the well-known Orientalist and Sanskrit scholar, Horace Hayman Wilson, and was respected and esteemed by a large number of English gentlemen. Keshub Chunder Sen himself was born in 1838, and, being early left an orphan, was sent by his uncle to an English school, and afterwards completed his education at

the Albert College in Calcutta. Early in his career he had learnt to reject the worship of idols, and had by degrees come to believe in one God; he then joined the Brahmo-Somaj, and before long became the head of a reforming party in that society. It seemed to him that even the Vedas contained teaching which it was impossible to accept as of divine authority, and he finally decided to reject them and to maintain the theory that no special revelation was needed to teach men about God, and that as a consequence no such revelation had ever been made. He adopted the doctrine of a divine guidance of the faithful believing soul, and held that prayer, meditation and spiritual worship were necessary to the maintenance of the spiritual life; while gentleness, self-denial and purity were requisite in order to bring men into union with the Divine Spirit.

Like other theistic teachers, he was ready to acknowledge the beauty of the life and example of Christ, and the moral value of His teaching, but he regarded Him as a mere man. Speaking of the Bible, Keshub Chunder Sen said, "However proud we may be of our own religious books, however great the value which we may attach to those ancient books inculcating the principles of pure theism bequeathed by our fathers as a precious legacy, it is a fact which must be admitted by all candid men, that India cannot do without the Bible. India must read

the Bible, for there are certain things in the Gospel of Christ which are of great importance to my country in the present transition stage through which it is passing."

But the reformer did not stop here. He realised that what was needed for the regeneration of India was not merely a return to a purer and a more elevating faith, but likewise a deliverance from the degrading social customs which kept the whole, or at any rate a large portion of the community bound hand and foot. The discouragement of polygamy, the education and enfranchisement of women, the overthrow of caste, and the abolition of child-marriage, were some of the reforms which seemed to him the most imperative, and to these he devoted all his energies with remarkable success. In 1870 Keshub Chunder visited England, where he was received with much kindness. He made a tour through the country, speaking and lecturing on various religious and social subjects, and awakening a great deal of interest and sympathy among a large class of people, and the Queen granted him a private interview.

In 1872 an Act was passed by the Government of India legalizing marriages between persons who did not belong to any of the recognized religions of the country, and who did not wish to be married either by Christian, Mahometan, or Hindu rites. This measure was passed mainly in the interests of the

Brahmoists, and of others who, like them, had rejected idolatry without accepting Christianity. Persons availing themselves of its provisions were required to have attained years of discretion, the age being fixed at eighteen for men and sixteen for women; and they were forbidden to indulge in polygamy. The law thus dealt a serious blow at two of the worst social evils, and was hailed by all the enlightened members of the Hindu community as a great step in advance, for which they were mainly indebted to the unwearied efforts of Keshub Chunder Sen.

Some years later, however, a great shock was given to the feelings of the members of the Brahmo-Somaj, by the announcement that their leader's eldest daughter was about to be married to the young Rajah of Kuch Behar. This prince was the head of one of the most ancient royal families in Bengal, which, however, had the disadvantage of belonging to a low caste, the Sankoche Kettry caste. He had succeeded his father as Rajah when only ten months old, and during his minority his State had been governed by the British Government, who had also superintended his education. His early training was conducted under an English tutor at Patnâ, and he subsequently attended lectures on Law at the Presidency College in Calcutta; but no attempt was made to interfere with his religious belief, and at

sixteen years of age he was supposed to be still attached to the faith of his fathers, that is, to Hinduism in its modern corrupted form.

The Indian Government were desirous that, before taking the management of his territories into his own hands, he should visit England. But it was considered necessary by all his relations that before starting on such a long and perilous journey he should provide himself with a wife ; and it appeared to his guardians that it would be advisable, both in his own interests and in those of his subjects, to bring about a marriage between him and the daughter of Keshub Chunder Sen. The young lady in question was not quite fourteen years of age, but she had been carefully educated, and it might reasonably be hoped that her influence and that of her father would be most valuable in determining the future development of the young prince and his people. That the Brahmo leader was only a private gentleman, while his proposed son-in-law was a sovereign prince, was no obstacle in the way, for the former was a man of very high caste, and it would be an act of condescension on his part, to allow his daughter to marry the Rajah, to which his well-known opinions on the subject of caste would be likely to dispose him favourably.

But although to disinterested spectators the proposed match seemed to offer advantages on both

sides, it raised a storm of opposition among the adherents of the Brahmo-Somaj. The principles they professed with regard to caste prevented any objections being raised on that ground, but they vehemently opposed the project, both on the score of the youth of the contracting parties and also on that of the religion of the bridegroom.

With regard to the latter objection, Keshub Chunder Sen and his friends maintained that the Maharajah was in heart already a Brahmoist, and that his youth, and the influence of his mother and his grandmother, had alone prevented him from joining the Theists, and that by this marriage he would be firmly attached to the purer faith professed by his wife.

The question of age was a more serious one, as it could not be denied that the marriage would involve a virtual surrender of the principle for which Keshub Chunder had so strenuously contended, and would be a serious bar to further progress in this direction. It was, moreover, pointed out that, in consequence of the bride and bridegroom not having attained the legal age, the marriage could not be celebrated according to Brahmo rites, as authorized by the Act of 1872; that it would, in fact, be a purely Hindu marriage, celebrated with all the idolatrous and superstitious ceremonies commonly in use; and, further, that the bride would be deprived of the pro-

tection which would have been afforded to her had she been married under the new law. Polygamy was an immemorial custom in the Kuch Behar family, and it was argued, with some show of reason, that there would be no guarantee that the Maharajah might not at some future time choose to follow the fashion of his race.

It would be neither useful nor interesting to follow into further detail the controversy on this subject, or the mutual recriminations of the two factions. Suffice it to say that the match was finally decided upon, and in March 1878 Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, accompanied by his brother and other members of his family, escorted his daughter to Kuch Behar, where the marriage was celebrated according to Hindu rites. A protest had indeed been entered by the bride's friends against the introduction of idolatrous practices, but in spite of it some of the figures and other objects usually worshipped on such occasions were placed in the courtyard where the ceremony took place, and the "Homa," or fire sacrifice, was performed in the presence of the bridegroom after the bride had withdrawn to her own apartments.

This latter ceremony, which forms an important feature at orthodox Hindu weddings, is as follows. The bride and bridegroom sit side by side before an altar on which a fire is kindled, and "ghee," or

clarified butter, is burnt as an offering to the gods. Keshub Chunder Sen was greatly annoyed at the disregard which had been paid to his wishes in this matter, and he was further mortified at not being allowed to perform the portion of the ceremony commonly allotted to the bride's father, on the ground that he had lost caste by his visit to Europe. So far, indeed, there seemed some reason to fear that the prognostications of those who had opposed the marriage were likely to be realised, and that instead of redounding to the honour and glory of the Brahmo-Somaj, the alliance would bring both its principles and its leader into disrepute. Happily, however, the young pair were not allowed to remain subject to the retrograde influence of the palace. Very shortly after the marriage the Maharajah set out on his journey to England, and his wife returned to her father's house in Calcutta, where her education was continued with the object of preparing her in every way for the important position she was to fill.

The dissensions in the Brahmo-Somaj still continued; the party which had opposed the marriage deposed Keshub Chunder Sen from his office as minister, and when they found that public opinion was too strong for them, they seceded and set up a new sect for themselves, calling themselves the Pro-Progressive Brahmoists.

Keshub Chunder himself never quite recovered

his former popularity among his countrymen, but he continued to enjoy the confidence and esteem of his English friends; and when, after his death, some few years later, a public meeting was called for the purpose of getting up a memorial to him, it was attended by such a large number of influential persons of all classes as testified to the sincere and widespread respect in which he was held.

In the meanwhile, the Maharajah had returned from Europe and claimed his wife, and having attained his majority in 1883, he took the administration of his affairs into his own hands.

