

**ESSAY**

**ON**

**THE PROMOTION OF DOMESTIC REFORM**

**AMONG**

**THE NATIVES OF INDIA.**

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**BY GANPAT LAKHSHUMANJI.**

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**BOMBAY:**

**PRINTED AT THE AMERICAN MISSION PRESS.**

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## NOTE.

In April and May 1841, I was called to preside at several meetings of some of the young native gentlemen of Bombay, held at the Mission-house, Ambrolie, for the purpose of discussing the important subject of which this paper treats. The liberality of a friend, R. T. Webb, Esq., afterwards enabled us to propose two prizes for the best essays written by any native, who took part in the controversies which were then held, and which should be read at the annual examination of the General Assembly's Institution which has just taken place. The successful competitors are Ganpat Lakhshuman, a student in the Elphinstone Institution, the author of this most interesting and able production, and Govind Náráyan, a student in the General Assembly's Institution, whose excellent essay we may afterwards have an opportunity of laying before the public.

Ganpat's Essay, it will be seen and acknowledged, is one of no ordinary character. The picture which it exhibits of a Hindú family is extremely correct, and such as few are able and willing to draw; and the reforms for which it eloquently pleads, are of no superficial kind. It is well worthy of the attention, both of his countrymen and Europeans,—of the former because it distinctly points to the path of improvement, and of the latter because it reveals much which they are anxious to know, and which they may turn to good account in their efforts for the promotion of the well-being of this great country.

The religious tone of the Essay will not escape notice. It is vastly different from that which is produced by Hindúism and the other systems of error prevalent in this land. The writer is one of those who, though not educated in a Christian institution, do not deem the faith of the most exalted and powerful nations on the face of the globe, unworthy of their serious consideration, but who appreciate the benevolence by which the friends of the propagation of Christianity are actuated, and who avail themselves of those means of improvement which they present to all candid inquirers after divine truth. May he, and those like-minded with himself, be further enlightened. May they see and feel that their comparatively clear views of the divine law, impose on them higher demands of duty; that amidst much which is honourable and amiable in the sight of their fellowmen, there may be much which cannot stand the omniscient inquisition of an infinitely holy God; that in the divine jurisprudence, condemnation must be the result of a single transgression, unless the divine mercy interpose to avert the awful consequence; that mercy cannot be exercised to the disparagement of justice, and the injury of the divine authority; that it is only in the sacrifice of Christ, that mercy and truth *have* met together, and righteousness and peace embraced each other; and that it is only in Christ that God is just while He is the justifier of the ungodly. May they look to the Saviour and live. May they be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and thus themselves experience *that great reformation*, in comparison of which all others are insignificance itself, — and be made meet to be esteemed members of the FAMILY OF GOD.

JOHN WILSON.

Bombay, April 1842.



## ESSAY, ETC.

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The very title of this paper suggests to our mind almost intuitively the great importance of the subject. The importance of domestic arrangement evinces itself in the circumstance of its being the most widely beneficial in its results, the most essential to the comfort and happiness of human society, and the best guarantee of social order and peace. Our home is important to us on account of its being the chief scene of many of those occurrences on which depends our happiness both present and future. It is the school where the infant mind is trained to the exercise of its powers, where the child is taught its duties to the different members of the family, where early lessons of piety are instilled into its mind, where its ideas are acquired and its affections formed, where principles of virtue are first implanted, in short where begins the laying of that foundation upon which will depend the superstructure of future happiness. Within the little circle of its walls we receive those impressions, which grounded in a heart that turns from good to evil, will influence our principles and conduct, and colour the whole of our after-life. It is there that we derive knowledge, wisdom, and ability, to enable us to discharge our duties to the world at large. There are our best affections rooted; there are the moral and social affections of infant humanity developed; and there habits of subjection to authority, of submission to a supreme will, are formed. There, as it were in a private nursery, are we prepared for the intercourse, and business, and duties of this life, and for the far more important duties and privileges of that which is to come. Is it not in the domestic circle of our home that there is secured from our earliest infancy, the benefit of a father's counsels and a father's care, that we are taught betimes the lessons of piety, commended with persuasive power by the lips of a parent, whom God would have to be at once a master and a priest in his own house, and to give by the type of an earthly father, some idea of the character in which he himself best loves to be known, even as their Father in heaven? How important then it is that we make our domestic life capable of realizing these glorious purposes for which it seems to be so evidently intended. It is indeed not every where that the blessing of a right family arrangement is felt to its fullest extent by all its members. To those miserable abodes where intemperance and vice are daily inmates, and where ignorance and superstition prevail, rooting out those social feelings which alone can enliven the charities of the domestic circle, and that sweet communion of sentiment which is essential to the happiness of the family, what feeling can be attached but that of a rooted aversion. Domestic life is indeed, above all other things on earth, redolent of happiness to every human being. But in that unhappy abode where ignorance and superstition are the reigning inmates, and where education has not penetrated its beams, and banished darkness from its walls, the true blessing which domestic life is designed by a gracious Providence to confer on man, is neither felt nor enjoyed to its fullest extent. Education found-

ed on the fear of God, which is the beginning of all wisdom, lends additional charms to the family circle and to all the dearest associations connected with it : but in vain would we look for the realization of these high blessings where education has not shed its light around. Consider a youth brought up in the ways of idleness and profligacy, into whose ears the wholesome lessons of piety were never poured, and the education of whose moral and intellectual powers was quite neglected, whose improvement in virtue was never attended to, and who was only encouraged to excel in the achievements of crime ; and contrast such a character with that of a modest, unassuming and enlightened youth, trained to habits of rational contemplation, brought to an acquaintance with his duties to his earthly parents and with those which he owes to his heavenly Father, grounded in the belief and confession of truth, and qualified for the important purposes of his existence — doing good to his fellow-creatures and living to the glory of God ; contrast these characters so diametrically opposite to one another, and say, reader, without prejudice or partiality, which of them would prove a useful member of society. Indeed, when ignorance is not removed from the family abode, and its natural accompaniments are allowed to reign without a check, our domestic life is no longer a blessing to us. Then, intemperance, vice, and superstition would become the reigning inmates, and root out all those social feelings so necessary for the preservation of domestic order and peace. But in a family composed of members, whose hearts are impressed with the convictions of truth, and imbued with the principles of sound morality, the real blessings of domestic life are most extensively felt. Born in a state of helplessness and placed in a state of absolute dependence upon their parents, their best and dearest interests as men, as far as both this world and the next are concerned, must in a great measure, depend upon the principles and conduct of those with whom they may be so nearly connected from the earliest days of their infancy. Hence arises the absolute necessity that the members composing a family should all have enlightened views of things around them, have a clear knowledge of the relations in which they stand to this world and the next, of the duties they owe to one another and to their Creator, and be impressed with the importance of being subservient to promote the glory of God, and the good of their fellow-creatures. In a family so constituted, there is no danger of man's proving a useless member of society. Then, indeed, may the blessings of religious and moral education be felt in all their fullness and abundance. Then, indeed, may the foundation-head of corruption be turned into waters of goodness. Then, indeed, may the depravity of the human heart be softened and its dreadful effects be prevented. In such a family, there is a provision already secured for the better and early tuition of the young candidates for immortality — a provision which we will look for in vain in a family of opposite description. Men united to such a family, cannot fail to derive from their connections, a large amount of useful information, and wholesome moral instruction. They have the opportunity of picking up these from the conversation and example of those enlightened and experienced individuals, by whom they may find themselves every day surrounded. Thus, then, they may enjoy all those advantages that can possibly be derived from an enlightened and well regulated intercourse of domestic life.

1. *A short sketch of Hindú families.*—Now, in order to avail ourselves of these foregoing observations in pursuing the subject with which we are presently engaged, we would in the first place, ask our native readers, whether the family institutions of the Hindús resemble an institution so well regulated, and so happily circumstanced, as this ? Since with our domestic life is connected the promotion of our best interests both in this world and the next, and since it is in the family circle that we



receive those impressions which have so great an influence over the principles and conduct of our future life, it is a matter of serious importance to inquire, whether or not in our own family systems, there exist customs and prejudices of all kinds, detrimental to the cause of virtue and the advancement of moral enlightenment, and whether yet we have neglected to extirpate them entirely from the family circle, with which we and our kindred are connected, and upon which our best interests are so greatly dependent? Does the father in our families gather around him the little flock of his children, and commend to them by persuasive power, the wholesome lessons of piety and the principles of morality? Does the mother, kind as she is, and possessing a heart that yearns with prompt solicitude over the little objects of her affection, display any anxiety or care about the interests of her own soul or of those of the family around her? Is she really convinced of her own state of ignorance, or when so convinced, is she willing to use any means to remove it? Did it ever occur to her mind, that while with all the solicitude of a mother, she cared about the health of her children, and sought eagerly to deck their bodies with all exterior embellishments, she must with far more solicitude and anxiety attend to the proper training of their mental powers, and to furnish their minds with rich intellectual wealth? No such thing! Is not her mind on the other hand always haunted with thoughts of their future eminence in the world's esteem, and is she not often discontented and vexed when disappointment or ill-success attends them in their purely worldly enterprise, without being able to use any means by which their spirits might properly be soothed and cheered? Is there any thing like sweetness of communion, gentleness of manners, mutual love, mutual esteem, sweet interchange of feelings and sentiments, so essential to the promotion of domestic harmony and filial affection, to be observed in the families of the natives? Are the children there seen collecting together to receive any lessons in piety or morality from their parents, and to derive useful instructions from them, as to the manner in which they ought to conduct themselves in relation to this world, and in the far more interesting relation to the world which is to come? Is a father's voice heard tenderly instructing his beloved children in divine things; or the lisping tongue of a child reverently whispering the Creator's name and singing His praises? No: surely not. The clean-swept hearth is scarcely ever encircled by a pious and God-fearing people, from whose lips no word of depravity ever did drop, whose souls are often raised in holy devotion to their Father in heaven, who love him both in prosperity and adversity, and whose stay is on Him only who is the author of every good and perfect gift. True piety and wholesome early instructions are entirely neglected, and their very semblance is, perhaps, without hesitation, mocked at and ridiculed. They do hardly recollect that every thing good comes from God, and that they are accountable to Him only for all they think, and all they do. All that degree of domestic felicity which they enjoy, they forget as proceeding entirely from Him who is the source of all good; and amidst all their social endearments and comforts, scarcely ever is an eye seen turned towards Heaven, whose liberal hand dispenses blessings to his creatures, who gives them all that is needful to their existence, and has pleasure only in a grateful heart. But let us bear in mind that where true piety and sound morality are sufficiently grounded in the hearts of a family, there it is that we can find domestic happiness and social comfort perpetually reigning throughout the whole family circle.

2. *The state of Hindu females.* — The production of social comforts and the enjoyment of domestic felicity to its fullest extent, depend upon the education of women who are chiefly concerned in the interests of the family, and who possess an extensive influence over the habits of human society. However sanguine our hopes may be about our domestic improvement, yet they



cannot be fully realized until the state of things undergoes a perfect change, or until the minds of our females be thoroughly enlightened by sound education. The formation of the minds of the other sex is occasionally hinted at as being in the hands of women, and never quite exempt from their influence. But when women are degraded and enslaved, the benefits that they can enjoy in such a state are evidently few, and the injury thereby done to the community at large, is great. Combined with the control which they possess over society, their own enlightenment would be a source of vast improvement, and render them in fact the ministers of a great many blessings. Here however, the order of things is quite the reverse. Here woman is degraded to be the slave rather than caressed as the companion of man. Here the cultivation of her mind is systematically neglected. She can hardly enter into intelligent conversation or discussion. Both the soul and body of a daughter are subjugated to the tyrannizing will of her father, who is rather intent upon enslaving her mind than informing her judgment—of a wife to the overbearing disposition of the husband who rather takes much pleasure in frowning towards her with anger and in seeing her tamely submitting to his lashes, than in maintaining a sweet interchange of feelings with her. Custom would no doubt, in such a case reconcile more than one half of the human race to this mental bondage, and the flexibility and gentleness of the female character in this enslaved state, combined with an uninformed mind, would greatly assist in rivetting the opinions instilled into her heart in her infancy, and begetting in her a stubborn obstinacy, against all forcible convictions of a stranger. The time which she ought to have usefully spent in improving and enriching her own mind, and in the prosecution of duties which involve the most important interests of her soul, is indifferently and negligently lost by being drawn away or occupied by some insignificant care, some small bargain to be made, some amusement to be engaged in, some petty object to be gained, some project or speculation which attracts her fancy or promises to gratify her taste and ambition. Far removed as she is from the busy tumult of society, the woman of India has a little society about herself, where she finds subjects sufficient to engross her — subjects of emulation, of provocation, and of quarrel among her own children, or among some other members of the family, with whom she has any thing to do. Within the narrow circle of her home does she find objects sufficient to engross her attention and occupy her time during the whole term of her existence. With the affairs of the kitchen is she the most busily engaged, and in them does she find the greatest possible delight. Instead of employing her time in the cultivation of her own mind, she lamentably wastes it in vain rivalries, idle gossiping, and in foolish trifles. Thus are the precious hours of an Indian woman told over, which she ought rather to have devoted to the attainment of nobler objects, and have employed in the enjoyment of purer and higher kinds of delight, than to suffer them to pass away in some petty cares or some frivolous objects, and to be absorbed in the gratification of some present humour or some wrong ambition. Thus by the engrossment of petty cares, domestic anxieties, and some causeless irritation, does she suffer the time swiftly to pass away which she ought to have purchased for the interests of her own soul, and which rather than be wholly bestowed on the establishment of mere bodily health or the promotion of temporal prospects, she should, under a deep impression of the more important concerns of futurity, devote with unbroken energy, to the promotion of her spiritual welfare, and the advancement of the all-comprehending interests of her soul, which is infinitely superior in value, infinitely nobler in nature, and infinitely more durable in existence, than the material mechanism which is called the body. But alas! her views do not extend beyond the narrow circumference of objects immediately around her. The more insignificant concerns of the kitchen, the adjustment of the differences and disputes among servants or relations; — outvying others of her own sex, in gilded trappings,

or in the splendours of brilliant jewels, magnificent rubies or golden bracelets, and such other frail ornaments which merely deck the exterior, but leave unenriched and naked the never-dying soul; — the forming and extending of connections by some conjugal alliances, the marrying of sons and daughters at an early age, long ere the buddings of their infant reason have begun to expand, or the dawnings of understanding to break in, or they are awakened to any sense of the important nature of their union and of the several obligations, which from such a union necessarily arise; — the strict and the undeviating observance of certain unnecessary ceremonies with which the hungry and dissatisfied priest over-burden her; — these and many others are the sole and primary subjects of her frequent care and anxious solicitude. These are the objects which take an undue precedence in her untutored mind, and on these alone are exhausted all the energies of thought and labour. Too much is she occupied with the passing scenes of temporal enjoyments or the grovelling pleasures of sensual appetites, eagerly to pursue after and sieze the nobler and more lasting delights of intellectual refinement; and too strong is her attachment to mere worldly things, seriously to desire the things of eternity. To her the enjoyment of present peace and comfort possesses more attractive charms than the bright and cheering prospects of future felicity. Under such a state of mental bondage hardly can we expect her to follow back the stream of time and grasp in, on a retrospective glance, all the transactions of the past, and to deduce from their arrangement and condensation inferences as to what might happen in future. Hardly can she in the events which take place on earth, whether they be of a public, private, or more domestic nature — hardly can she discover the visible hand of God, as directing them all for ages, as overruling the schemes and enterprizes of many successive generations of men, as guiding with infinite facility the complicated movements of the natural and moral worlds to the result which he had determined from the beginning of time. Under the present enslaved state of her mind, she can neither form nor entertain any enlightened views of the divine administration, and of the constitution and condition of mankind as subjects of that administration. The whole natural world affords to her no rich materials for contemplation, and furnishes no wholesome discipline to the faculties and powers of her uncultivated mind. In vain for her does the sun dart his enlivening beams upon the earth, and diffuse gladness through the nations. In vain for her the earth is blessed with fertility, and is replenished with all that is conducive to the comfort and convenience of mankind. In vain the flowers of the field bloom before her in all their radiant beauty, and perfume the air with their sweet fragrance. Thus then the affections and thoughts of Hindú women are wholly set upon the objects and advantages of the world, without ever lifting up their minds to the Giver of all good, and who is the only source of all their blessings here below and above. In such families the real blessings of domestic life can scarcely be experienced to their fullest extent by the unhappy members of whom they consist. For, those apparent advantages and enjoyments which they seem to enjoy, and on which they rest the full weight of their affection and interest, are not the blessings peculiar to a domestic life. The authority of disputing with servants, and darting an angry look towards them if they do any wrong, or smiling at them with mild complacency if they do right, is not a real blessing. Marrying sons and daughters at an early age, dressing them in all the charms of artificial decorations, covering their heads with flowers, their bodies with splendid clothes, and hands and feet with yellow gold, gazing at them, sometimes with pleasure, sometimes with wonder, and often with admiration, calling friends and relations alike disposed with themselves to share in their sports, whims and pleasures, constitute none of the real blessings of a domestic life. To preside over the affairs of the kitchen and to manage all its concerns, is no domestic blessing.

To chastise a child for its impertinence, or to have the means of satisfying its wants, is no great domestic blessing. Attending on certain ceremonies even of the most trifling description, and having all matters to adjust at their command; distributing fruits and money among the Bráhmans, who are always ready to subject them to many unnecessary religious penances and sacrifices and who, on receiving the welcome reward of *dackshinâ*, as it is called, for all their priest-craft and cunning, pronounce a kind of blessing on the presiding female of the family — all these ceremonies and all these affairs can not be the blessings of a domestic life. If, therefore, these objects and these pursuits occupy the time and engage the attention of every female of an Indian family — if beyond these her thoughts never extend, and if in them she finds the source of all her chief happiness and enjoyments on earth — if amidst all the domestic charities, of which she partakes, and the domestic felicities she enjoys, she can never yet acknowledge the liberal hand that dispenses blessings to all created beings: if the affairs of the kitchen, the bonds of relationships, and the extending of connections and the decoration of children, are the sole objects and purposes of her existence, and form the whole circumference of her actions and thoughts, then it can scarcely be that she enjoys the real blessings and comforts peculiar to domestic life in all their extent and in all their fulness, for these are the whole sum and conclusion of her domestic history. No other than these things form the subjects of her attention and serious regard. It is these, and these alone, which form the whole history of her life, and without them her existence is considered as a mere blank.

3. *The conduct of children in families of the higher classes of the natives.* — The effects of the exclusion of moral and religious education from native families, and the consequent moral and spiritual prostration which prevails throughout, manifest themselves most dreadfully in the conduct of the children bred up amongst such families. Perhaps in the higher ranks the evil is not exhibited in all its magnitude, because of those studied refinements that smoothness and polish of manners, which characterize the higher portions of the community. These refinements, artificial as they are, keep for a time within proper bounds, the energies of the corrupt heart; and prevent, though not entirely, the effects of ignorance from gaining an uncontrolled predominance in the family. Let them be but once removed, and just as surely will the unhappy effects of corruption burst out and spread themselves over the family, as the waters of a river rush inland and overwhelm the country, when the artificial embankments which confined them are removed. The genuine sentiments of the heart display themselves in a variety of circumstances of the most unhappy description. Hence we every day meet with instances of the most glaring deficiencies in the character of children, born even in the families of the higher classes of natives. Often when we enter these families of our native brethren, do we meet with a boy or a girl fighting or quarrelling with some inmate of the house for extorting from him unwilling compliance with his wishes or her's, as the case may be. Often does it happen that when some ill-omened guest enters their houses and observing around him the order of things, ventures to talk of learning, of the danger of ignorance and the folly of youth, the haughty children of the family not a little flattered and indulged betimes by their parents, laugh at him, mock, ridicule, and despise him, pour upon him every bitter reproach and all the harsh language of contempt. Often is the indulgent mother drawn away from her domestic affairs, with which she may be busied, by the incessant cries and unreasonable importunities of her stubborn boy. She coaxes and flatters him. The boy persists in his resolution. She yields to his impertinences, allows herself to be vanquished, and leaves him alone. The father worn out and exhausted by the labour



of the day, seeks, at night, a repose in his wife and children — a refuge from the noise and turmoil of the world. But his repose is not one of a sweeter kind; for, here does a haughty child come complaining of some wrong being done to him; there does he set up crying for something which he wants, and his parents do not like to give. Here he falls to beating his brothers or sisters who may be like-minded with himself, and be distinguished by the same petulant character; there does he run away from one corner of the house to the other, to find some stone or some stick by which to avenge the little affront offered him. The old man feels disturbed and vexed by this scene of wild extravagance among his children. He can use no better means to put a stop to their roguery and their childish sports, than by inflicting upon them the severest corporal punishment. He is too little enlightened himself to advise them by wise counsels, and convince them with persuasive power, of the folly and danger likely to attend their practices and sports. He can read to them no lesson in morality, and instil into their ears no wholesome principles of true piety and wisdom. And if under such circumstances he even makes an attempt to speak of the awful responsibility in which they stand to their earthly parents, and their Father in heaven, what can be expected but the romping insensibility, the wild mirth of intemperance, the loud laugh of childish enthusiasm, or the damping of excited spirits, and confusion and disorder reigning throughout the whole. The old man is tired and vexed, and leaving his unmanageable children to their wild sports and amusements in despair, retires silently to his bed, vainly blaming his fate, but never thinking that the fault is his own. The mother, whose solicitude for their peace and satisfaction is indeed remarkable, and often too powerful to sway even her better motives, countenances them in their gay frolics, and their wild gambols, only scolding and threatening them if they carry their extravagance to too high a pitch, and do not cease in the immoderate indulgence of their favourite whims. The mother whose heart is naturally full of affection for them, and who loves them with extreme tenderness, never bears the thought of discouraging or frightening her fond children by rough or harsh menaces, but with a smile of complacency and satisfaction, endeavours to coax them up by flattering promises or to satisfy their appetites with some gewgaw, or some glittering toy which might amuse their fancy or gratify their taste. This indulgence of the parents, founded upon no moral principle, and directed by no enlightened views which education alone opens, lays a foundation for many regrets and disappointments, subjects them to a multitude of vain troubles and anxieties which they might otherwise have avoided, destroys social harmony and every sentiment of filial respect, and renders the children, at last, curses rather than blessings to the family.

4. *The conduct of females in families of the lower ranks of the natives.* — Let us not, however, stop here, but pursue our inquiries through the lower ranks of our native society. Observe first the conduct of the seniors of those families. Observe the female inmates occasionally falling out upon one another with the most bitter acrimony for some trifling or insignificant concern, bawling out the most horrid imprecations the whole day, mentioning lies without dismay and violating truth without one single feeling of remorse, uttering language towards one another, that would abash piety or redden the cheek of modesty, often gnashing their teeth, stamping their feet, beating their heads and breasts, and committing every kind of self-infliction in the height of their foolish anger, blaspheming God's holy name on all occasions whether trifling or serious, vainly setting up crying, and bitterly lamenting the hard fate, as they would have it, in which by their own impudence, they are unhappily involved. Observe still farther their conduct towards their husbands. The wife, feeling herself to be the lady of the family, with a few children at her command, and some little stock of money on which

rests all her pride and glory, looks about on the several objects of her family circle with self-complacency : and her vanity, which is common to her sex, being flattered by the respect and obedience which she sees paid to her all around, she does not even fail to attempt at gaining some ascendancy over her own lord. If he be a man of upright conduct, steadiness of purpose, firmness of principle, and of a regular disposition, the cunning woman first fondly dallies about him, pleases him by well-measured pace, fine serving of the hands, the graceful flow of her hair, and the artfulness of her soft, sweet voice ; — all which she does for the sake of duping her undesigning lord. Then gradually she coaxes him up, flatters him, showing him proofs of her high esteem and regard for him, submits with some semblance of patience to the few slaps and scolding which he gives her to be satisfied with her constancy, then slowly brings in a few subjects of complaint in which the feeling of her husband may be deeply interested, explains to him the different details of circumstances connected with them, reveals to him the bad feelings and sentiments which his own kindred or friends might cherish towards him, and takes care to contrast those feelings of his own relatives with the high, and amiable sentiment displayed towards him by relations on her own side ; thus indicating to her husband what delicate sensibility she possesses with regard to his welfare, what deep interest she takes in his nearest concerns, and how scrupulous she is in observing and detecting even in his dearest friends and relations the slightest marks of hostility towards him. If on the other hand, he be a man of loose habits, and incorrect moral principles, she need not be at so much pains to gain her selfish end. Her ascendancy over him is at once established. The display of her ingenuity and skill in the management of her own domestic concerns, and her strict observance of the forms and ceremonies which she is now and then called upon to perform, impresses him with a sentiment of reverence for his wife, and invests her character with such awe that her husband gives himself wholly up to her guidance, and submits to her in all matters, however serious or important they may be. Perhaps the husband, as no doubt is often the case among the lower ranks of the natives, may be in the habit of visiting taverns and gamehouses. This circumstance adds to the consequence of the reigning heroess of the family, and renders her ladyship the more esteemed and revered by the houses of her neighbourhood. He may be a servant to some respectable native himself, or to some European. Returning from his duties in the evening, on his way homeward he steps into some ale-house or other, and demands the fatal cup. The man sits calmly gazing around, and cheerfully swallows up the contents of the poisoned cup. The drunkard then goes home, and finds the door shut fast against him. The wife whose business all this was, is perhaps baking her cakes, and and cooking her meals, meditating on the broils and contests in which she was engaged with her fellow-mates during the day, and busily working her fancy to find out some subject for quarrel to be engaged in with her husband by night. The husband, shivering in the cold night, knocks at the door, and bawls out his wife's name to open it, who had so cruelly shut it against him. She comes furiously out, hastily opens the door, loads him at the first interview with the severest reproaches, deprecating his conduct, and invoking the gods to have pity on her, and relieve her from the dangers and perils attending such a disgraceful union. The poor husband smitten with shame and the lashes of a self accusing conscience, submits patiently to all the imprecations of his wife, and to all her whims and caprices, rooting out, as they do, those social feelings and those rational sentiments which enliven and adorn domestic life.

This is no exaggerated statement but a fact attested by my own experience and observation.