The State of Kuch Behar is situated in the north-eastern corner of Bengal. It is surrounded on all sides by British territory, and occupies an area of about thirteen hundred square miles; that is, about the size of Kent, or Hampshire. It is a well-watered plain, and the soil is fertile and well cultivated, the general green of the fields being diversified here and there by graceful clumps of bamboo or by the orchards which surround the homestead of some substantial farmer. The country is thickly populated, but there is only one town, and hardly any villages, the dwellings of the inhabitants being scattered over the fields or grouped round the residence of some well-to-do family. In former times a different state of things must have prevailed, for the ruins are still to be seen of two extensive walled cities; but they are

of very ancient date, and must have belonged to a period long anterior to that of the present dynasty.

Agriculture forms the occupation of almost the entire population, rice, grain, and pulse of various kinds being grown for food, and tobacco and jute for exportation. The whole of the land belongs to the Maharajah, the larger farmers being his tenants and sub-letting the land to smaller cultivators, and there are strict laws to prevent their exacting exhorbitant rents. The Maharajah is virtually independent within his own dominions, but he has an English official adviser; and were any very grievous abuses to arise in his administration, the Indian Government would doubtless interfere to put a stop to them, as it has done in so many other cases. Under the rule of the present Prince, however, there is no reason to fear such a complication, for the good effect of his English education is shown in the numerous improvements and reforms which he has introduced in the administration of justice, the development of public works, and the encouragement of education.

The Maharajah himself is an excellent specimen of an educated Hindu gentleman, and exemplifies the ease with which a Bengali assimilates English customs and ideas. On State occasions, when he wears his native dress, adorned with pearls and diamonds of priceless

value, he looks the very picture of an Eastern potentate, but otherwise he dresses like any ordinary English gentleman, and there is nothing in his speech or manner to betray that he is not one by birth as by education. He has, moreover, imbibed the true English love for sport and games of all kinds, and he is not only a first-rate shot and polo-player, but also an excellent dancer and an accomplished billiard-player.

Such, then, was the country, and such the Prince to whom Keshub Chunder Sen gave his daughter.

The Maharani Sunity Devi was born in 1864, being not quite fourteen at the time of her marriage, and still almost a child in years when she entered upon the duties of an exceptionally difficult position.

"The fierce light which beats upon a throne" often proves a great obstacle in the way of change and reform. What is done and said by people in high positions is known and commented on by everyone, and there are none more trammelled by custom, tradition and etiquette than sovereigns and princes. It would have been comparatively easy for the daughter of Keshub Chunder Sen, as a private lady, to set at naught the traditional prejudices which condemn Hindu women to lives of seclusion and idleness, but it was a very different thing for the Maharani of Kuch Behar to attempt the same task.

Although her husband had adopted many English ways and ideas, the traditions of his family were very strict, and public opinion in his dominions was by no means prepared to welcome such an entire revolution in the whole theory of social life, as was implied in the enfranchisement of women; while there were plenty of critics ready to find fault with each fresh step in the path of reform.

The Maharani herself was naturally of a somewhat shy and yielding nature, and but little inclined to set herself in opposition to the views of those by whom she was surrounded. For some years, therefore, it seemed quite uncertain whether she would make an effort to break through the barriers of custom and go into English society, or whether she would succumb to the influences constantly brought to bear upon her and withdraw more and more into seclusion.

When it was proposed that the Maharajah should pay a second visit to England during the Jubilee year, a question naturally arose as to whether the Maharani should or should not accompany him. The conservative party, which included many of her own relatives, exerted their utmost influence to deter the Maharani from going; the reforming party, together with her English friends, did their best to persuade her to go, and in the end they were successful: and this decision may be considered as a turning-

point in her history as well as in that of Bengali ladies in general.

The Maharajah and Maharani left India in April 1887, accompanied by their children and by the Maharani's brother Mr. Sen, and they remained away some months. During the summer they stayed in London and paid some visits in the country, and the Maharani was presented to the Queen at Buckingham Palace. She was also received by the Queen at Windsor, and treated most kindly by her Majesty, who showed in every way possible her kindly feelings towards the daughter of Keshub Chunder Sen, as well as her appreciation of the courage and good sense shown by the Maharani in making up her mind to come to England. The fact of her undertaking this journey implied a determination to break decisively with the old traditional prejudices, and the manner in which she was treated by our own gracious Sovereign could not fail to have a great effect in securing her position in society, both as regards English people in India and her own countrymen. There could be no further ground for fearing that a lady who had taken such a decided step, should ever withdraw into the seclusion of the zenana, or succumb in any serious degree to the influence of the reactionary party.

The Maharani returned to India in December 1887 with her children, the Prince following a couple of

months later. During the cold season, or at least a part of it, they live in Calcutta, occupying a fine house in the suburb of Alipore. Here they entertain a great deal; and their handsome reception-rooms are furnished in every respect like those of an English house. Those, however, occupied by themselves and the members of their family are much more simply furnished, and in the privacy of these apartments the Maharani retains most of the ordinary social habits of her country. While retaining a not unnatural preference for the customs in which she has been brought up, she shows a wonderful aptitude for conforming to foreign ways when more advisable, and as a hostess she is both popular and successful. Her parties and receptions are crowded by English people, but though a few members of the Brahmo-Somaj may also be seen at them, native gentlemen are as a rule conspicuous by their absence.

The explanation is not difficult to find. There are still very few Indian gentlemen of good position who have adopted in any degree the Western idea of allowing free social intercourse between men and women. Some of them have learnt that, it being the accepted principle in European society, English ladies who appear in public are only following the custom of their race, and are therefore entitled to be treated with respect, but they have not advanced sufficiently to be able to apply the same principle to native

ladies. Still bound by prejudice and tradition, they look upon the mixing of the two sexes in social intercourse as a scandal, and regard the example set by the Maharani as one to be avoided, not followed.

On more than one occasion the Maharani has had reason to complain of incivility from her own countrymen whom she has met at some official gathering, and therefore it is not to be wondered at if she does not invite them to her own house.

The above facts will no doubt surprise many, and will perhaps make English people understand rather better the sort of difficulties which beset the path of social reformers in India, and which ought to enlist our sympathy and respect for those who are brave enough to face them.

The Maharajah and Maharani always spend some months of the year at Kuch Behar, the capital of their little territory, where they have a fine estate; but during the hot weather they usually follow the example set them by English people, and go to the hills, either to Darjiling or Simla, where they mix a good deal in society. They keep up the native custom of having many members of their family to live with them, and their "house-party" is always a large one. They have several children, of whom the youngest, born soon after their return from England, is named Victor in honour of Her Majesty. These children

have English nurses and an English governess, and will, no doubt, become still more completely anglicized than their parents. The Maharani speaks and writes English perfectly, and shows a good deal of the facility for acquiring foreign ways so characteristic of the people of Bengal. She has not, indeed, shown any very striking talent nor remarkable intellectual ability, like some other Indian ladies, but if she is not destined to help her countrywomen in that particular way, her life may be as useful to them in others. Her quickness, her gracious manner, her ready tact, and her readiness to please and to be pleased, have gained her many warm friends among the English residents in India; and the fact that there is at least one Indian lady of high rank in whose house English men and women are cordially welcomed, cannot fail to be of great value in forwarding the development of that freer social intercourse between the two races, to which many people look as the surest and happiest way of solving the difficult problems that must be dealt with ere long in India.

V.

TORU DUTT.

It was a saying of the ancients that "those whom the gods love die young," and, however we may interpret it, it certainly seems as though some strange fate was destined to cut off in their early prime those whose youth has given promise of more than ordinary achievement. Modern India has as yet produced but one real poetess, and she, alas! is one whose early promise has been buried in a premature grave.

The story of the young Hindu girl's life is short and sad.

Tarulatta Datta, or, as she is more commonly called, Toru Dutt, was the youngest child of Babu Govind Chunder Dutt, a Bengali gentleman of good family, high character, and considerable attainments, who was distinguished among his countrymen by his broad-minded views on social questions, and by his clear and vigorous intellect. He was a Chris-

tian, and was well known and respected in Calcutta, where he filled the position of a magistrate. In Calcutta Toru Dutt was born in 1856, and, with the exception of one year spent by the family in Bombay, it was in Calcutta that her early life was passed.