5. *The conduct of children in lower families.* But this is not all in reference to the families of the lower orders of natives. A circumstance equally mournful with the former, and involving the happiness of human society, needs be particularly noticed. Ignorance has deeply rooted itself in the bosom of those families. Juvenile depravity there holds an uncontrolled sway. One can scarcely walk the streets without meeting with numberless instances of the early profligacy of character. It meets the eye on all hands. And it is so common here, that it ceases to excite wonder. A boy is seen running along with some little theft which he may have committed in his own house or the houses of his neighbourhood. He calls out to his fellow-mates, who may be probably engaged in the same kind of enterprise, to share the prize with him. They all assemble together congratulating and complimenting one another on the successful issue of their enterprise, divide their respective spoils among themselves with due regard to the degree of skill which each one of them exercised in committing the theft, and to the value of the spoil which he succeeded in acquiring, and pride themselves on these achievements as those of an extraordinary kind. A girl with the gentleness and flexibility peculiar to her sex, is observed also to run about in imitation of the boy, chanting out some merry rhyme which her mother taught her, and associating with her fellows of the other sex with the most unseemly familiarity. A father is seen with his whip, or a stick, or perhaps, with a stone in his hand, driving his stubborn son home, falling upon his body, and soundly beating him with blows, calling him harsh words, tying his hands and feet to some tree growing near, or to some post, or to any kind of support, then soundly giving as many lashes of his whip on his back as he chooses, kicking him, spitting on him, and dealing with him in a very unbecoming and disgusting manner. The son bawls out, and in fits of anger beats his own breast, throws about his arms and legs, calls out to some one to set him at liberty, promises to give him some small reward for his display of generosity in relieving him, calls upon the names of his gods to lend him their *celestial* aid in loosening the ties by which the *earthly* hands of his parent have fastened him, even blaming them for their giving him birth in a house and amid friends where his natural heart has not its full play. A mother is beheld running in the same manner as the father after her child, with one hanging on her shoulders, and another sucking at her breast, snatching from his hands any toy he may have fled with from her, tying up his hands and feet, dragging him along the streets, beating him with her fist, whipping him as he is dragged along, while the little urchin is exerting all its might in resisting her threatenings and beatings. Perhaps he gets loosened from her grasp, and flies off from her. Now what solicitude and anxiety does not the mother display? She goes home and sends a servant if she can afford one, to look about for her child and to bring him into her presence. The boy goes and joins his companions. There he revels in all the wantonness of freedom amid the circle of his gay companions. He is so deeply engaged in the sports and gambols of his youthful companions, as never to allow himself to recollect that his mother from whom he had fled, is much strict about him, and would never afterwards give him leave to stir out of doors. Amidst the noise and fumes of pleasure, the youth loses all sense of his moral obligations and duties to his parents. But the mother's affection comes into play. At home she is weeping for her child's absence. Her heart is soon melted into pity and tenderness. She is not now what she was some moments ago. She throws away the whip and the stick which she had just held fast in her hands to chastise her wayward boy. She casts aside her angry looks, and forgets the words of execration which had just lately moved her lips. She does not attend for some time to the affairs of the kitchen and leaves them at the disposal of some qualified person in the house; sending all her thoughts after



the boy who is yet out of doors. Perhaps now the day has set, and the shades of night begun to close in all around. The mother's solicitude now knows no bounds; and her heart beats high with the throbbings of tender anxiety. She lays her hand upon her breast, and lifts up her eyes to heaven, as if in deep meditation. Her thoughts are all wandering after her boy. Her imagination, heated by superstition, transforms all her thoughts into frightful spectres which often cross her mind's eye, now representing her boy as carried away by some thief, now as devoured by some monster of the forest. Her boy does not yet appear. She weeps and refuses to eat or drink till he comes home. She sends for a Bráhmaṇ in the neighbourhood, and asks of him omens, and inquires of him where her boy must be? What must he be doing? And when will he come? At midnight, perhaps, when the flutter and noise of the gay circle has closed, in the disgusts and slumber of the young companions, the longed for boy of the mother walks home with his eyes half closed, his body weakened, his intellect benumbed, his senses stupified, and almost in a state totally unfitting him for any other than the business of quietly sleeping in his bed. The door of the house is indeed shut, but the indulgent mother half sleeping and half awake, is sitting immediately behind the door waiting in anxious expectation of her child. He knocks at the door and it is soon opened by the mother within; she forbears scolding or threatening him, lest it should tend to strengthen his obstinacy, and thereby subject herself the more to the same unnecessary anxieties and cares in future. This indulgence, so far from producing the expected result, rather encourages him to engage more deeply in his pursuits, and indulge more freely in his gambols. He repeats the same round of process the next day and goes unpunished. He is thus allowed to run into the wildest extravagances of his youth, beyond all hopes of his being ever afterwards reclaimed from his error. He obeys no commands given by his parents, who, however, are little careful to see them duly enforced. Commands are respected and are as often disobeyed. A habit of insubordination is gradually induced, which grows to such a height that nothing can overcome it. Entreaties, threats, corporal punishments, lose their effect, and are found insufficient to counteract its tendencies. Thus a sure foundation is laid for many future perplexities and sorrows; for many needless troubles, bitter regrets, and self-reproaches. When, therefore, the boy thus breaks off at a tangent from all domestic restraints, when the flagrant outbursts of his corrupt nature are allowed to burst out in all their fury without being reprov'd or checked, when no attempt is made to develope and strengthen the faculties of his mind, and when every sound instruction is neglected which might tend to subdue the evil tendencies of his corrupt heart, and rear him in an intimate knowledge of divine truth, he becomes really a curse, not only to the family in which he was born, but to the community at large.

*General observations on instances of juvenile depravity displayed in Hindú families, and female education recommended as necessary to prevent these.* We still wish to enlarge on this interesting branch of the subject by remarking that those instances of juvenile depravity which now everywhere meet the eye, would be less frequently obtruded upon public notice, if women were endowed with sound education, and their views enlightened with respect to their rights and obligations. The promotion of the interests of the rising generation strongly inculcates the necessity of female education. The early discipline of children depends upon their parents, but more especially upon their mothers, under whose watching care they are placed for a greater length of time. As on the principles and conduct of the rising generation, the welfare of society does in a great measure depend, it is not unnecessary to trace to its source early profligacy of character. Surely the strongest law binds on parents the duty of watching to the extent of their power and means over their own children in infancy, and of not resigning too soon the care of



them to strangers, but of employing as long as they can, every day in discharging the sacred duty for all the purposes which their parental wisdom and affection ought to be exercised in accomplishing. Early, unremitting, and vigorous superintendence, constant restraint and unwearied patience, combined with a proper degree of self-possession, are the essential qualities required to form a prominent part in the character of every early guardian of youth; for if indolence or negligence with all its pernicious train of attendant evils be allowed to paralyze and weaken the exertions of the parent, and the mental cultivation of the young immortals be entirely neglected, or attended to with remissness and languor, not only a total enslavement of the soul will be the consequence of such a criminal method of procedure, but also symptoms of degeneracy, examples of vicious excess, and unprovoked rudeness will make frequent appearance and acquire an uncontrolled predominance. When in walking through a village or a town, or on entering, in the ordinary course of social intercourse, or the discharge of social duty, the houses of our neighbourhood, we meet with a roughness of character, the petulance of childhood, the pride of contempt, the scream of passion, the look of indifference, the sullenness of suppressed rage, the wild mirth of insensibility, and the thousand other effects of overweening indulgence,—we are warranted, by every right consideration, to trace all those glaring and unhallowed deficiencies in the character of youths to the want of discipline that prevails under a parent's roof, or under the fostering care of the mother who gave them birth. The father being occupied, during the whole day, which is the season of instruction for youth, with his toils out of doors, it is obvious that the younger branches must fall to the more immediate and watching care of the mother. But when she is incapable from her own ignorance to pour into the minds of her children wholesome lessons of piety, she can have no right conception of that decency of deportment, which piety brought to early maturity necessarily inspires. Not being herself brought to the conviction of the most important truths of nature and religion, she must, as there is no other alternative, connive at and willingly countenance the glaring indecencies of her children, however debasing in their nature, and however pernicious in their effects. Not being herself enlightened so as to be capable of entertaining lofty ideas of the Deity, and of forming correct views of the principles and motives on which his government of the moral world is conducted, she countenances sometimes without even a look of authority, the wild extravagancies of her corrupt offspring, and so far from checking or arresting them in their heedless career, calmly contemplates them indulging in their sinful gambols, and unconsciously slumbering on in their favorite indulgencies. Under such an order of things, what is to be expected, but the loud laugh of intemperance, the romping of insensibility, the damping of excited spirits, disorder and confusion, if an ill omened guest should regard piety with reverence and esteem, and venture to talk of the soul and its high destiny, and of the folly of devoting one's self exclusively to the promotion of mere temporal concerns. True it is, that in the higher ranks of society in which a similar want of discipline prevails, such conduct is not followed by the effects which we deplore, because of the polish, the smoothness of manners, which for a time keep within bounds the outbursts of innate corruption. But when these artificial restraints are occasionally removed, the genuine sentiments of the depraved heart are expressed in the circumstance of piety being ridiculed, honest worth being despised, and a bitter sarcastic sneer seen playing over the countenance. Observe the conduct of children so imperfectly brought up in the knowledge of truth, and so carelessly educated under the indulging care of an ignorant woman. Behold those motley groups of such children in our streets, and you hear the name of God blasphemed in horrid imprecations, language uttered that would redden the

cheek of modesty, truth violated without one single feeling of remorse. Mark their conduct again at home : here you have already seen the discordant jar-ings of angry passions ; one raising his hand against another ; there the child disputing the authority of a father, or sullenly yielding an unwilling compliance with his wishes ; in another quarter you may see some retiring to rest with the wild mirth of indifference when not an eye was turned to the author of every good and perfect gift. Hence is it that the most crowded page in the Calendar of crimes is that which records the delinquencies and punishments of those who were not trained up, under their parent's care, in the paths of learning, who were not taught their duties to their Creator, and who disregarded the solemn remonstrances of conscience. It is owing to this cause that a stream of moral pollution threatens to inundate our land, and to bury in its waves the feeble barriers which an ignorant child of an ignorant mother can erect to oppose its overwhelming violence. And hence is it that a withering blast has passed over our land, and we see its effects in the roar of intemperance, the emaciated votary of dissipation, the lowering looks of the worldly sensualist. Now this early profligacy in youth, would, in a considerable degree, be prevented from deforming their character, if the mother who gave them birth, and under whose immediate care they are, from the years of their infancy placed, possessed that enlightenment of the mind which education gives, and acquired a strong relish for those intellectual pleasures and enjoyments which are superior, both in quality and amount, to any which the world can supply. But if, on the other hand, the female guardian of youth has no idea of the manner in which the understanding is enlightened and expanded, if her thoughts, views, and prospects do not extend beyond her present condition, and if she is incapable of appreciating the true worth of the soul, and of providing the means of moral and religious instruction to the young immortals, then, I grieve to think, an uncommon degree of juvenile rudeness, grafted on that innate corruption which lies at the foundation of an unrenewed heart, will, in spite of all, acquire an uncontrolled predominance. If therefore we wish our children to be good and pious, modest and respectful, circumspect and prudent, it must be the object of a serious and primary importance to us, as individuals and to the community at large, that their mothers, whose views and principles from constant habit will form essential ingredients in their character, and colour the whole of their after life, that their mothers who have the sacred duty imposed upon them by nature, of watching over, and providing for them, be first well-grounded in the higher truths of religion and morality, and be brought to habits of rational contemplation. It is my constant and earnest prayer that the lesson which this part of the subject teaches us may press home to the hearts of our native friends, with all the weight of an awful responsibility, and that they, by a ready renunciation of all national prejudice, may unite in strenuous exertion in educating their female friends, and thus prove effectual instruments in preventing those direful consequences of juvenile depravity which spring from a want of proper religious discipline under the fostering care of the mother, those complicated disasters that are confined, not to the depraved youths alone, but also extend themselves to the relations who conceal or countenance their crimes, and to the communities that fail to provide the means whereby the prevalence of evil principles and of vicious examples may be prevented or restrained.