From her childhood she enjoyed educational advantages such as were very unusual in the case of Bengali girls; her father took great pains to instruct her himself, and she and her sister Aru, who was two years older than she was, both shared the English lessons given to her brother Abjie by Babu Shib Chunder Banerji, for whom she always entertained a grateful affection, and who seems to have been the first person to instil into her mind a love for the study of English literature, together with the thoroughness of application so remarkable in her subsequent studies. The stern, grand poetry of Milton is hardly what one would expect to find as the chosen study of young Indian girls, yet these two sisters knew large portions of "Paradise Lost" by heart, and apparently understood and appreciated it far more thoroughly than most English girls of the same age. In 1869 Babu Govind Dutt determined to take his two daughters to Europe and to give them the best education he could. His only boy had died a short time previously, and he felt that the hopes of his life now depended on his girls. They went first to Nice, where for a few months the sisters

attended a *pension* and studied French under the best masters. The whole family then came to England, spending, however, a short time in Italy and in Paris on their way. They remained in England till the close of 1873, the girls continuing their education the whole time. They attended some of the then recently established lectures for women at Cambridge, especially those of M. Bognel on French Literature, and afterwards they went to lectures and classes at St. Leonards, where they resided for some time.

During their stay in Europe Toru Dutt kept a careful journal, which is of extreme interest, as showing the effect produced on the Indian girl's mind by all she saw and heard around her in this strange country.

The following extract from her diary is dated the 30th of January, 1871, 9 Sydney Place, Onslow Square, London, S.W., and is of peculiar interest :—

"How long it is since I last wrote in my journal! Alas! what changes have taken place in France since the last time I wrote! When we were in Paris for a few days, how beautiful it was! What houses! What streets! What a magnificent army! But now, how has she fallen! She who was once first among the cities, what misery does she not contain! Ever since the commencement of the war my heart

has been with the French, although I all along felt certain of their defeat."

Although the Dutt family stayed so much longer in England than in France, it was the latter country evidently which seized most forcibly on the imagination of the girls, especially of Toru. The strange contrast between the France of 1869, proud, joyous, beautiful and queen-like, and the France of 1871, conquered, blood-stained and distracted by internal feuds, made a deep impression on her, awakening her keenest sympathies and inspiring one of her most original poems.

Not dead; oh, no, she cannot die!
  Only a swoon from loss of blood.
Levite England passes her by;
Help, Samaritan! None is nigh
  Who shall staunch me this sanguine flood.

Range the brown hair, it blinds her eyen;
  Dash cold water over her face!
Drowned in her blood, she makes no sign.
Give her a draught of generous wine!
  None heed; none hear to do this grace.

No! she stirs; there 's a fire in her glance.
  'Ware, oh 'ware of that broken sword!
What! dare ye, for an hour's mischance
Gather around her, jeering France,
  Attila's own exulting horde?

Lo! she stands up—stands up e'en now,
  Strong once more for the battle fray.
Gleams bright the star that from her brow
Lightens the world. Bow, nations, bow!
  Let her again lead on the way.

After her return to Calcutta in November 1873, Toru Dutt continued her French studies, and also applied herself to the study of Sanskrit, under the direction of her father, who also cultivated and encouraged her talent for writing in general and for poetry in particular, and it was to his instructions that she always ascribed her facility in the latter branch of literature.

On their return to India, the Dutts once more took up their abode in Calcutta, where they resumed the quiet and retired life they had led before their visit to Europe.

To those unacquainted with India it will no doubt appear rather strange that a family who had been so well received in England, and had been welcomed in the most cultivated circles, should on their return home have been so little noticed by the English residents in Calcutta. It should, however, be remembered that fifteen years ago it was an exceedingly rare thing for an Indian lady to wish to mix in English society, or to possess the education that would fit her for doing so; and so it came to pass, not unnaturally, that the existence of two well-bred, well-read girls like Toru Dutt and her sister, was not even suspected by those who, if they had known it, would have been only too well pleased to have made friends with them.

So incredible, indeed, did it appear in those days

that a Bengali lady should achieve literary distinction, that when Toru's first writings appeared it was supposed that they were the work of some English writer, and that Toru Dutt was simply a *nom de plume* assumed for the occasion.

Her first appearance in print was in the *Bengal Magazine*, to which she contributed an essay on the poetry of Le Conte de Lisle, a writer with whom she was much in sympathy. He was a Creole, born in the Mauritius, and, as we may judge from the following extract from her article, she felt that in some respects his case resembled her own.

"The faults generally attributed to all Asiatic or half-caste poets, writing in the languages of Europe, are weakness, languor, conventionalism, and imitation. From most of these defects Le Conte de Lisle was singularly free. He is wonderfully vigorous and very often thoroughly original. Not only is he very well read, not only has he meditated much, but he has that gifted poetic eye, which can seize at once, and extract poetry from the meanest object."

This paper was followed before long by some translations of French verse into English, and by various other essays in literary criticism, of which both the style and the matter aroused the curiosity and interest of the readers of the magazine.

It was about this time, in the year 1874, that Aru Dutt, the elder of the two sisters, died of consump-

tion. Although less original and less ambitious than Toru, she was not less amiable, and she had equally profited by the educational advantages she had enjoyed. Both the sisters were good musicians. They played well on the piano, and sang with much sweetness, having good contralto voices. They kept up their accomplishments, but at the same time they did not disdain the more useful domestic duties which, in Indian homes, are usually performed by the ladies of the family; and their father, writing after their death, speaks with deep emotion of the exemplary manner in which they discharged these household duties.

In general society Toru shone more than her sister, who was of a gentle, retiring disposition, and inclined to keep in the background, while she listened with sisterly pride and admiration to Toru's lively and intelligent conversation. The younger sister had a very remarkable memory, and could remember every piece of poetry she had ever translated. She read much and deeply, and whenever she met with a difficult passage, she worked at it thoroughly, till she had mastered not only its meaning, but its bearing on the subject in hand.

Aru occasionally tried her hand at translation, but her most decided talent was for drawing, and the sisters' dream was to produce a novel, which one should write and the other illustrate.

Toru's first book appeared in 1876, and consisted of a collection of lyrics translated from the French poets. It was printed at Bhowanipore in Bengal, and like the greater number of works hitherto published in India, was badly printed, on poor paper, and had nothing attractive about its appearance. From the ordinary reading public, accustomed to find its poetry enshrined in a prettily designed casket, this uninteresting-looking, paper-covered book, received but scant attention. Fortunately, however, it fell into the hands of a few more discriminating critics, who bestowed upon it some well-deserved praise.

M. André Theuriot, the well-known French poet and novelist, reviewed the poems favourably in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; while in England they received an appreciative notice from Mr. Edmund Gosse in the *Examiner*. This gentleman, in a prefatory note to one of Toru Dutt's later works, thus describes the impression made on him by them. "It was while Professor W. Minto was editor of the *Examiner*, that one day in August 1876, in the very heart of the dead season for books, I happened to be in the office of that newspaper, and was upbraiding the whole body of publishers for issuing no books worth reviewing. At that moment the postman brought in a thin, sallow packet, with a wonderful Indian postmark on it, and containing a most unattractive orange pamphlet of verse, printed at

Bhowanipore, and entitled *A Sheaf gleaned in French Fields*. This shabby little book of some 200 pages, without preface or introduction, seemed speedily destined to find its way into the waste-paper basket. I remember that Mr. Minto thrust it into my unwilling hands, and said, 'There, see whether you can make something of that.' A hopeless volume it seemed, with its queer type, printed at the Saptahik-sambad Press. But when at last I took it out of my pocket, what was my surprise, and almost rapture, to open at such a verse as this—

> "Still barred thy doors. The far East glows,
> The morning wind blows fresh and free;
> Should not the hour that wakes the rose
> Awaken also thee.
>
> "All look for thee, Love, Light and Song;
> Light in the sky, deep red above,
> Song in the lark of pinions strong,
> And in my heart true love."

Although Toru's first book is the least perfect and polished of her literary productions, it is in some respects the most interesting, revealing as it does both her weakness and her strength. At every turn we are met by instances of genius overcoming all obstacles, and yet, in its turn, baffled by ignorance and inexperience. It is little short of marvellous to see the way in which the oriental mind adapts itself to Western ideas, and expresses them with a purity and a grace that leaves nothing to be desired; while,

on the other hand, we are constantly reminded that she is writing in a foreign tongue, by some strange ignoring of the rules of prosody, some quaint and almost *prosaic* rendering of a poetic simile.

It would be impossible within the limits of so short a sketch to do any justice to these poems, but the following may serve as an example, and no doubt expresses her own thoughts on her sister's early death. The original is by Evariste Desforges de Parny:—

Though childhood's ways were past and gone,
More innocent no child could be;
Though grace in every feature shone,
Her maiden heart was fancy free.

A few more months or happy days,
And love would blossom, so we thought,
As lifts in April's genial rays
The rose its clusters richly wrought.

But God had destined otherwise,
And so she gently fell asleep,
A creature of the starry skies,
Too lovely for the earth to keep.

She died in earliest womanhood;
Thus dies, and leaves behind no trace,
A bird's song in a leafy wood,
Thus melts a sweet smile from the face.

To these poems there was affixed the following short postscript:—

"The author of these pages wishes to add that those signed 'A' are the work of her dear and only

sister Aru, who fell asleep in Jesus, 23rd July 1874, at the early age of twenty. Had she lived, this book might have been better than it is, and its author might perhaps have had less occasion to crave the indulgence of the reader. Alas,

> "Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
> The saddest is, It might have been!"

Not the least remarkable portion of this book are the notes. In them Toru Dutt gives short critical notices of the various poets from whom she has translated; her criticism showing sometimes a naive simplicity that is very engaging, at others a keenness of insight and a purity of taste which are truly admirable. In addition to these criticisms we find notes on the occasions which called forth some of the poems, explanations regarding the allusions to persons and occurrences which they contain, and references to other poets and writers.

Her acquaintance with French and English litera- was something extraordinary; very few English or French women of twice her age can boast as much, and when we consider that both were to her foreign tongues, it is difficult to understand how she can have found time for such a wide range of reading.

Most of her translations are from nineteenth century poets, Victor Hugo himself being the chief object of her admiration. In the note on his poems she writes: "It would be absurd to make any com-

ments on Victor Hugo. His name is among the great ones of the earth. With Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Goethe, and Schiller, his place has been long prepared in the Valhalla of the poets."

Her poetic imagination led her to place Victor Hugo above Lamartine, although she was quite ready to acknowledge the moral superiority of the latter.

"In fancy, in imagination, in brilliancy, in grandeur, in style, in all that makes a poet, he must yield to Victor Hugo: in purity he yields to none. His mind is essentially religious. He never forgot what he learned at his mother's knee."

Toru Dutt's first collection of poems was prefaced by a dedicatory poem to her mother, translated from Xavier Labenski. A copy of the first edition of the *Sheaf gleaned in French Fields*, in the dull orange paper cover, is in the British Museum, and bears on its fly-leaf the following inscription in the authoress's handwriting:—

Au Chevalier de Chaletain, à l'élégant traducteur de Shakespeare.
Hommage de la traductrice, Toru Dutt. 29 Mars 1876. Calcutta. 12, Manicktollah Street.

Very soon after the publication of her first book Toru Dutt's health began to fail. Her father, whose parental anxiety was quickened by the loss of his two other children, imagined that she had been

overworking herself, and that her studies were too much for her. He, therefore, insisted on her giving up her Sanskrit, which she did most reluctantly, for it was her favourite study, and doubly dear to her because in it her father was her companion and her instructor. For a few weeks it seemed as though rest were doing her good, but before long it became only too evident that the insidious disease which had carried off her sister had already seized her in its fatal grasp. As her bodily strength declined her mind seemed to gain in activity; her longing to write became more and more feverish. The more she realised that her life could be but a short one, the more eager did she become to achieve some literary success.

About a year before her death she became acquainted with a book which struck her much. It was *La Femme dans l'Inde Ancienne*, by Mdlle. Clarisse Bader, and she instantly conceived a strong desire to translate it. She wrote to the authoress, asking her permission to do so, sending her at the same time a copy of her "Sheaf." In her letter she described herself as "une femme de l'Inde moderne."

To this Mdlle. Bader replied promptly: "Eh quoi? C'est une descendante de mes chères heroines indiennes, qui désire traduire le livre que j'ai consacré aux antiques Aryennes de la presqu'île gangétique! Un

semblable vœu, emanant d'une telle source, me touche trop profondément pour que je ne l'exauce pas. Traduisez donc 'La Femme dans l'Inde Antique,' Mademoiselle. Je vous y autorise de tout mon cœur, et j'y appelle de tous mes vœux sympathiques le succès de votre entreprise. . . . Vous êtes chrétienne, Mademoiselle ; votre livre me le dit. Et en vérité votre rôle nous permets de bénir une fois de plus la divine religion, qui a permis à une Indienne de développer et de manifester cette valeur individuelle que le brahminisme enchaîna trop souvent chez la femme."

In writing to acknowledge the permission thus generously granted to her, Toru Dutt told her new friend of her own bad state of health, and how greatly it interfered with the pursuit of her studies. She mentioned that her father proposed taking her to Europe again, so as to consult some eminent physician, and in the hope that a drier and more bracing air than that of Bengal might perhaps check the disease, or, at any rate, give her strength to battle against it. With this letter she sent her photograph and some of her translations from the Sanskrit. A month later she wrote again, from her bed, to which she was then confined by very severe illness and great pain. Yet, with the hopefulness so characteristic of persons suffering from consumption, she still looked forward to recovery, and

hailed every slight rally as a permanent improvement.

But it was not to be, and on August 30, 1877, she passed away. Her father's account of her last days is very touching: "It is only physical pain which makes me cry," said she to the doctor who was attending her. "My spirit is in peace. I know in whom I have believed." "Never," writes the bereaved father, "was there a sweeter child, and she was my last. I and my wife in our old age are left alone in a house wide and desolate, where of old the voices of my three loved children echoed. But we are not forsaken. I think I can see dimly that there is a fitness, a preparation, required for the life beyond, which they had and I have not. One day I shall see it all clearly. Blessed be the Lord: His will be done."

When the first bitterness of his loss had passed, Toru Dutt's father found a sad consolation in examining the mass of papers which his gifted daughter had left behind her, and in preparing some of them for the press.

A new edition of the *Sheaf gleaned in French Fields* was prefaced by a short biographical notice of the young poetess, and with its good paper, printing, and binding, formed a handsome volume, which was enhanced in value by the photograph of the two sisters, which forms its frontispiece. But to many

of Toru Dutt's admirers, the little insignificant orange pamphlet has a greater charm.

Among the many poems which Babu Chunder Dutt now found were a number of ballads, embodying stories and legends of ancient India. It appears that she had intended to write a series of nine such ballads, but of the projected series two were missing, so it was determined to fill up the blanks with two translations of stories from the Vishnupurana, which had already been printed in the *Calcutta Review* and in the *Bengal Magazine* respectively. These, though valuable as her first attempts at rendering Sanskrit tales into English verse, are very inferior both in form and finish to the ballads. These latter are written in octosyllabic verse, and may be regarded as the most original and, at the same time, the most successful of all her literary productions. Though the medium in which she expresses them is still foreign, the ideas, the traditions, and the memories are those of her own country and her own people, and they have a vigour, a freshness, and a charm which can never be infused into a mere translation. The historic *Ballads* and *Legends of Hindustan* are too long for quotation here, and no fragment would give an adequate idea of them. But we give here a few stanzas from a poem included with some others in the same volumes, which will enable our readers to judge of the advance Toru

Dutt had made since the publication of her French "Sheaf."

It is addressed to the "Casuarena Tree," a tall, graceful tree which grows very freely in Calcutta and its neighbourhood.