6. We would now say a few words as to the *treatment of children in their earliest years in native families.*

That the parents have a great influence on their children, especially the mother, is an undoubted proposition. Such is the arrangement of family systems, that the children born in them, carry along with them in the world the views, the principles, the prejudices, and the doctrines which characterized

their parents ; and these are rooted into their hearts to such a degree, as almost wholly to colour their after-life and give to their actions and character a new tinge, scarcely effaceable even by years of strict discipline and strenuous exertion. On the mode in which they are brought up amidst their family circle, depends their future well-being or misery. A child is naturally prone to take his views of things and persons around him. What daily presents itself to the eyes and ears of children invariably forms their character. At its very early age, the child is capable of reasoning, of comparing different objects with one another, and drawing general conclusions from them. Its rational and perceptive powers soon unfold themselves ; nor is it that its passions fail to display themselves as early — perhaps they are the fastest in their development. We may however find it difficult to reconcile ourselves to the idea, that the passions of our nature could unfold themselves so early in children while yet their bodily powers have not attained their full vigour. For we maintain that it is impossible to look at the placid countenance of a child without being impressed with the belief that it presents a faithful index of gentleness and mildness within, that as yet no angry passions have begun to rage within its breast, nor any guilty imaginations polluted the exercise of its newborn powers. The conclusion, however is not right. We, on the contrary, not unfrequently see obstinacy, jealousy, anger, petulance, &c. displaying themselves in the countenance of a little child yet sucking at its mother's breast. How important then it is that when the powers of the mind so early open, when the passions of our nature so early develop themselves, and when children are capable of reasoning, observing, comparing, and deducing conclusions from the different objects that present themselves to their notice, that nothing disgusting in its nature, or dangerous in its effects, should be brought within their observation. Yet, what great carelessness is displayed by parents in this country with regard to the proper treatment of their children, whose present and future happiness wholly depend upon them ! They carelessly allow them to remain in the company of men whose ignorance or narrow-mindedness make them especially the most dangerous ministers of folly and vice. They entrust them to the care of servants, who having nothing else to do, amuse themselves with these youngsters in any way they choose. False objects are represented to their minds merely for their own personal amusement ; these hired guardians of our children often teach them to chatter some bad words, and perform some unseemly gestures. Their minds are stuffed with a confused mass of imaginary ideas ; small harmless things are magnified into large tremendous images. Frightful hobgoblins are represented as having been seen in the darkness. Stories of witches, demons, and apparitions, are gravely related to children by servants and even sometimes by their sisters, brothers, or other members of the family. They are often frightened into obedience by the terror of some one of these visionary beings suddenly making his appearance. Frequently does it happen that when a child cries out for some thing which it wants, it is threatened to be thrust into a dark room which is represented to be the haunt of some frightful demons — that when the child persists in its importunities, and none of the householders have the means of gratifying them, the foolish mother or father cries out a "black man," and immediately to the terror and astonishment of the child, a servant disguised under a black coat makes his appearance before the child — that if the child be always in the habit of crying, and thereby disturbing the peace of the family, the parents even put themselves to the expense of having some frightful heads made of different forms and covered over with black or some other colour—and that if the child be again found crying or doing some mischievous thing, the parents, or the servants, or some one in the family, take care to present forward one or two such heads before them, and thus to frighten them into silence. Hence, we find superstitious notions deeply rooted in the hearts of many native boys and girls, and images of terror or horrid phantoms so much associated in their



minds with darkness that they cannot approach it with courage or confidence, unless some older or more experienced person be at hand. Hence, in many a native family, children are more easily brought under control, or under subordination to some required discipline by frightening their imagination than by enlightening their reason — by presenting before them the “disguised servant” or the “black man,” than by laying before them a set of moral precepts and wise counsels. Hence, therefore, instead of the direct authority of parents being here found sufficient to bring children under control, mere superstitious terror holds an acknowledged supremacy over them. When, therefore, at an early age the children are capable of reasoning and comparing different objects, and all their passions begin to unfold themselves the fastest, when at this time, impressions of all kinds are the most lastingly and deeply made, and tend to give direction to their future principles and conduct, it is of the greatest importance that they should be guarded against associating with men of wrong principles and vicious habits, so that they may be prevented from coming into contact at all with the sources of moral corruption — that the parents should adopt such a method with regard to the good training up of their children and their establishment in the principles of truth and moral rectitude, as would prove most beneficial to the children themselves and the community at large with which they may be connected, that they should, from the moment they observe the minds of their children to open, and their passions to operate, endeavour by all means in their power to regulate them properly with a special view to improving their interests in time as well as in eternity, and to instil into their minds principles which may have wholesome influence on their conduct in life — that their connection with vices of every kind or hue, should as far as possible, be entirely prevented from the moment that they are yet young, and the impressions of objects around them are yet weak and faint on their minds — that every symptom of carelessness or of degeneracy in their manners should entirely be checked — that the parents should guard them against every thing that might excite them to vanity or self-conceit — that they should seek to obtain authority over them neither by the tone of their voice, nor by threatening language, nor by frightful gestures, but by an even, firm, moderate disposition of the mind which is master of itself — which is only governed by reason and which never comes under the impulse of angry passions or irregular fancy. Children treated in this way would be happy in themselves, and a comfort to their parents. The necessity of frightening children into obedience, would no more occur; and those threatenings and scoldings, and sounds of discord, now so frequently heard in the family mansion, be entirely prevented.

7. Now, as regards the *system of the early tuition of children in native families*. — The obligation which is upon parents of training up their children in every kind of useful knowledge, is felt and acknowledged by every Hindŭ; but however deeply the responsibility may be felt, it is often found difficult to devise a system of instruction that shall be best adapted for the accomplishment of an object so desirable. The difficulty is rendered still greater by the ignorance of the parents themselves — consequently, it often happens that the earliest years of our native children, when their hearts can be most easily reached, and most lastingly impressed, are permitted to pass away without the communication of religious knowledge, or the infusion of religious principles. Thus, all the while these very children, though only perhaps two or three years of age, are busily engaged in laying in a stock of knowledge and imbibing a mass of principles, which go to form the elements of their future character. It is from the habits, principles, and dispositions of childhood, that the whole aspect of our future history takes its origin. Hence the high importance that is attached to the early training up of young children in the

of the early tuition of children followed amongst the natives, and to suggest the method, or the means, by which the efficiency of their instructions may be promoted.

Hitherto the practice is quite common among native parents either of sending young children to some school in the neighbourhood, or, if means fail, or parental fondness prevail, of allowing them to misspend their time in the trifles of home and the insignificant, though harmless, amusements of the domestic circle. Those, however, who have it in their power to send their children for education to schools out of doors, do so without giving any heed to the wrong sentiments they shall imbibe from their association with other children, and the worse habits they shall consequently be led to contract. The parents do not care to observe the growth of their children in useful knowledge or in sound morality. The children go to and return from their school without ever being once asked by their parents as to the manner in which they get on in their studies, or the mode on which their education is conducted by the schoolmasters. Early in the morning, at five or six o'clock, does the young boy rise up from his bed, wash his mouth, and run to his school with a napkin in one hand and an inkstand in another. He looks backwards and forwards, to see if any boy goes before him, and with the hope of getting some reward, or occupying a higher place in his class, he runs out of his breath, enters the school bowing down his head to the name of some god posted to the front wall, and joins his fellow students. It is here curious to see the young lads stirred up by emulation, trying all their efforts to to get above one another, and to win the smile of their teacher. They are here one and all subjected to a common discipline by their master, like bullocks ranged in a row and laid under a heavy yoke — once they rise up joining their hands and feet, again they sit down, resuming their writing pens, and going over their prescribed exercises — once moving from their place in one order of marching, again returning to it in another — once raising up their hands at the first signal of their master, again lowering them down at the next — once saying this merry rhyme, and returning to another again, chanting that, and thus finishing the whole. The time of breakfast arrives and the word of dismissal is sent. The school breaks, and the children go away to their respective homes — some the master himself conducting — others entrusted to some elder and abler leaders. And what follows their return to their homes? Here one boy sets up crying for some thing which he wants, disputing with the servants at home for their crossing him in his little wishes; there another is fondly playing with the little urchins of home, and instead of revising the lessons he learned at school vainly repeating some foolish tales or stories he heard from his sisters or mother, and chanting this merry rhyme and that. The father engaged at this time in his preparation to go to his labour or service out of doors, has no leisure or perhaps no ability to attend to them. The mother is busied with the affairs of the kitchen, oppressed with her domestic cares and anxieties, and perhaps has some little infant at her breast which requires her chief attention — feeling herself somewhat relieved from the oppressive burden of her household duties, and from the heat and smoke of the kitchen which had exhausted her, and her pots and pans being arranged in neat order, the mother with a melodious voice of affection calls her children for breakfast, and threatens or scolds them with an angry tone, if they refuse to obey her commands. The children meet and eat their bread. They then freely join their fellow mates, and indulge in their wild gambols without fear of being checked in their heedless career by their mother, or by any one superior to them. At the hour of attendance, the boys put on their dirty clothes, which they scarcely wash clean once a week, and trot their way to the school. There they repeat the same kind of process, with all its usual accompaniments, that was observed there in the morning and in the evening they return home. The father and mother

are then both at home, the former little eased from the toils and labour of the day — and the latter still burdened with the same anxieties, occupied with the same concerns, disturbed by the same perplexities, heated by the same fire, smothered by the same smoke, and busied, in short, with the same round of affairs. But they scarcely ever hear the lessons of their children in moral and religious truth repeated. It is because they have little or no knowledge of the branches of learning taught to their children in schools. They are however now and then desired to attend to their studies by their parents, who though they may be ignorant of the nature of education given to their children, and be unable to appreciate its value, yet take deep interest in their improvement from the consciousness that education, in whatever degree acquired, will enable them to raise their condition and character in the world. The children in fact have none at home under present circumstances to attend to their studies and direct them in their prosecution of them. The father being occupied during the whole day with his toils out of doors, the younger branches of the family must of course fall to the immediate and watching care of the mother. She has a greater authority over them than any one else in the family. They are more in the hands and under the influence of their mother than of their father at all times and under all circumstances. But it is often the case that she is uneducated. She has received no share of the mental enlightenment which is adequate enough to enable her really to appreciate the blessings of knowledge, and efficiently to discharge the important duties of her station. She is incapable from her own ignorance to pour into their minds wholesome lessons of piety and morality, and can therefore have no right conception of the manner in which their understanding might be improved, or the several powers of their mind be properly regulated and disciplined. Not being herself well grounded in the knowledge of moral and religious truths, she can hardly, beyond what common sense will dictate, be expected to recommend her children to hold fast what is good, and reject what is evil. She must as there is no other alternative, countenance her young offspring in the indulgence of their foolish whims, and their juvenile extravagancies. Brought up within the narrow circle of her home, secluded from all intercourse with refined society, and having received no enlightenment which education alone gives, she can hardly be expected to preserve any regular discipline in her house, and to devise such methods as shall be best adapted to promote the progress of her children in learning. She is only taken up with the ideas of their worldly prosperity, and not of their religious and moral well being ; under such an ill qualified mother, instead of any instructions being furnished to her children in the higher truths of useful learning, their attention is wholly directed to subjects that interest her own fancy or amuse her own imagination. The whole family partakes too much of a non-interference system, leaving the children to spend their most precious years without the slightest attempt being made to convey to their minds those truths which shall prepare them for eternity. A few good advices are indeed from time to time administered ; a few of the more flagrant out-breakings of their nature are reprov'd, but seldom do the Hindû parents, whether high or low, resort to the systematic plan of conveying to the young minds of their children, those important lessons in morality and religion, which would more effectually tend to subdue the evil tendencies of their hearts, and rear them in the knowledge of divine truth. Nor is this culpable neglect to be charged upon the ignorant and foolish parents of most of the Hindû families. Even in the households of those who are brought to appreciate the value of education, the younger branches of the family are allowed to pass several years of their childhood without any attempt being made to impress their hearts with the importance of the soul and the awful realities [of the future world. The family fireside of our homes is scarcely ever encircled by a



truly enlightened and God-fearing people, or edified by pious conversation. Round our family altars are scarcely seen to assemble, father and mother, brother and sister, husband and wife, master and servant, to mingle their hearts in gratitude for common blessings, or in humble supplication for the supply of their common wants; seldom is heard a father's voice in our families tenderly instructing his beloved children in divine things; rarely are seen the mother's tears of love and affection, as the mind of her child begins to open to clearer views of God and his duty, and to give a strong evidence of the heaven-ward direction of his desires. It is true that the early discipline of children may be accomplished by their tuition at schools where they are sent at the earliest period of their lives. But the purpose is defeated there by the non-interference system observed at home with respect to their education, at least so far as the youthful minds themselves are concerned. Even taking it for granted that in those schools, the right object and spirit of instruction are upheld, their efficiency, as great instruments in enriching the youthful minds with solid learning and sound principle, is entirely lost by the neglect and ignorance of parents at home. It is only at the family hearth that piety and duty are best taught, and if they do not receive such instructions at home from their parents, all their mental exercises in the same matters presented to their notice in school will be of little or no avail. If instead of the communication of moral truths, and the infusion of religious sentiments, they hear or see under their paternal roof, nothing but what tends to fill their minds with worldly views, with unprofitable tales, and the trifles of the kitchen, they will then become, as sad experience has shown, but idle, ignorant, and profligate members of the community, unhappy in themselves, pests to society, curses to their family, and to the parents who bare them.

Now, therefore, if we would have children to be good and pious, and to prevent all instances of profligacy from deforming their early character, it is a matter of serious importance to us as individuals and to the community at large that their parents under whose care they are placed, be well grounded in the higher truths of religion and morality before they can be expected to infuse pious sentiments into their children's minds and to prepare them for eternity. Under their present state of ignorance and superstition, the native parents are scarcely able to feel the responsibility of their situation as consisting wholly in the promotion of the spiritual welfare of their children, and so far to appreciate the importance of the onerous charge imposed upon them as not to resign too soon the care of them to strangers. The melancholy truth, as we are well aware, is, that they often allow the younger branches of their family to pass away their earlier days when their hearts are yet capable of being the most easily reached, and deeply impressed, without any attempt being made to endow their minds with the riches of useful learning, and to impress their hearts with the awful realities of the immortality of the soul, and the existence of the future world. But when they themselves are thoroughly enlightened, the result will be far different and far more beneficial. Feelingly alive to the dearest interests of their children, and fully sensible that by their being sent away too early to schools they might necessarily be exposed to the moral contamination which reigns abroad, they would attend to their education not with remissness or neglect but with great care and watchfulness, and establish a system of discipline at their own houses tending to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of their children. Schools though opened for the reception of boys throughout the different parts of this country, with the special object of communicating instruction to them in the higher branches of human learning, are yet ill adapted to the state and situation of young children, who can derive greater benefits from the pious instruction and example of wise parents at home, than from those of the schoolmasters themselves, whose attention is divided among a vast number of chil-



dren entrusted to their care and tuition. Besides, children are there exposed to the evil example and habits of those whom they see around them, and are themselves naturally prone to slide into congenial habits and practices. There, the imperfect cultivation of their minds is too often accompanied by the corruption of moral feeling. The capricious and frivolous restraints, added to the example of dissipation and luxury, the selfish spirit and premature vices which discredit many of our schools, will combine with the wilfulness and pettishness acquired at home. I do not however mean to speak disparagingly of schools. My argument consists in suggesting that all the exercises at schools with reference to the training up of the youthful minds, will be of little avail, unless a regular discipline be observed at home. For the forced mental activity which they might acquire at school, will otherwise be counteracted by the indulgence and indifference to learning observed under the paternal roof. Those pious and enlightened parents, therefore, who have any regard to the interests of the rising generation, should in preference to sending them too early to such schools, adopt a system of early discipline for their children and follow it in their own domestic circles. Of the results arising from such a method of procedure, their own experience would be witness. The effects would, indeed, be highly beneficial. The younger branches of our families would not be permitted to pass the earlier years of their childhood without enjoying the benefits of real instruction under their own paternal roofs. Under parents so well qualified to discharge the important duties of their station, the necessity would not be so deeply felt, as under present circumstances, of resigning the care of them to strangers, at a period when the heart is most easily reached, and most deeply and lastingly impressed. When parents were thus enlightened and impressed with the sentiments of piety, they would act in mutual harmony in all the commands and instructions they might give to their children, and strictly observe all those modes which might be well calculated to promote the best interests of the young children entrusted to their care by a gracious Providence. Seldom would recur those altercations and disputes which now so frequently take place between parents about trifling matters, and which so surely tend to subvert the very foundations of family government, to lay the seeds of many future sorrows and perplexities, and to endanger the interests of those whom they profess to hold dear. Domestic order and peace would not be overthrown, deceit and hypocrisy would not be cherished, superstitious notions would not be imbibed, filial affection would not be undermined, misrepresentation of things would not be practised, and those scoldings and punishments which now do not unfrequently occur, would be entirely prevented. Nothing would be allowed to pass under the notice of children which would only serve to nurse them up in habits of vice and intemperance. Nothing will be done in their presence that will only tend to fill their minds with mere worldly and unprofitable views. A perfect systematic discipline will be observed throughout the whole family circle. The domestic economy of the Hindûs would exhibit a perfectly changed scene. All disagreeable effects would be prevented, and all positive enjoyments be introduced. Those family feuds, those jarrings of opposite interests, those violent altercations which now fill the pages of the calendar of crime, would be less frequently obtruded upon public notice.