> But not because of its magnificence
> Dear is the Casuarena to my soul.
> Beneath it we have played; though years may roll,
> O sweet companions, loved with love intense,
> For your dear sakes shall the tree be ever dear;
> Blest with your images it shall arise
> In memory, till the hot tears blind my eyes.
>
> What is that dirge-like murmur that I hear,
> Like the sea breaking on a shingle beach?
> It is the tree's lament, an eerie speech,
> That haply to the unknown land may reach—
>
> Unknown, yet well-known to the eye of faith.
> Ah! I have heard that wail, far, far away
> In distant lands, by many a sheltered bay,
> When slumbered in his cave the water-wraith,
>
> And the waves gently kissed the classic shore
> Of France or Italy beneath the moon,
> When earth lay trancèd in a dreamless swoon;
> And every time the music rose, a form sublime,
> Thy form, O tree, as in my happy prime,
> I saw thee in my own loved native clime.

In addition to all these poems and translations, Toru Dutt left behind the MS. of a French novel entitled *Le Journal de Mdlle. D'Arvers.*

Both the sisters had been great novel-readers. We may wonder how they found time for reading novels, considering how much else they read in their

short lives, but so it was. A story is told of an English gentleman having paid them a visit in Calcutta, and asking them what were their favourite books.

"Oh! novels, of course," replied the younger sister, who was almost always the spokeswoman.

"Novels!" exclaimed their visitor; "I am sorry to hear that. You should read history."

"Oh, no!" was the answer; "for history is false, but novels are true."

It was truth of thought, of life and character, which these Bengali girls sought after; not the bare dry facts of history. What fairy-tales are to children, novels were to these young women; and, as we have already said, the dream of their joint lives was to produce a novel themselves.

Whether the *Journal de Mdlle. D'Arvers* had taken shape in Toru's mind before her sister's death is uncertain, but it seems more probable that it was of later date.

The choice of the subject was certainly a singular one. The life, the thoughts, and love experiences of a young French girl of good family, could only have been known to Toru Dutt by the mysterious intuition of imagination and sympathy, and though no one would pretend that the attempt to portray them has entirely succeeded, yet it is a proof of the real genius of the authoress that it should not have signally failed.

The domestic conditions portrayed in the story are those of an English rather than of a French home, and there are not wanting, here and there, touches which betray the oriental cast of the writer's mind. The hero, for instance, is described as tall and thin, with coal-black hair, and black liquid eyes, the typical characteristics of a young Bengali, while he is said to have had a fair complexion, *which showed his high birth.* To a European mind the latter expression is absurd and meaningless, but it would come quite naturally to a native of India, where the higher classes have almost always fairer complexions than the lower classes.

The manuscript as left by Toru Dutt was complete so far as the story was concerned, but it required careful editing before it could be sent to the press, and this work was cheerfully undertaken by Mademoiselle Bader, whose introduction to the book is full of sympathetic and generous appreciation.

The story is told in the form of a journal, supposed to have been written by Mademoiselle D'Arvers. She begins to write her journal when she returns to her home from the convent in which she has been educated, and depicts the very natural conflict of feelings which fills her mind. Her joy at returning to her parents and the pleasure she anticipates from mixing in society being mingled with regret at quitting the convent in which she has passed some happy years,

and at parting from her friends and school-fellows. Soon, however, the pleasures and interests of her new life make her forget her regrets, as she finds herself surrounded by all that adoring parents can give their only child, and the admiration which her beauty excites in everyone is received with a charming *naïveté* and simplicity.

An excellent young man, whom her parents have long fixed on as her future husband, comes to stay at the house; but though she appreciates his good qualities and is quite ready to make friends with him, he fails to touch her heart, which is captivated almost at once by the young owner of the neighbouring château.

Seeing that her affection is returned, the parents, with some regret, relinquish their cherished project and consent to her betrothal with the man of her choice, and it seems as though for once the course of true love were destined to run smooth. But a terrible storm is at hand. Mademoiselle D'Arvers is loved not only by the man she loves, but by his brother Gaston also. The discovery of this puts the elder brother into a fury, which passes into a fit of temporary insanity, in which he kills his brother. No sooner has he fired the fatal shot than his madness leaves him, and in bitterest shame and remorse he gives himself up to justice. He is tried and condemned, but while awaiting his

punishment, the insanity returns and he commits suicide.

His unhappy *fiancé* is crushed to the earth, feeling most bitterly the humiliation of having been the innocent cause of two men's death, whereby their widowed mother is left desolate. By degrees her affection for her parents and her religious faith enable her to rouse herself from the state of prostration and dejection consequent on the tragedy, and she accepts somewhat reluctantly her mother's suggestion, that, having wrecked the lives of two men who loved her, it is her duty to do her best to make the third one happy.

So the faithful, patient lover is at last rewarded, and there appears a prospect of happiness for him and his bride. But the terrible tragedy in which she has played a part has shattered her constitution, and just as she is beginning to rest happily in her husband's love, she droops and dies.

As will be seen from this short sketch, the conception is very crude, and the story is full of glaring improbabilities. But in spite of these defects, in spite of the unnecessarily tragic features, the story is not an unpleasant one, and gives ample evidence both of imagination and of knowledge of human nature, as well as of the pure and spiritual nature of the authoress which she reproduces in her heroine.

Sad, indeed, it is to think that such a gifted nature

should have been thus early cut off, and that its rich promise of fruit should have been blighted before time and experience had matured it. It has been the case in all countries and in all times, but perhaps the modern educated native of India is peculiarly exposed to the danger. The premature development of both mind and body does not seem to be accompanied by that physical health which can alone make great mental cultivation really safe, and in too many cases the bodily frame is worn out in a few years, and hopes of future achievements are buried in an early grave. The danger, no doubt, is increased for those who go to England or America, and the damp cold of these countries has cost us more than one life that seemed destined to play a noble part in the work of regenerating Indian society. Yet, perhaps, as we mourn these early deaths, these gifted women taken from us, as we think, all too soon, we may be at fault, and that for them as well as for their country the poets words may be true—

> The fairest gift that life can give
> Is to die young.

VI.

CORNELIA SORABJI.

One of the reasons which make it so difficult for people who have not closely studied the history of India to understand the intricate and delicate problems which are constantly presenting themselves in regard to its modern development, is that there are so many different races in the country, each perfectly distinct, with its own religion, language, and traditions, and with no special bond of sympathy or patriotism to draw them all together.

Of these various nationalities, the smallest numerically, though by no means the least interesting, is that of the Parsis. They are found scattered over various parts of Upper India, but chiefly in the Western Presidency, and by far the larger proportion of them live in the city of Bombay itself, where they form the richest and most influential portion of the inhabitants. Their position in India may in many respects be said to be analogous to that of the Jews

in western Europe. Like them they have lived for centuries as exiles and aliens in a foreign land, keeping themselves distinct from the people among whom they dwelt, in their religion, their dress, and their social customs, and seldom intermarrying with them. Like them they have distinguished themselves by their aptitude for business, their enterprise, and their commercial prosperity, as well as by their loyalty to the Government of the country, although, like the Jews, the Parsis are seldom if ever to be found in the ranks of the army.

As their name signifies, the Parsis came originally from Persia, and belong to the Iranian branch of the Aryan family. The inhabitants of Persia, in course of time, had corrupted the primeval faith of their forefathers, and had sunk into gross idolatry, when, according to tradition, about the year B.C. 1200, Zoroaster began to preach and to lead them back to a purer and true form of religion. His doctrines spread widely, and from that time the Persians remained monotheists, worshipping the Creator of the Universe under the outward symbols of fire and light. During the seventh century of our era the country was conquered by the Saracens, who, being Mahomedans, forced the adoption of their religion on all those they overcame, and spread it with fire and sword. Although the Persians had as a nation sunk into a condition of great effeminacy,

and were unable to offer any serious resistance to their fierce invaders, a nobler spirit still breathed in some parts of the country, where the inhabitants, who were chiefly engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, inherited some of the indomitable courage and patience of their forefathers. Rather than accept the faith of the Saracens, which they looked on as idolatrous, these people submitted to the most cruel and unceasing persecution. They were driven from one part of the country to another, until at last, despairing of ever being able to remain in peace in their native land, a remnant of them took ship and sailed to India, where they landed on the western coast. Here they were kindly received by the people, and the rajah or prince of the place gave them permission to settle, and to exercise their religion without molestation. During the thousand years that have passed since their arrival in India, their history has been very uneventful. When Timur invaded Northern India, people called Magians are enumerated among his prisoners, from which we may infer that the disciples of Zoroaster had already made their way into the Punjab. Gradually the Parsis abandoned the agricultural pursuits which had occupied them on their first arrival, and, flocking to the towns and cities, devoted themselves to commerce.

When the English became masters of Bombay and of Surat, they found the Parsis established in both

places, and carrying on business as merchants, bankers, and ship-builders; and since that time they have continued to flourish exceedingly, although it would appear from the census returns that their number is not increasing. In 1841 there were 114,000 Parsis in India, while in 1881 the number was given as only 85,000.

As we have already said, the religion of Zoroaster, which is still professed by the Parsis, is essentially monotheistic. Dr. Haug, who is the great authority on the subject, writes as follows:—"The leading idea of Zoroaster's theology was monotheism: that there are not many gods, but only one. The principle of his speculative philosophy was dualism, the supposition of two primeval causes of the real world and of the intellectual; while his moral philosophy was moving in the triad of thought, word, and deed." The Creator of the Universe is worshipped under the name of Hormazd, or Ahrima Mazda; while, according to the Parsi Scriptures, there are working in subjection to the Supreme Being two causes or principles, by whose agency he is the Causer of all causes, the Creator and Destroyer of all things. These two principles are Spento Mainyush, the increasing or Creating Spirit, and Angro Mainyush, the decreasing or Destroying Spirit. And these two are ever at work, and have been from all eternity, acting and counteracting on each other,

but both in subjection to Him who is at once the Lord of Life and Death, of Light and of Darkness.

In addition to these, Parsi theology acknowledges six immortal spirits or benefactors, who preside severally over the vital faculty; light and brightness; rule, power, and wealth; piety and obedience; prosperity; and immortality. The idea of a future life and of the resurrection of the body distinctly pervades the sacred books, both the earlier and the later ones alike.

The most ancient of these books are the Zend-Avesta, which contain the main principles and outlines of the Parsi religion, and which are written in a language allied to, but distinct from, Sanskrit. The later books are written in Pehlevi, which belongs to the Iranian group of languages, and these are frequently written in the Gujerati character, it being in Gujerat that the Parsis first found a home in India. It is in these latter books that the details relating to religious ceremonies and customs must be sought. Pehlevi is the language used on all religious occasions, the daily prayers of the Parsis being said in this tongue, although it is to the greater number of them quite unknown, so that they repeat their prayers as a sacred duty, but with little or no comprehension of the words they are using.

The Zoroastrians are frequently spoken of as being

worshippers of Fire and of the Sun, but it seems clear that this is not really part of their religion. "God, according to the Parsis, is the embodiment of glory, refulgence, and light, and a Parsi engaged in prayer is directed to stand before fire, or with face to the sun, as proper symbols of the Almighty. Fire is the best and noblest representative of the Divinity, in its brightness, activity, purity, and incorruptibility; while the sun is the best and most useful of God's creation."

Fire, then, is worshipped only, if at all, as the representative of Him who is Himself Eternal Light, and as such the practice is very ancient among Aryan nations.

The principles of the Parsi religion, as sketched above, are those which may fairly be deduced from their sacred books, and such as are held by the most enlightened and cultivated members of their community. But, like other religions, the beliefs actually held by the more ignorant have become much corrupted and debased.

In order to avoid persecution from their neighbours, the Parsis at one time or another adopted many Hindu customs; they neglected the study of their sacred books, and, as a natural consequence, their religion became corrupted and almost idolatrous. The vulgar and unlearned ceased to see in fire only the symbol of Divine Light, and adored the

visible flame, as well as the sun, moon, and stars. They even lost sight of the truth that there was but one God, and worshipped two spirits, one good and one evil, whom they believed to be contending for the dominion of the universe. In fact, like Brahminism, Buddhism, and even Christianity itself, the religion of Zoroaster has been greatly perverted by his followers, and it would be unfair to judge its real teachings by the beliefs held by its more ignorant professors. Its real superiority to the other religions of India may, however, be gathered from its effect on the people who profess it. The Parsis are distinguished from both Hindus and Mahomedans by their general good conduct and their high standard of morality, as well as by their general healthiness. Their average mortality is singularly low, especially among the children. Their women occupy a far more honourable and independent position than either Hindu or Mahomedan women, and are universally allowed to be both good wives and good mothers. They are not kept in seclusion, but drive about in open carriages, with their faces uncovered, wearing white shawls or sarees over their heads, and a great deal of jewellery. The men wear a white or black coat and white trousers, and a dark turban or cap of a peculiar shape.

The Parsis seem to have inherited that characteristic of their Persian forefathers which so struck

the Greeks, namely, the facility for adapting themselves to foreign manners and customs ; and they are decidedly the most Europeanized of any of the Asiatic inhabitants of India. In one particular, however, they cling steadfastly to their national custom, namely, with regard to the disposal of their dead. These they neither bury nor burn, but expose them, uncoffined, at the top of high towers, where they are devoured by the birds. This custom appears to us both unnatural and disgusting, but is defended by them as being the best possible, because the speediest, way of disposing of the dead bodies, and as wise on sanitary grounds. Cremation, which is frequently recommended on this latter ground, they object to from religious scruples, Zoroaster having taught that fire was too sacred a thing to be profaned by a dead body.

The towers on which the bodies are exposed are called Towers of Silence, and are, some of them, of a great height. The highest at Bombay is over ninety feet. It is considered a very meritorious act to build such a tower, and the completion of one is usually made the subject of a general rejoicing.

It is frequently claimed for the Parsis, by their own writers, that they are a very tolerant people, and that while they have proved their fidelity to their own faith even to the death, they have never persecuted

or ill-used members of other religions. It should, however, be remembered that almost all religious systems have been tolerant while they were themselves in a minority, and that the era of persecuting intolerance has been that of power, so that the Parsis have never really been in a position to exercise intolerance. It is, however, notorious that they do not view with indifference the conversion of any members of their own body to Christianity, and that a Parsi who desires to throw in his lot with the Christians must expect as many difficulties and troubles as though he were a Mahomedan or a Hindu.

A very well-known instance of this occurred in the case of the Rev. Sorabji Kharsedji, now a missionary of the Church Missionary Society at Poona. He was brought up strictly as a Parsi, but while pursuing his school studies he became acquainted with the Bible, which he read diligently and devoutly. The pure unselfish morality which he found there greatly attracted him, and his heart answered to the idea of a mediator and a Saviour as set forth in the New Testament. In some of his own sacred books he had found a dim echo of Isaiah's prophecy that a deliverer should arise, who would subdue all evil and save his people from their sins, but the religious system of the Parsis offered him no such friend. Gladly, therefore, he accepted the truth as revealed in Christ, and with a willing and teachable heart he

listened to the missionaries. At last he professed himself a Christian. At once there burst upon him such a storm of opposition as can be but faintly realised by us who live in a Christian land. In the graphic and touching words of one of his daughters, "Imprisonment, desertion, stoning, were the least he had to suffer. They sent him out oar-less and rudder-less to sea, in a tiny boat once, hoping he would be drowned, and added to all, of course, was the wrath of his people; his father and his uncle disinherited him, and his mother died of a broken heart." But the faith of the young convert was proof even against such attacks as these; the grief and anger of his parents moved him no more than the persecution and cruelty of the priests, and the existence of British justice in the country prevented them from carrying their opposition further. As soon as he had attained the necessary age Mr. Sorabji was ordained, and henceforth devoted his life to the work of the Church Missionary Society. His labours have been greatly blessed, both as a teacher and a preacher, though, perhaps, his most important work has been done with the pen. He is a member of the Committee for translating the Bible into Gujerati, and has also published a work on *Zoroastrianism and Christianity.* In this book he not only shows how inferior is the religion of the Parsis to that of the Christians, but also shows good ground for denying that the Zend

Avesta is at all as ancient as it claims to be, or that it is in any real sense the work of Zoroaster.

Mr. Sorabji married a Hindu convert to Christianity, and together they both laboured at Nassick, where they are still remembered and welcomed with affection, and where most of their children were born.