8. Having got thus far it is for us now to describe with some minuteness the common *pursuits, amusements and ceremonies, in which the elderly females as well as the young girls of our families are generally engaged.* The long chain of their duties and amusements extending from the kitchen at home to their intercourse with society of their own sex abroad, carries an interest with it which I hope cannot fail to excite the attention of the general reader. But the prevailing tinge which distinguishes their pursuits and employments throughout life, is that which ignorance alone has given, and which

education only can suffice to remove. Every one is well aware that the education of woman is here systematically neglected. She is not brought to taste those refinements of learning, which her enlightened sisters in Britain do so amply enjoy. The untutored state of her mind is discovered in the circumstances of the narrowness of her ideas, the limited sphere of her understanding, her attachment to absurd ceremonies, her exclusive devotedness to the duties of the kitchen, and her extreme bigotry to notions and prejudices, the folly of which she might easily have been brought to conceive. Access to every solid information is shut against her. She is allowed no place in enlightened society, no share in literary or scientific discussions. In fact she is incapable of both. She grows as a mere flutterer in the passing sunshine — a sordid drudge, whose plans and schemes are only confined to her present state and her domestic concerns, and never extending beyond the narrow walls of the kitchen. The history of her life presents a scene wholly diversified by domestic quarrels, superstitious fears, trifling ceremonies, &c. At the crowing of the cock does she rise up in the morning, busies herself with the affairs of the kitchen, calls her domestics to assist her in their management, disputes with them as to the prices at which articles necessary for domestic purposes are sold, sometimes furiously beating them, but often abusing and gnashing at them, if ever they should question her authority in superintending them, or fail in properly executing her little commissions. Then kindling the fire, she sits unremittingly blowing it, till she is fatigued and half-smothered in the smoke. During the afternoon she explains in detail the operations of the morning to her fellow-mates who go to her from motives of friendship or from some special calls of duty — telling them how scrupulously in the morning did she attend to the business of the kitchen, what great exertion of skill and perseverance did it cost her to arrange neatly the articles connected with her domestic employment, how vigilantly was she engaged in detecting in her servants any degree of inattention, want of diligence, or the slightest deviation from the prescribed rules — complaining to them of the faithlessness of her servants in executing her orders, and of the frequent broils in which she was obliged in the morning to engage with them, and by which her sleeping lord in his bed was disturbed — fondly dwelling upon the character of her husband — applauding his zeal in complying with all her favorite inclinations, and in endeavouring to contribute to gratify them, admiring his vigour and resolution in opposing difficulties and dangers, praising him for his ardour in gaining money and his economical diligence in saving it. She does not stop here; she goes on explaining to her fellows the different ceremonies which are generally observed in her house, and the enormous expenses usually expended upon them, the peculiar tastes and views which characterize her male friends in the family, the thousand ties of relationships by which she is connected with several other people of her own caste, the cares and anxieties with which her mind is engrossed as to the advancement of her own and her husband's interests, and as to the promotion of her children's welfare and prosperity, the difficulties which she has to encounter in the accomplishment of her particular objects in view, the inquiries which she has instituted into the nature and character of the families with which she has the intention of connecting her daughter or son by way of marriage, the compliances by which she encouraged the demands of some for either, or the refusals by which she discountenanced those of others. On these topics she loves to expatiate with peculiar interest and delight. While she is occupied as she generally is with her household duties, she now and then calls out her daughters who may be otherwise engaged, bids them lend her their assistance in looking over and superintending the different concerns of her family, taking every opportunity to instruct them in all household duties, and to acquaint them with their right nature and character; advising them to imitate her own skill and zeal in managing the affairs of the kitchen; and thus endeavouring to

qualify them for all the necessary duties of a woman so as to make of them good wives when they shall have been married, or if already married, when their marriages, shall have been consummated. She directs her daughter-in-law, who is always in dread of her, to arrange neatly the several articles of the domestic economy, to observe strictly the several ceremonies which she may be called upon to perform, and to attend seriously to the numerous affairs of the kitchen. She is engaged in acutely discovering in her the slightest degree of inattention to the general business of the house, the smallest symptoms of remissness or neglect to the duties connected with her situation, or the fewest instances of deviation from the rules by which she ought to guide herself. She narrowly watches her conduct and sometimes her principles. She scolds her severely if she should ever go amiss in her duties. She abuses or beats her when she happens to do wrong, though her intentions were quite pure and innocent. If she perceives in her any want of docility, of inattention to her own commands, she thunders forth all the fulminations or reproach against the poor simpleton and even threatens the certainty of her being separated from her own husband; she spends some of her time in making new bargains for the use of herself and of the family in general. She occasionally recounts in her mind the several expenses she went through during the day, and unable either to write or calculate, she frequently repeats them so as easily to recollect them, and render a proper account of them to her husband in the evening. She is also too much engrossed with the thoughts of some ceremony to be observed in her own house, and the several different circumstances which may be connected with it. Custom dictates a circulation of notice to that effect among her friends and relations. She therefore invites them to attend and witness the performance of the ceremony, and enjoy the opportunity which it might afford them of gratifying their frivolous tastes, and amusing their wrong fancies. This she does through the hands of her daughters. For this purpose, she dresses them in rich clothes, decks their bodies with ornaments, and endeavours to heighten their personal beauty with all the charms of artificial decorations — requisites without which they are apt to be overlooked and despised by all. She then gazes at them for some time with a significant stare, minutely observing every part of their dress and ornaments, and trying to mind every fault she might discover as to neatness or regularity. Thus feeding her own vanity, she calls out a few of her fellow mates in the neighbourhood to see the young girls, and to admire her own skill and judgment which she has displayed in so dressing them up. Equipped in such grandeur, the young girls prepare to set out in executing the commission of their mother, inviting all her friends and relations whom she may wish to attend on her. Their gilded trappings and glittering ornaments attract every eye as they pass along. At home the blessed mother is busily engaged in making every necessary preparation for the reception of women, whom she has invited to attend on the ceremony at her house. She receives them with all that gentleness and mildness peculiar to her sex, and seating them on a carpet or cloth spread for the purpose, administers to them every kind of ceremonial service which religion or custom has rendered necessary, and dismisses them with presents of plates laden with fruits and flowers as the reward of their courtesy. Thus is the elder female of the family occupied during the whole course of the day. In the evening again she prepares herself to repeat the same round of experiments at her kitchen which she performed there in the morning, never allowing any important consideration to engross her mind but the gratification of some present humour or fancy, and scarcely ever thinking of the duties she owes to God and to her fellow creatures, and of the consequences which their performance or neglect would bring about. So much for families of the higher orders of natives! With regard, now, to those of the lower orders, there is much, however, calculated to excite pity. The elderly female there, is subjected to all the privations and



miseries as it were of a life of servitude. She submits on all occasions and under all circumstances to a routine of severe burdensome toils, and laborious duties, fatigue and labour quite exhaust her; she is denied that ease and comfort which are the portion of the blessed female of the higher families. She does not possess much money, and therefore she lacks that ambitious spirit which her fellows moving in higher spheres display in gilded trappings or shining ornaments. She cheerfully submits herself to every variety of mechanical work wherever she can find it. Not unlike her own husband, when she has fully accomplished her household duties in all simplicity — contrasted with that pomp and dignity which mark the conduct of the haughty female of the other family — she waits on her toils without doors. Rarely is she found working within during the greater part of the day. She goes to the neighbouring house of some wealthy individual, and there accepts some piece of work or other for some petty means of subsistence. If we enter the house of a wealthy native, we should there see one of these low-bred females attending at some petty work — one engaged in grinding the rice at the mill — another in winnowing corn of different kinds and reducing it to powder — one attending on some sick individual of the family, and ministering unto him all the services which it is her duty to render to him — another waiting as a mid-wife on some childbed woman, helping her weak body to rise out of her bed and lie on it again, leading her from one place to another by holding her hand or supporting her on the back, washing her body, dressing her, cleaning the clothes of her child, and performing a variety of diverse duties in connection with her peculiar employment, with a well-grounded hope of meriting some good reward. Some of these lower classes of women again go to some distant *jungle* with hachets and knives in their hands, cut down the wood from some tree, or the grass that grows carelessly under foot, tie them up in bundles and carry them home to serve as fuel within their kitchen-walls, or as provender to the cattle, which most of them are in the habit of rearing. And it is needless to observe that this truth does every day obtrude itself upon our notice in the circumstance of many of these poor wretches, being seen carrying such heavy burdens on their shoulders through our streets. Some again are busy on the farm of their husbands, assisting them in all their farming operations, ploughing the ground, breaking the clods, and sowing the seed. Some go to the market and there expose a variety of articles for sale — many of these wretched females are seen busily engaged under the bright sun in working at the foundation of some building to be raised on it, or the erection of some new road at the expense of the state, — some in breaking down stones and reducing them to powder for giving strength and consistency to our streets, and others in watering them in common with their husbands. Many are seen busy at some of the different manufactures throughout this country. Not a few are seen bearing heavy stones or earth in baskets over their heads from one corner of the town to the other. Groups of these females are beheld, as evening advances or morning dawns, passing through the streets, each having an earthen pail in her hand, and going to some distant well to draw out water for the use of their family. Their labour indeed during the greater part of the day, as we have already remarked, is exceedingly great and tiresome. It may even sometimes unnerve the energies of the mightiest arm that ever wielded a sword. All of them are indeed engaged in employments, which, as they are diversified, are extremely intricate and burdensome. Yet they are satisfied to endure every kind of hardship, provided they find their labour rewarded with a sufficient return. Man must eat by the sweat of his brow. But that gentleness, that flexibility of disposition, and that unsuspectingness of temper, which are the characteristic virtues of woman, mark her out as a being fit only for those kinds of employment that are suited to the fragility of her constitution.

hard and laborious mechanical duties, which the circumstances of her situation in this country seem to enjoin upon her. In the case, however, under consideration they appear in fact to do work in place of men. They carry heavy burdens on their shoulders for a distance of miles together, as well in the burning heat of summer as in the severe cold of winter. They are compelled in short to submit to every kind of laborious and difficult work. But let me not be understood by these few observations to insinuate that woman should not work at all. She must; and it is her duty — yet not in that degree and manner in which she is here obliged to work. We would shortly notice the effect of this on the children of their family. We have seen that both the parents are employed at their respective toils out of doors during the hours of the day. And the circumstances of the case render it necessary. Thus then the children of the family are often left away without that full measure of superintendence which is needed for their welfare. Whether the parents are fit to give the needed superintendence or not, is questionable. Even though the mother instead of her being occupied abroad, were at home, yet we are aware of few instances in which children have received much benefit from her immediate and affectionate watchfulness. Still the look of a mother is some, if not a great, restraint on the wayward youths, however unable she may be to exercise her due authority over them. But when the circumstances of the family, as in this case, preclude the possibility of her being at home to watch the growth of their tender minds, the depravity of the young children acquires then a full play. Both parents are out of doors, the hands of both, wheresoever they may be, are full of toils; they are taking their parts in providing for their daily bread, — poor souls! There at home, a different scene is observed. Instead of domestic endearment or instruction, which but for the immediate watchfulness of the parent, would not be so grievously neglected, there is now nothing but what serves to nurse the youths in almost unceasing animosity and brawl. The children are left to themselves without that control or superintendence, which must needs be exercised over them, — they run about in the streets with all the wantonness of freedom. They are there exposed to the hurtful changes of the weather; their morals are there exposed to contamination; they there listen to the language of profaneness; they are confirmed in all the wildness of insubordination and disobedience, — and their whole character is tainted by practices which they ought never to know, and from which they ought ever carefully to be far removed. This, my dear reader, is no exaggeration. It is a statement of plain truth.