Mrs. Sorabji herself is a woman of rare intellectual power, allied to a force of character and a spiritual charm such as are seldom to be met with. As six daughters were born to her one after another, her neighbours gathered round her to condole with her, because that no son had come to redeem the family. According to Indian ideas a woman's hope of happiness, on earth or after death, depends upon her being the mother of a son, so that the birth of daughters can only be considered a trouble and a disgrace. But Mrs. Sorabji thought otherwise; already she had grasped the idea that the salvation and regeneration of Indian society should be wrought by its women, and she gazed proudly on her little flock, and counted them all as sons.

The fifth daughter, born at Nassick in 1866, received the name of Cornelia. Soon after her birth her parents removed farther south, and the child's first reminiscences are associated with a very lovely place in the Dekkan. There many happy years were spent, the early lessons being made delightful to the children by the mother's sweet and imaginative teach-

ing. There were no kindergartens in India in those days, but the little Sorabjis had a sort of kindergarten of their own. "We learnt to sing our letters," writes Cornelia, "to tunes mother made for them, and to the names of our friends and acquaintances. I remember a delightful alphabet, where A was for 'Appagi Bappaji,' who was god-father to one of my sisters. We learnt to count over playing at 'shop' with mother. Nature around us was invested with life, and we were told stories of the birds and insects which brought them near us, and unconsciously we learnt Natural History. So with our writing; 'the soldiers' and 'towers' (strokes and pot-hooks) were all part of a long delightful game which had no end."

While the mother trained and educated the younger children, the father devoted himself to the elder girls. In that far away village in the Dekkan there were but few opportunities for girls to learn much; and the young Sorabjis soon got beyond what could be taught them in the Church Missionary School. Fortunately for them, their father was both willing and able to teach them, and under him they studied mathematics, science, and Sanskrit, until they had reached the standard required for the matriculation at the University of Bombay.

Education had been making great strides in the Western Presidency, both for men and women, but

the question of admitting the latter to University examinations had not yet been mooted. Mr. Sorabji then sent in an application for his two eldest daughters to be admitted to the matriculation examination at the Bombay University, and it was refused.

This refusal was a great blow both to the father and the daughters, but the effort they had made was not without its effect.

The question had been raised, and though it was some years before the matter was finally settled, the fight between the advocates and the opposers of women's education at last ended in the unconditional admission of women to all the University examinations.

The Sorabji family had now removed to Poona, and Mrs. Sorabji, finding her time less fully occupied as her children grew older, determined to put into execution a plan which she had long been revolving in her mind.

We cannot do better than quote her daughter's words on the subject:—"It seemed to my mother that the great question of how to bring the nations in India together, could best be solved by making them learn together as children. They worked together in offices when grown, but their relations were strained and unhappy, and if early friendships had been there to recall, things might have been different; for the

minds of all a more intimate knowledge of each other would be beneficial."

A school, on much the same lines as those Mrs. Sorabji was contemplating, had been started at Ahmedabad under Government auspices in 1872, by the name of the Female Normal School, and its success was already assured. It was attended by women of all the better classes in Gujerat, and it was found that the intercourse of the pupils with each other did much towards overcoming their caste prejudices.

Ten years after its foundation it had sent out thirty-six well-trained teachers, and the work of the pupils, especially map-drawing, plain needle-work, and embroidery was such as to elicit the warm commendation of the Government inspectors.

In 1875 the work of the school was not as widely known as it has since become, but its success during the three years it had then been in existence, was sufficiently marked to encourage Mrs. Sorabji in the idea of establishing a somewhat similar institution at Poona.

The school she founded there, and which is known as the Victoria High School, was in many respects different in its working from that of the normal schools, being as far as possible on the same lines as English high schools, and its success has been so

remarkable that more than one school has been modelled after it in other places.

In the Victoria High School Europeans, Parsees, Brahmans, Jews, and Mahomedans are successfully taught together, and the numbers attending it are constantly on the increase. At the present time the High School itself has about 150 pupils; but there is also a branch school in connection with it, a large and flourishing kindergarten school, and a department in which older girls are prepared for the matriculation examination of the University of Bombay.

Since the opening of the Victoria High School Mrs. Sorabji has succeeded in establishing three other large schools in Poona. One of these is for children who understand nothing but the vernacular, or Marathi language; another is intended for young Mahomedan girls of good family, who are not allowed to attend mixed schools; and the third undertakes the task of training teachers, and is almost the only institution of the kind in the Bombay Presidency.

In the working of these schools Mrs. Sorabji has been assisted almost from the commencement by one or more of her daughters, and at the present time no less than four of them help her regularly: the eldest is assistant superintendent; the second teaches music; another is head mistress of the High School, where she specially manages the upper forms; while

another devotes herself to teaching in the kindergarten; in addition to which one daughter, who holds an appointment under Government, but who lives at home, devotes all her spare hours to the work of the schools. Two of these girls served an apprenticeship for some time as assistant teachers under Miss Collett in the Female Normal School at Ahmedabad, so that there is ample justification for the generous pride with which Cornelia Sorabji speaks of her mother and sisters as having done much for the cause of education in Western India, and as having been the means of bringing knowledge and enlightenment to many dark and ignorant minds.

We must return, however, to Cornelia herself. She was only nine years old when the Victoria High School was started, and she immediately took her place as one of its pupils. Three years later she began to help in the teaching, though continuing her own studies at the same time, and later on she passed through a course in the training school established by her mother. The sister next above her was her special instructress, and it was to her teaching that she ascribed her success, when, at sixteen, she went up for matriculation at Bombay. Having passed this examination, she was not content, like many other students, with what she had already achieved; success only increased her desire to learn more and to continue her course up to the degree. In order to do

this, it was necessary for her to keep terms at a Government college; accordingly, she was entered as a student at the Dekkan College at Poona, and while continuing to live at home, she drove every day to the college for her work.

For a time, at any rate, her experiences there were anything but pleasant. She was the only girl student at the college, and her position as such was not an easy one, among three hundred men students, who looked on her as an intruder, and who had never been trained as English men and boys are, to look upon a woman with respect and to treat her with consideration and courtesy. On the contrary, these young Indian students had been accustomed from their boyhood to hear the women of their family spoken of with contempt, and to see them treated as inferior beings; and it is not to be wondered at that they made Miss Sorabji's life as unpleasant as they could. They stared at her rudely, they played practical jokes upon her, shut the doors of the class-rooms in her face, and tried to keep her out of lectures. All this, however, she bore with patient good-humour, determined not to be driven out, because she felt that she was a pioneer in the cause of her countrywomen's advancement, and that as such she must be ready to endure a great deal. All the students, moreover, did not behave so badly to her; her own countrymen, the Parsis, were uni-

formly courteous and civil, showing in their good manners the result of the more enlightened views with regard to women in which they had been brought up.

Miss Sorabji worked at the college five hours every day, but she had also to study several hours at home in order to get through her work, which she found rather hard. She does not appear to have studied Latin at all before she began her college course, so she had, as she says, "to put five years of Latin into one." Since that time French has been introduced into the University course, as an alternative for Latin in the case of women students; but it was not so then, and the regular curriculum was a fairly difficult one for a student whose previous education, good as it had been, had not been conducted on exactly the same lines. However, on the whole, Miss Sorabji enjoyed her college days. The lectures she always found delightful, and even the examinations were to her a source of real pleasure. Nor were her exertions unsuccessful; besides the real pleasure which she found in study, she obtained substantial rewards of another kind. She was a college scholar each year of her course; she won the Havelock prize, and the Hughling's Scholarship of the Bombay University, which is awarded to the highest candidate in the First Arts Examination. At each examination she took honours, and in the final examination for the

degree, in 1887, she was one of four in the first class of the University list, and stood at the head of all the students from the Dekkan College.

While waiting for the results of the examination to be made known, Miss Sorabji resumed work in the Poona Schools, throwing herself into the work of teaching others with the same whole-hearted enthusiasm which she had displayed in learning for herself.

At the end of a month the lists were published, and great were the rejoicings at the distinctions she had won, not only in her own family circle, but among all who were at all interested in watching the development of education among Indian women.