(3.) We shall now notice the several employments and duties of native girls both of the higher and lower classes, in reference to their *connection with the family of their parents*. First, in reference to the higher classes. There seems to be, as it were, a regular system of the division of labour observed in Hindú families. Certain duties are performed by young girls, and others are left exclusively to the disposal of the elder females. Be it known that we refer to families of the higher classes of natives. When, in the morning, the necessary articles are brought by the servants, it is the business of the young girls to observe and examine them. One of them selects a certain quantity of those things brought from the market, washes and cleans them, cuts them if necessary, arranges them neatly, and upon every preparation being made, presents them in order to her old mother who is engaged in blowing the fire and kindling the flame within her kitchen walls. Another prepares a like thing in the same manner, and follows the example of the former. Another girl prepares to assist the mother in her management of the affairs of the kitchen, displaying her activity by running from one corner of the kitchen to the other, to please her old mamma, readily handing to her any thing which may be placed without her reach, expertly cleaning some vessels that must be employed in the business of cooking, skilfully blowing the

fire herself if her mother be fatigued and exhausted, and doing every thing that she can possibly do for her mother by way of helping her in the management of her domestic concerns, and lightening the oppressive load of those duties and affairs by which she is always overburdened. In the midst of all this process, their eyes are filled with smoke, the watery humour is trickling down their nose, the hand is occasionally seen wiping the face, drying the eyes, and cleaning the nostrils. Time gradually runs on; and the mother and the young girls, as they proceed on with their duties at the kitchen, observe and watch its flight. A word is sent through some domestic of the house to the father who may then be superintending the concerns of his family, and to the young boys who may be playing in the streets, or may have just returned from their schools, intimating to them all that the time is full, the breakfast is ready, and they must be prepared for receiving it. The mother gives the command, and in obedience to it, the young girls who are always ready to please their old mamma, at once cry out the names of their papa, and younger brothers with a voice peculiarly tender.

We will however, by the way, give a brief sketch of the operations in which the male portion of the family are engaged at this part of the day, before they go abroad to their duties, and leave the females at home to themselves. The father and the boys take to their bath and then engage themselves in their religious exercises in a room set apart for the purpose, rubbing their foreheads, hands, and breasts, before they commence their operations, with some white powder sanctified in the shástras, muttering some holy words taught to them by their priests, and, when in this manner they fulfil their devotional duties, repairing to the eating room which is always close by the kitchen walls, which do not prevent the smoke within from going without and giving to the males who are quite unaccustomed to it, much irritation and annoyance. The mother working in the kitchen, or the young girl assisting her, then serves up to them the meals either in plates of some metal or on convenient leaves of some plant, as circumstances might permit. The boys and the old man their father, on eating their food, and washing their hands and mouths, and going through a certain round of ceremonies that their own habits or custom may have rendered necessary, put on their clothes, and hasten to their respective duties, he to his office, those to their schools. Now all matters connected with the household business are left to the exclusive disposal and management of the leading females in the family. The young girls now resort to their particular amusements, living in the house of their own parents, where every one is disposed to regard their faults with a smile of complacency and to correct them only with a gentle reproof, moving in a circle where all those by whom they are surrounded are bound to them by a mutual sympathy of habits and manners, and forming parts of the family where they are guided in all their operations by a voluntary impulse of their own will, rather than the dictate of obligation, where they have no settled object to aim at, or no particular avocations to be engaged in, and where the idea of their whole happiness consists only in the good disposition of their parents towards them, and their wishes, they seek only after amusement as the chief element of their present happiness, and find it in every thing that is variety. They engage themselves differently. Some are busily employed in weaving their little playthings in wreaths of flowers, some in ornamenting them in various ways, according as their humour or fancy might direct them, some in buying new toys or new playing-things and carefully laying them in store to serve for the use of the children they expect to be after blessed with. This circumstance shows their love of marriage and the extreme anxiety they indulge for being possessed of children, and having it in their power of administering various ceremonies consequent upon their birth, and the several succeeding periods of their lives. Some of them are found



busy with their needles, sewing cloths belonging to themselves, as well as those belonging to the rest of the family. A few of them, we are happy to declare, seem to have arrived at such perfection in this art, that all the females, if not the male portion of the family to which they belong, quite dispense with the necessity of employing tailors. Clothes of their workmanship cover the limbs of many of their relations and friends, especially of their own sex; and they are often so nicely made that the rude hand of the tailor can easily be distinguished. The author has to boast of having a sister whose skill in this interesting art once rendered her an honour to the family of her parents, and now makes her the most useful member of that of her husband. This part of their employment is certainly the most interesting, and so far as the state of our present families is concerned, the most honorable. And well might we exclaim with a most distinguished writer, who observes in reference to the employment of ladies, that "whenever chance brings within my observation a knot of young ladies busy at their needles, I consider myself as in the school of virtue, and though I have no extraordinary skill in plain work or in embroidery, I look upon their operations with as much satisfaction as their governess, because I regard them as providing a security against the most dangerous snares of the soul by enabling themselves to exclude idleness from their solitary moments," and so on.

But unhappily, the case is such that those girls of the native families who may have acquired any degree of proficiency in this interesting art, are few compared with multitudes of them, who are often engaged in several frivolous and unworthy pursuits; yet these few are not free from the faults of others, no less are they given up to those absurd and unprofitable ceremonies which always occupy the attention of those around them. No less are they wrapt up in notions of the importance and necessity of those ceremonies as giving life and interest to the objects of the family circle. Many of them even renounce this kind of employment as a vain drudgery, and do not unfrequently unite themselves with others in the observance of foolish ceremonies, and in idle amusements. Indeed the time of native girls upon the whole, is miserably spent. They are often engaged in unnecessary ceremonies, in useless rivalries, in vain meddling with others' matters, in idle talking, and petty frauds. The marriages of their fellow-mates, and the features, manners, and dispositions of their husbands, the money which the parents of the parties spent in their marriage, the ornaments bestowed upon the bride by the parents of the bridegroom, and the articles of furniture given in exchange to the latter by the parents of the former, and various other circumstances connected with their marriage ceremony, form the subjects of their talk, laughter, and amusement. They insist upon their parents to get them married to some one or other whom they think fit, to prepare some golden ornaments for them, that they might the better be able to shine in the little society of their fellow-mates, to purchase for their use some varieties of cloths, and to do all those things for them which might please their own taste or amuse their own fancy. Few girls might be seen reading some religious book or hearing with attentive ear some moral instructions which a pious guest may happen to give them. They mistake his instructions for the out-breakings of some madness or religious enthusiasm, and reward his attempts with mockery and laughter, which the better informed may have regarded with reverence. — When some particular religious ceremony takes place in their house, the young girls are occasionally employed in singing some interesting rhymes during some hours of the day and night, and by taking large swings in a sort of cradle hung up for the purpose. They sing indeed in such sweet and delightful tones as almost wholly to ravish the ear. Jovial and gay in their disposition they often intermix and enliven their songs with humorous wits, which they aim at some one amongst themselves, of



whom they intend to make a sport. And this they manage so dexterously and in such an appropriate manner as perfectly to make their song adapted to the case of the person against whom they thus point their wits. They then take a share in the ceremonies going on around them. They make certain vows and resolutions in imitation of the elder females of the family, under some supposed difficulty or inconvenience. They observe certain fasts and go through a routine of numerous other ceremonies which afford them excessive delight and interest. They engage themselves in such frivolous kinds of pursuits, not so much from a sincere religious feeling being awake in their minds, as with the view of deriving some amusement or employment from them. Thus they allow the hours of the day to pass away. At night having worked for some time in the kitchen as they had done there in the morning under the superintendence of the mother, they then assemble together, talk, laugh, mock, sing, and perform their curious trifles, even in the presence of their elders, without dread of punishment, or the fear of any one reproving their wild outbreakings, or checking their intemperate mirth. The father passes by them, heedless of their trifles. Knowing that they are but the temporary residents in his family and that they can have no other opportunity of indulging their humours so freely, when the restraints of fathers and mothers-in-law shall have been imposed upon them, he never discountenances them in their free gambols, but rather contributes to multiply circumstances which would warrant their indulgence in their sports. The look of the mother is always smiling upon them, she takes peculiar interest in their amusements of which the father seems to have no idea. Freed from her domestic affairs and the concerns of the kitchen, she even occasionally participates in their gay amusements, and their pleasing trifles. The want of gaiety in her daughter she mistakes for a natural stupidity or dullness: and her who displays such a disposition she quite despises, and bestows upon her only a sparing measure of her regard and esteem. She likes those much who display all possible vivacity and mirth in their sports and amusements. Her face beams upon them with favour and delight. A few expressions of her approbation as evidenced by her words or countenance, afford them sufficient encouragement in their trifling exercises and frivolous amusements.

But we should never think that this miserable state of affairs will always remain unaltered. We have cheering hopes of better days to come; and better changes may we then see! Our girls are capable of being considerably raised in the scale of intelligence, if right discipline be observed with regard to them. Trivial circumstances develope great latent genius. And instances are not few, trifling as they are, which go to prove that our girls possess minds not inferior to those of the most talented, and capable of the highest degree of cultivation. Their simplest amusements display to us the force of their talents. We have already remarked, in the preceding sentences, with reference to the proficiency acquired by some of them in the art of sewing and to their petty excellent workmanships, which indeed do the highest credit to their judgment and skill. Now there is another kind of employment equally harmless and interesting, which indeed sets forth their talents to the best advantage. This employment may be called rather occasional than daily; for it is engaged in, only during some part of the year. What we mean, shall be evident from the following brief description of it. Some time previous to the Dasara and Dewálí, the two great festivals of the Hindús, young girls are seen employed every evening in our native towns in drawing out various lines and figures, first with white powder and then filling the vacant spaces with other colouring powders of different descriptions on small elevated pieces of ground prepared for the purpose and attached closely to the veranda of their houses, and they always acquit themselves so well in their undertaking that we are happy to have it in our

power to say that their performances display forth their skill and abilities in the most prominent light.\* The curiosity of every man on this subject will be satisfied by his taking a short trip after sun-set in our native towns, when numbers of those interesting young girls are found employed in their busy manipulation out of doors under the cool shade of the advancing eve. It is indeed a most delightful spectacle to observe a parcel of these young native girls busily engaged in their harmless (?) employments in the open air during these calm hours. Their beautiful round faces, blooming with the red blushes of modesty and beaming with intelligence, remind the spectator of those rosy blushes, which tinge the yonder sky, and excite the most pleasing vibrations in his heart, as if he were really transported to the seats of the heavenly angels. Would to God that such interesting beings, gifted so richly by nature but depraved so miserably by custom alone, were removed far away from a state in which they cannot live long without being exposed to the moral contamination which reigns around, and were brought up in a family whence the clouds of superstition and ignorance have been dispelled by the irradiating beams of knowledge, and where the blessings of education continue to shed their benignant lustre on all around.

2. The remarks we have just made, the reader must be aware, refer to the families of the higher classes. With regard to those of the lower ranks, nothing worthy of mention occurs. The girls belonging to those families are not so merrily employed as girls of the higher classes. They do not buy new toys and adorn them with various ornaments like their fellows in the other families. They have no fine cloths to sew. They are not so careful about attending to different ceremonies, for they have no money to discharge the expenses attending them. They practise no singing, for they are so far removed from the polish and refinement of the higher classes, as never to have been able to acquire a taste for that art. They draw out no *kanas*,† like the girls of higher families, and if few of them do so, their performance is the rudest of its kind. They interchange no presents among one another as the others. In fact they are engaged in no interesting employment during the hours of the day. From some instances, however, it appears that their whole amusement consists in a few slight skirmishes with their brothers or their mothers, in picking up a few small stones, playing with them, and throwing them away, or in collecting some quantity of earth, moistening it with water, and making some fancy work of it. Amusement is found in variety, and variety is procured by money; whereas these girls are brought up amidst want and poverty — yea, they are nursed up in scenes of animosity and brawls, which are the unexceptionable characteristics of their families. There is no amusement — theirs is rather a hard troublesome work. With their poor wretched mothers, they wait on their toils out of doors, and submit again at home to the duties of the kitchen, envying the lot and enjoyment of their fellows moving in the higher circles of life.

10. We now propose to give a brief sketch of the *ceremonial part of Hindú marriages*. Their nature, the manner in which they are formed, and the effects resulting from them, will be treated of separately, in the following pages of this essay. Such is the desire prevailing in Hindú parents with regard to the marriage of their children, that to say the least of it, the children are betrothed while yet they are in the womb of their parents. In that case, should the issues be of opposite sex as expected, the betrothment is confirmed by the parents, or if the matter turn out the reverse, the question is dropped. In most cases, however, girls are betrothed to boys while they both are yet infants, and

\* We allude to the drawing of what are *Kanas*.

† The art of drawing figures and lines on some clean spots of ground prepared for the purpose, as above noticed.

nearly of the same age with but a slight difference of years. The mother of the girl prides her upon the circumstance, that her daughter has obtained a husband at such an early age. She frequently invites her son-in-law to her house for dinner, confers on him some little presents, and sends him home with a servant to lead him, or asks his consent to remain with her and his little wife for some days. On some great *holy* days she sends a few plates — some filled with flowers, others with fruits, to the mother of her son-in-law, and receives a like kind of return from her in acknowledgement of the present which she had sent to her. Thus things move on until at last the day of their marriage ceremony is fixed upon by the parents of both parties, after having consulted the opinions of their respective priests, in whose hands the parents of the children are generally like mere tools. The expenses to which the parents are put on this occasion are enormously great, but they shall be spoken of particularly by and by. Two or three days previous to the day of marriage, ceremonies are observed at the respective abodes of the boy and girl, of the most trifling description, which the unbounded rapacity of the priests always multiplies, and the slavish disposition of the parents tacitly countenances. The boy is at his house seated on the ground, his body is rubbed over with different powders, and washed perfectly clean. He is surrounded by all his female relations, who sprinkle water upon him in drops, reciting a few rhymes in praise of the intended bridegroom. Visitors consisting of females come from every quarter of the town to witness the joyous scene. They all lift up their voice in an exalted chorus accompanied by the sounds of music without, adoring and praising the fabled deities whom they suppose as presiding over human affairs, and imploring them to shower down their blessings on the boy and the girl throughout the whole of their life after their union, a circumstance which points out their deplorable ignorance of the only living and true God, who is the disposer of all events, and whom they thus exclude from their supreme regard, and the fatal illusion under which they labour in rendering to beings which have merely an imaginary existence, a superstitious homage, quite derogatory to the honour of the only Governor and Preserver of all things. Well, the officiating priests who administer the ceremonies, impose upon the surrounding superstitious multitude by the solemn grandeur of their appearance, the sonorousness of their voice, and the hard, unintelligible words which they pronounce. The boy is from time to time made to walk up and down the house to attend at the performance of certain ceremonies, followed by females who wash, clean, and dress him, and administer unto him every possible service that it is their duty on those days to render. The boy thus undergoes a variety of trifling ceremonies without a moment's respite. The girl is dealt with in the same manner at the house of her parents, as the boy, surrounded by the same superstitious multitude of females, and oppressed by the same overburdening number of ceremonies. To-day are invited all the relations and friends of the bride and bridegroom, by the parents at their respective dwellings, when to-morrow is their wedding day. Every preparatory or necessary measure is at the preceding night so planned and arranged by the females of the family, as to bear on the grandeur of the method in which the great marriage ceremony is intended to be performed the next day. The female members of the houses of the bride and bridegroom entirely abstain themselves from sleep, and they are deeply engrossed with all their preparatory engagements during the whole night. The morning dawns, the trumpet sounds, the drums beat, and the music commences at both the houses. The priests attend, the parents of the boy and girl are dressed most sumptuously and preside at the administration of the ceremonies passing before their view. A great sacrificial fire is erected in the middle of the house by the priests, who on the plausible ground of religion, impudently and uncereemoniously consume many useful articles of the parents in the great devouring element raging in the



centre. This fire is considered as forming the most essential part of the whole ceremony of that day. About sunset numbers of people, all consisting of relations and friends, attend at the house of the bridegroom. The boy is equipped in the most magnificent apparel, decorated with the most glittering ornaments of gold, and the most brilliant jewels. Long wreaths of beautiful and elegant flowers are wound round about his head, and thrown over his shoulders, flowing down his feet. He is then seated on a horse, the most sumptuously equipped, a cocoanut covered with tinfoil is put into his hands, the trumpets sound forth their echo in the air, music is set to work, the drums beat, a perfect concert flourishes, and a most splendid procession follows. The whole procession stops as it comes within a short distance from the house of the bride. The horse of the bridegroom, who is still riding on its back, steps onward in front of the door of the bride's house. A curious and unmeaning ceremony then follows, which might seem almost to mock a stranger. There goes first the brother of the bride and squeezes an ear of the still riding bridegroom. He meets with his reward, carrying off a splendid dress which the parents of the bridegroom bestow upon him. Then steps on the mother of the bride in her splendid apparel with an arthí \* in her hand, which she moves about the face of the bridegroom and gives him some sweatmeat to taste a little of it. She meets with her reward too for all her trouble. Then follows the father-in-law with a majestic pace, a piece of cloth held over his head as he moves on and offering some sweatmeat to the lad, carries him on his arms into the house, and places him on a chair. The bride is brought forward, covered all over with gold and silver, and placed before the boy. Another ceremony equally ridiculous with the former attracts the notice of an observer. It is that upon whose issue the marriage-knot of the pair does substantially depend. A shawl is interposed between the bride and the bridegroom. The reverend priests commence pronouncing their hallowed benedictions and prayers. The intervening shawl is still held suspended between the pair. Perfect silence reigns throughout. Every present soul remains in breathless expectation of the issue of the ceremony. Every eye is rivetted on the boy and girl. Every ear is given to the words of the priests who pour out their benedictions and prayers in the loftiest strains of their hollow voice. All of a sudden the reverend priests stop. The hands clap. The intervening curtain drops. The drums, the tomtoms, the pipes, the trumpets make their mingled roar. The bridegroom puts a string of black beads round about the bride's neck. It is this string which binds up as it were their marriage-knot proving a sufficient guarantee for the bridal fidelity, and a satisfactory vouchsafe to that devoted service which the wife is enjoined to owe to her husband through life. The bride and the bridegroom are thus united together from that moment by the flimsy cord of mere ceremony, which shall be broken by the fiery edge of passion, as the thread of tallow is broken by the flame of a burning candle. Yet rejoicings ensue. The female voice is exerted in the loftier and sweeter notes. Joy beams forth in the eyes of the parents, and lights up the countenance of the married couple. Warm and cordial embraces are mutually interchanged between the parents of the married children on the one hand, and their relations and friends and visitors on the other. The money and cocoa-nuts and beetle-nuts are distributed among the Bráhmans and visitors and strangers and men of all descriptions. The bride and the bridegroom are then seated on a horse whose gaudy accoutrement vies with the gilded trappings of the riders upon its back. They are followed by a most splendid procession to the house of the latter—the bridegroom. Many other ceremonies follow one another in uninterrupted succession for several weeks together. The bridegroom is

most ceremoniously invited to the house of the bride immediately on the next day to observe the continuation of their nuptial ceremonies. There the young boy and girl are made to sit together and permitted to pass away a few hours in some interesting trifles, to which custom has given the appearance of importance. The eating leaves are rolled in small cylindrical parcels. A few of them are given to the boy, a few to the girl. Their female friends surround them both on all hands. The girl is advised secretly by a friend who sits beside her to catch one of the pieces strongly in her teeth at one of its ends, allowing the longer end to remain without. The boy assisted by a like friend on his side, puts out his mouth, and bites off the outer end of the rolled piece of leaf. Thus, indeed, after the wedding ceremony is entirely over, multitudes of several other vain, trifling and unnecessary ceremonies do still continue; without interruption, to be observed for a succession of days, weeks, and months, as if they were calculated to keep up the fading grandeur and interest of the past, great, nuptial ceremony. And those ceremonies are indeed of such endless varieties that an enumeration of them would be a mere waste of paper. Those that we have adverted to, can well suffice to give to the general reader an idea of their extreme absurdity, and the unnecessary waste of time and money which their observance involves. But it often happens that when the ceremonies in which the native females so fondly indulge themselves, interfere with the pressing duties and callings of the males, the latter always demur as to the unnecessary length to which the women are anxious of carrying the ceremonies, and as to the vain expenses of money to which they lead. Hence sounds of discord and contention are heard in our family mansions on these occasions, which a right view of the subject would have entirely prevented. Here, discontent marks the brows of the old mother, there the eyes of the old father flame with anger. Thus a damp is thrown on the excited spirits of all the females of the family, who ere-while lingered unconsciously amid the scenes of their favourite ceremonies. It is not, however, our business here to descant on a vast number of other trifling ceremonies besides those we have noticed, which even for a considerable time after the principal ceremony of marriage is performed, do not still cease to be observed in our families. \* Custom, unconquerable custom, sits however lofty on the throne of ignorance, and bids all defiance to the prejudices or notions of particular individuals.

11. I shall here advert to the *treatment of the newly-married son-in-law by the parents and relations of his wife*. The boy immediately after his nuptial ceremony is over, is occasionally invited to attend by his father or mother-in-law at some feast held, or some other ceremony observed at their house. At every visit which he thus pays to his wife's house, he receives presents consisting of clothes, fruits, or sweet-meats at the hands of his wife's parents. His treatment at the house of his wife by her relations while he is yet young, and his marriage has as yet lately taken place, is made to adapt itself to the circumstances of the time or occasion in which he happens to be present before them. When on some merry day or some great festival, he is invited to attend at his father-in-law's house, notwithstanding every necessary honor and reward conferred upon him by the parents of his wife, he is not allowed to pass away without being treated by the other members of the family in any manner which their own present humour or fancy might dictate to them. Several young girls, and even elderly females surround him on all sides, gazing at him with eager attention, making remarks on his features, disposition, and dress, whispering into one another's ears the probability

\* A most intelligent native writer in his essay on Female Education has dwelt at sufficient length on the ceremony of Padar and others of a kindred nature to which we mean to allude.

of his rising to fame and distinction in future, as if they could read his fortune in his physiognomy, flattering him at first with some small praises, presenting forward some sweet-meat for him to eat, or some water to drink, describing in his face the proportions of his wife's body, the features of her countenance, the peculiar tastes which distinguish her, the ornaments of which she is very fond, and the amusements in which she loves most to indulge, and telling him to be kind and favourable towards her in spite of all the aversions and opposing views which his other relations may have against her. This zeal on the part of the relations of his wife in acquainting her husband with all the circumstances connected with her, may be accounted for by considering the want of a free and familiar intercourse between them which would alone enable the husband in arriving at any correct knowledge of his wife's real character and concerns. But the relations of the young married girl do not rest contented with this short discourse with their son-in-law which is rather to the benefit of the girl than their own. They have not yet attained the end which they originally sought after. They, therefore, now proceed with their tricks with the son-in-law. They contrive different plans by which they might amuse themselves with the married couple. They forcibly drag the young lad into the presence of the girl who instantly hangs down her head on seeing him. They play jokes upon him, and use with him every indecent freedom without thinking of the consequences that might arise, — of the displeasure which their tricks might naturally give to the boy, and the prejudices which they might lead to exist in him against them. Of this, indeed, the girl's relations are perfectly insensible, and they therefore persist, though unconsciously, in their jokes and tricks to the fullest extent of their wishes. But when he is invited at his father-in-law's house on such days as the Holi festival, the liberty which the females of the house, who are always on the alert to find some matter for amusement, use with the poor lad, goes beyond its due bounds. They then conduct with him in a manner highly offensive to him, and quite incompatible with the nature of the relation in which he stands to them. They proceed to tease him in a thousand different ways. They rub his face with the red powder and oblige him to rub that of his wife with his own hands. They squirt upon his clothes some red fluid which they prepare beforehand for the purpose. They throw handfuls of some red powder upon him. They then mock at him, laugh at him, and amuse themselves in various other ways with him, taking advantage only of his silence and bashfulness. The girl stares with amazement at such a free and indecent conduct of her relations towards her young husband. The mother-in-law, father-in-law, and brother-in-law, have seldom any direct hand in those proceedings, though they may privately connive at them. They stand all the while like mute spectators of the foolish play around them, without attempting to check or reprove the free conduct of their relations towards the poor solitary boy — their son-in-law. Such a freedom of conduct exhibited on these festive occasions with reference to the son-in-law by the relations of his wife, is rather to be attributed to, and is certainly encouraged by, the young age of the boy himself. Adult sons-in-laws are seldom treated with such liberty even on occasions of festivity and mirth. But instances of adults being married at the first time are under present circumstances indeed very few in the annals of Hindûs in comparison to the great majority of instances of the early marriage of children. With regard to the relation in which a son-in-law of any age and under any circumstances, stands to the family of his wife's parents, a lamentable want of sociality of intercourse is to be observed between him and the relations of his wife. True it is, that whenever he goes to his wife's house, he receives all marks of respect from her parents, and from all those who may be related to her. They rise up as he passes by them in token of respect, especially the females: but never once through-



out the whole tenor of his connection with them does an instance occur in which there exists a friendly and familiar intercourse between him and his mother-in-law or even his father-in-law. Go he may as often as opportunity permits, he can never once have the fortune of seeing his wife, far less of speaking to her. While she is at her parents house as well as his own, he can scarcely ever hold a free conversation with her for fear of shame; neither can he send her a message through a mediator, thereby conveying to her all the sentiments which he might otherwise have fully communicated to her himself. Written messages are under the circumstance of her ignorance, impossible; or if possible, the practice might be prohibited by the fear of giving rise to hurtful and evil suspicions. In fact he can hold no free or friendly intercourse with any of members of his father-in-law's family. For the mother-in-law to speak to him or to use any manner of familiarity with him, it is considered a violation of that modesty which her peculiar relation to her son-in-law, necessarily enjoins upon her to observe in her conduct towards him. Indeed he enjoys every respect and regard at his father-in-law's house from all the members of the family; but he enjoys none of those delights which he could have derived from a friendly intercourse with them. He is there like a solitary being left amidst a circle of those who can scarcely enter into a real and close sympathy with his feelings. Those who are there, are so miserably destitute of every social sentiment towards him, that they scarcely even fully talk to him, or when they speak to him, speak so sparingly as to seem to number out as it were their very words. We can little expect to enjoy in a society of such individuals, those pleasures and delights which free and mutual interchange of ideas is calculated to afford. He is there left to shift for himself. We might easily believe, that from their peculiar relation to him, they may have his good sincerely at their heart; but it is difficult to take it for granted that they prove it so by their conduct towards him.