Almost immediately afterwards she received the offer of a teaching Fellowship in the Gujerat College at Ahmedabad. This she refused, being anxious to devote her time and talents to the education of women rather than of men; but when, a short time after, she was again offered a Fellowship at the same college, and found that the authorities had created a new one expressly to meet the demands she had made, she felt that she could not again refuse. It seemed, indeed, to her that there must be work for her to do at Ahmedabad, and believing that "it would do Indian men good to be ruled for a time by a woman," and "also that if Indian women were ever to be raised, it must be by the respect gained for

the sex by certain members of it," she made up her mind to go.

It was a formidable undertaking, and one which required no small amount of moral courage. It had been hard enough to find herself the only girl at the Dekkan College; but then she had her home to go back to every day, and the sympathy of her parents and sisters to help and encourage her.

Now she had to leave home altogether, and alone to appear before a large body of young men, not as their fellow-student, but as their teacher. It was an ordeal which few girls of twenty-one would have sustained with equanimity, but she came through it unscathed. She writes of it thus: "I do not like to recall my first lecture; but the men behaved well. One rather dreaded contest was all I have to record, and a little sarcasm cured the men. I found them docile and very appreciative."

Her work was to lecture to a class of men on English Literature and Language, her pupils being candidates preparing both for the Previous Examination and the two examinations for the B.A. degree; and she soon won her way by her quiet decision of character and ready tact. It was a great victory; for it demonstrated to all who were willing to be convinced, that an Indian woman may not only possess marked intellectual abilities, but also those qualities of character which are of greater importance and

more lasting value, and which must be held to entitle her, without question, to honour and respect.

Three months after Miss Sorabji's appointment as Fellow, she received an acting appointment as Professor of English in the college. The work of this appointment is usually performed by the English Principal of the College, but owing to the absence of this gentleman, a vacancy occurred for about six months, during which time Miss Sorabji performed the duties and received the salary of the English professor.

It was a great honour to be awarded to one so young, and it was doubly welcome, as it enabled her to put by some money towards the expenses of a visit to England, on which she had set her heart. Not content with the successes she had already gained in India, Miss Sorabji desired to prosecute her studies still further, and her great ambition was, if possible, to go through a course at some college preparatory to passing the Degree Examination of one of our universities.

The Government of India, in order to encourage students to go to England, have established several scholarships, and Miss Sorabji hoped to be able to obtain one of them. But although her qualifications in other respects would have fully entitled her to it, the Government decided that it could only be held by a man. It was a cruel disappointment, and when, in

1888, the selected scholar succumbed to sea-sicknees on his way to England and returned home from Aden, her hopes revived, for she felt confident of passing the ordeal by water. But again her application was refused, and it became evident that if she was to go to England at all, she must depend on her own exertions and on such help as she could obtain from the friends of women's education.

She had saved about £60 out of her salary, and had borrowed about as much from friends in India. This was enough, at any rate, to pay her passage to England and back; and, having received a warm invitation from Miss Manning, the Hon. Secretary of the National Indian Association, and a promise of help from friends in England, she resigned her post in the Gujerat College and set out on her journey of faith and hope.

Miss Sorabji was not allowed to leave Ahmedabad without many tokens of the appreciation in which her work was held by all. Her pupils presented her with a farewell address, accompanied by a present of Cutch silverwork, and the Principal of the College gave her a very handsome testimonial. It ran as follows :—

"Miss Cornelia Sorabji having passed the examifor the degree of B.A. in the First Class, was appointed a Dakshina Fellow in the Guzerat College, for the year 1888. As a teacher in the college, she did her work with remarkable ability and tact, in a

very quiet and unassuming way, at the same time that she exercised complete control over the students. Whatever work was entrusted to her, she did it in the most satisfactory manner, leaving nothing to be desired.

"I had recently, on a vacancy occurring, recommended Miss Sorabji for a Professorship in this college, and I still wish that she may be allowed to continue her connection with this college, where she has already done such good work. By her brilliant University and College career, and by her excellent work as a teacher this year, Miss Sorabji has shown that she is pre-eminently fitted to supply in her person the great want felt in many towns and in the Native States, namely, a thoroughly able and qualified lady superintendent for girls' schools.

"Miss Cornelia Sorabji will carry with her the good wishes of all her colleagues in this college.

(*Signed*) "J. A. Dalal, M.A.,
Principal,
"Guzerat College, Ahmedabad."

It was some disappointment to Miss Sorabji on her arrival in England to find that the only actual degree attainable by women was that of the University of London, and that the course for that degree, as well as that for the Tripos Examinations at Cambridge, was both too long and too expensive for the time and means at her command.

The course laid down by the University of Oxford, however, seemed to offer special advantages, and a scholarship of £25 a year at Somerville Hall having been awarded to her, she took up her residence there at the beginning of the October term 1888. Miss Sorabji was advised to devote her time chiefly to the study of English Literature, with a view of taking honours in that subject, in which she had already shown herself so well informed; and she worked at this for some time. However, the opening of the Honour School of Law at Oxford to women turned Miss Sorabji's ideas in a new direction, and she thought that by qualifying herself in this subject she might be able to open out a new career for women in India. She is now, therefore, studying law, and her answers at the last examination were such as to call forth warm expressions of praise from the examiners, and to make her friends hope that her success in the final examination will be very marked.

Miss Sorabji has made many warm friends since she came to England, and the assistance which they have given towards continuing her studies has been prompted as much by personal affection as by admiration for her abilities and her brave endeavours.

When Miss Sorabji first came to England she was frequently asked to speak at missionary meetings, especially at those in support of Zenana Missions; but, under medical advice, she has now been obliged

to give this up, as her health is by no means very robust, and the exertion of speaking in public is more than she can stand.

It may be mentioned here that Mrs. Sorabji paid a visit to England in 1886, at the invitation of the Indian Female School and Zenana Missionary Society, and made many friends, who were prepared to welcome her daughter when she arrived two years later.

Mrs. Sorabji herself is, as has already been said, a woman of great character and keen intellect. She was one of the witnesses examined by the Commission on Indian Education in 1882, and her evidence given at Poona was considered very valuable, both from her own position as one of the leading educationalists in the Bombay Presidency, and from her intimate acquaintance with the needs of native society. She stated on this occasion that she did not consider that "home education" for either boys or girls in India was of much value, except as a supplement to what they were taught at school. In fact, it was her opinion that education, in the proper sense of the word, must begin with women, if it was to be of any use to the men, because it was the mother's influence which was strongest in moulding the child's character; and for this reason she thought no trouble or expense should be spared to raise the standard of female education in India.

While Mrs. Sorabji was in England in 1886, the work of her schools was ably carried on by her daughters; but her absence was keenly felt in every department of missionary work at Poona.

Her husband wrote thus: "I feel as though I had lost my right hand. Often, when I have been in need of her wise counsel and prompt action, I have been forced to wait and hesitate. The mercy and wisdom of God in providing a help-meet for man never came home to me so forcibly before. I must take this opportunity of observing that my wife, who is still in England, speaks with heart-felt gratitude of the kindness and love shown to her by people in that Christian land."

Mrs. Sorabji's schools are now partly supported by a Government grant-in-aid, a clear proof of the value attached to them; she has made them over to a society, so that they may be carried on on the same lines when she and her daughters are no longer there to direct them.

That some members, however, of this remarkable family may long continue to work in Poona we may reasonably hope. The youngest Miss Sorabji already gives promise of emulating her elder sister's achievements, for she has recently matriculated at Bombay, though only fourteen, and she stood nineteenth in order of merit among nearly three thousand candidates; she, however, intends to be a doctor.

The success achieved by Mrs. Sorabji and her daughters is no doubt exceptional, and it must not be supposed that every Indian woman to whom the same advantages may be offered would make as good a use of them. They have, however, proved beyond all possible doubt that Indian women are, under favourable circumstances, quite as capable as English women of high educational development, and moreover, that such development renders them all the better qualified to serve their generation, either in the domestic circle as wives, mothers, and daughters, or in the more extended sphere of teachers and workers.

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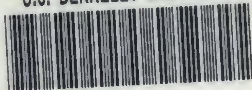

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