Unhappy therefore is that native lad, who under any circumstances, even the most pressing, leaves the family circle of his own parents, and consents to live among relations of such description, with whom he can expect to hold no friendly intercourse, which is so essential to contribute to his real domestic enjoyment. Ere long, however, sad experience will tell him that his is a sorry and ill-judged exchange. Indeed the respect and veneration in which he may be held by a few females of the family, may be somewhat gratifying to him. Want of sociality of intercourse would certainly by him be much felt there. But in addition to that, those feelings of respect and esteem which the male portion of the family might have cherished towards him, begin gradually to diminish. The male portion particularly, of native families, are more prone to haughtiness and pride than the other sex, and would therefore bear hard the necessity of always paying that homage and respect to their son-in-law, which they would willingly have paid him if he were at a distance from them. They think it hard even to speak to him, and they soon naturally grow weary of him. Such is the nature of the treatment which the son-in-law receives at his father-in-law's house. Thus have we seen that under circumstances in reference to the native families, nearness tends in no small degree to diminish in addition to the want of social intercourse, that respect and esteem which they ought to cherish towards the son-in-law, and which distance may have inspired and kept alive. The wisest policy therefore that I can recommend a Hindú son-in-law to observe, is never to trust himself to the relations of his wife, for by so doing he might subject himself to all the miseries which want of social intercourse, and consequent diminution of respect, as has been shown, would entail upon him. And he shall afterwards have to look up to that part of his life which he spent in his father-in-law's family, as of the most miserable kind. These observations we may however remark, are applicable not to a particular family amongst the Hindús, but to all of them universally.



12. The *state, treatment, and character, of the married girl*, are the next points which must deserve notice in this place. The girl, when she gets married, generally assumes a dignity and grandeur which betoken the wonderful influence of the state upon which she has entered, and in the gravity and seriousness which now mark uniformly her conversation or her conduct, we discover the effect of her marriage state, as distinguishable from the pettiness and frivolity which had characterised her in her other state. After her being so betrothed or married, she remains a considerable time in the house of her parents. There does she explain to her mother the details of relations which connect her to the family of her husband, and amuses her with accounts of those peculiar habits and dispositions which her short residence in her husband's house may have acquainted her with, as having characterised its several members. When the household duties are finished, and the females of the family are a little eased from the burden of their domestic concerns, the married girl, with her body decked with ornaments and her hair covered with flowers, takes a seat with her newly acquired gravity, amongst her sisters and her other fellow mates who look upon her with a stare of wonder and admiration which she takes for a compliment to her. She looks on her own body, prides herself upon the golden ornaments which so richly adorn it, compares them with those of others, and expresses her contempt of them, if her own be larger and more valuable than theirs. She is under her parent's roof free from all domestic concerns. Amusement is her highest idea of happiness, and she can find it in every thing that is variety. She has there no particular duties to attend to, no particular avocations to follow. Her time is generally spent in employments which have been adverted to under the head of the amusements and employments of girls. She feels here so easy and so free from a sense of responsibility with reference to any domestic concern of her parents' house, that nothing would seem to check her happiness except some positive or present harshness. There indeed is nothing her's. But soon the scene changes. Time soon flies away; circumstances change, and the state of separation in which she had so long remained from her husband, becomes no longer necessary or lawful. I hope the reader understands what I mean. She grows older, and, hitherto quite pure in her actions and intentions, passes, a modest virgin, into the chamber of her husband. She now leaves her father's house and goes to her husband's. By the way we shall stop to describe the ceremony which follows her puberty. The ceremony which goes by the name of *Sola*, takes place on the day in the evening of which she is intended to be united with the husband, some trivial ceremonies having already been observed on the preceding days. The whole body of the girl is thickly decked with ornaments, her head is covered with a variety of fragrant flowers, and her limbs loaded with large heavy bracelets to such a degree as almost to crush her under their enormous weight. She is scarcely able to move her hands and feet freely. The husband is similarly equipped, though not to such a degree of profusion as the wife. They both are then seated on an elevated place. Dressed in all the elegance of clothes, and decked over with costly ornaments, and seated on a lofty place, the happy pair appear the most commanding figures in the house. The first thing which strikes and fixes the attention is the costliness of the girl's ornaments. The husband and the wife are then made to attend to a certain routine of ceremonies at which the cunning priests usually officiate. The next thing which fixes the attention is the loud vocal strains which resound through the whole house and heighten the effect of the imposing scenes around. Numerous women come from every different corner of the town to witness the merry pair. The ceremony occupies the whole day, and at night some short ceremonies of a trifling nature being observed, the two youths are united together and left to themselves after a highly formal and mutual introduction. Thenceforth the girl really makes one of

the body of her husband's family, and her duties and rights are there now fully recognised. She is now introduced as it were into a new system of existence. She sees new objects around her, and a new order of things quite different from that which she used to observe at her parents' house. Every thing here is her's. She now gains some station in life, some object in the avocations of home. New scenes open to her view, and new duties press upon her notice. Amusement is no longer the object of her pursuit. The present has lost half its charms in her sight, and cares about her future happiness engross her attention. She now lives upon the future. Hope and pursuit are now necessary to the full-grown being. All this is true. But she is here subjected to the tyranny of her husband, father-in-law, and mother-in-law, who have the power of treating her in any way they choose. Of all the others, she is most under the influence of her mother-in-law, who exercises her authority over her, not only in matters related to household affairs, but even in those which involve her immediate and personal interests. She is there bound to respect all, to obey all, to rise in their presence, to listen to their commands and diligently to execute them. None on the other hand respect her, none even take of her so much notice as to acknowledge any service which it may lie within her power to render. The goodness of her husband alone can be her only hope amidst circumstances of such a gloomy description. But if he be unprincipled and violent, as is often the case, her misery is beyond conception. She then labours under a most heavy curse that can ever in her life befall her, for the happiness of her existence depends upon her husband. She is rejected, despised, scarcely spoken to, and beaten by him, and even under circumstances of an extraordinary nature deprived of all participation of his bed itself. She is smitten with despair. She is obliged to submit tamely and silently to all the horrors of his despotic sway, which the unhappy circumstance of her marriage with him has alone conferred upon him. She is not only there subjected to the tyranny of father and mother-in-law and her husband, she is also subjected to the tyranny of fashion. She takes her meals in the same plate in which her husband may have previously dined without taking a clean one for herself. She sometimes washes and cleans the vessels which may be rendered any way useless for the purposes of the kitchen. She often cleans those spots of ground where all the members of the family may have previously dined by covering them with a thin wash of cowdung. She is then burdened the whole day with domestic concerns in which she is so busily engaged as scarcely to be able to obtain a moment of relief. She is regulated in her neat management of them by her mother-in-law, who always keeps a watchful eye over her conduct. She is indeed like a mean homely drudge, who does what she is bid to do, without any reflection or judgment on her own part. She must have some elderly and experienced female of the family to guide her even in the simplest operation of the kitchen; for otherwise she is likely to be crushed beneath the oppressive weight of household duties which might wholly devolve upon her. She is there always puzzled and confounded, and is at a loss to know what to do.

Neither does she prove, such as she is, an easy and useful companion to her husband. She has received no education which could enable her to discharge with judgment and skill the most important duties of her husband's family, or to assist him in any difficult part of his undertakings. Her views are not sufficiently enlarged by education, and her feelings are not directed by it into a proper channel. The girl had indeed the best opportunities of improving herself under her parents' roof. She had much time at her command and few cares to vex or disturb her. If she had then employed her leisure hours in storing her mind with useful knowledge, and directed her attention with full advantage to subjects which enlarge and strengthen the understanding, and counteract the influence of petty cares, she would now have proved not only a useful but an agreeable companion to her husband. But her time, instead of

being so usefully employed, was lamentably wasted in the performance of unnecessary ceremonies, in idle amusements, in vain rivalries, or in useless meddling with some neighbour's affairs. With such tastes and inclinations, she goes to her husband when the proper season arrives. Little wonder then is there that she does not in many cases prove an easy companion to her husband. Her mind is full of those childish impressions and prejudices which she had received under her paternal roof, and which now become fixed principles of her reasoning and conduct. The names of parents, of relations and of home, strengthen her bigotry to those notions or sentiments which she may have received in their company, and the absurdity of which she might have been easily brought to conceive. And stronger of course do her prejudices against education become. "What," when she is told of the value of learning, she asks herself, "were my parents in a mistake? Can it be that they did not know what was best for me to do? How can I now change my course of life which they have hitherto allowed me to follow? Can it be that those wise parents led me astray?" — And similar other questions in the same tone. Here, however, opens wide the field for the husband to call into play all his active energies, to train her up in the principles of sound education and to promote as much as possible the interests of her immortal soul, which, as a husband upon whom the chiefest good of his wife greatly depends, he ought never to overlook. From the very nature of the situation which she fills, she presents the tenderest claims on his affection and regard. To suppose him exhibiting an ominous listlessness and indifference to her eternal interests, is a contradiction which we can never conceive to be realized when piety and benevolence retain any hold of the mind.

13. An important consideration now presents itself to my mind. Having somewhere in the preceding pages of this paper, directed the reader's attention to the treatment of young children in Hindú families, I hope it will not prove unprofitable to advert in this place to the peculiar predilections which Hindú parents display in favour of their sons, and the aversion they have to their daughters.

It is scarcely necessary to advert to the superstitious notions entertained in regard to the births of a male and a female child. The joy and satisfaction felt by native parents at the birth of a son, far exceed that which attends the birth of a daughter. Hence she is held in the lowest estimation of the family; and hence is the peculiar kindness and interest displayed towards a son, not only by his parents whose hearts are filled to the brim by his birth, but by one and all of the members of the family. To the intensity of that natural feeling which is implanted in the breast of every parent, the idea of a son's being the heir to the family adds not a little. The daughter is considered here as a mere property, first in the hands of her parents, and next in the hands of her husband. The son carries about him an air of consequence which procures him the greater share of the respect and attention of the rest of the family. The daughter however careful she may be to secure the regard of her parents, is often sadly neglected or despised. The kindred in the house even rail at her, the servants ridicule her. The parents, though they may cloak their feelings of aversion for her under the disguise of an apparent regard or favour, often secretly wish that she had been born a male child. The son is their peace and rest. He is the delight of their eyes. On him are set all their affections and desires. He is therefore treated by his parents with an intenseness and affection which do not mark their treatment of their own daughter. All that they eagerly wish to do for her, is getting her married to some one whom chance or circumstances may entitle to their notice. Until the time of her betrothment, they feel it their duty and interest to accommodate her in every possible manner, and when the marriage knot binds her to another family, it, in fact, severs her from those ties



which had bound her since her birth to the family of her parents. That real solicitude with which the parents' hearts yearned towards her whilst she made one of their own family, is now much diminished in its intensity. Those offices of kindness which, as dictated by natural feeling, they administered towards her till then, do now cease or are prompted only by a sense of duty. Every link of connection which had bound her to her father's family, now breaks off, but that which natural affection may keep up. She is now regarded by her parents as a stranger, and even sometimes treated as such. She is now a property, not in the hands of her parents, but in the hands of her husband. He is her lord, and his word is her law. Her parents occasionally call her to their house, and make her stay with them, and enjoy their society for some weeks or months: but scarcely now does she receive that marked attention and notice from her parents, which her jealous eye observes unsparingly bestowed on her own little brother, whose slightest cry awakens the mother's anxiety, and arouses the father's affection. Now it is difficult to conceive the propriety or reasonableness on the part of native parents of exhibiting such different conduct, and displaying such different feelings, towards their sons and daughters. Why should joy prevail at the birth of a son, and discontent follow that of a daughter? Is the event of the birth of the former fraught with propitious consequences, and that of the latter with mischievous ones? Such is however the common belief of Hindû parents; and superstition, no doubt, comes in to the support of this foolish and absurd belief. The girl is thus neglected and despised because her parents have fewer prospects of her future usefulness to them, combined with the idea of the flexibility and weakness common to her sex, which unfit her for any important and arduous duties of life, and also because she is soon afterwards to be separated from them, and be united to another family. The son, however, is regarded with peculiar respect and attention, not only as being heir to all their earthly possessions, as forming a principal part of the family, and as being unlikely to be ever severed from it except by the ruthless hand of death, but as being capable in future of discharging the most important duties of society in whatever station he may happen to be placed. It is owing to this circumstance that parents reserve from their daughter the fullest share of their sympathy and regard; and this conduct, founded as it certainly is on one of the most selfish principles which discredit our nature, is directly opposed to the duty which nature herself has imposed upon them of watching over the interests of their children as much as possible, and highly repugnant to the dictates of reason and humanity, which would never warrant such partial and interested division of regard and favour. The flexibility and weakness which distinguish the gentler sex, are their natural defects, if defects they can be called. This weakness does not originate in her wrong use of those abilities or powers which nature may have bestowed on her in a full and sound state. Her inadequateness, therefore, to discharge the momentous duties of life, cannot for a moment justify her being unavengedly exposed to the calamity of being so universally disrespected or despised; or to the harsh treatment of those under whom Providence has placed her, not to be so ill behaved to, but to be attended to, with all the respect and gentleness due to her sex. Nature has constituted her such as she is, and she has constituted her so, with the benevolent intention too that she may become a proper helpmeet for man, and be best adapted to the peculiar situation which she is intended to occupy in the scale of human existence. In harshly treating her therefore for this deficiency of her nature, and denying her every accession of comfort and enjoyment which is placed so much within the reach of the son, Hindû parents seem evidently to act in direct opposition to the dictates of reason, and to the benevolent purposes of Providence. But Hindû superstition will not be reconciled to any such liberal sentiment on the subject. It will degrade the female in the

scale of existence, and subject her to every species of domestic tyranny. She is, in fact, rendered a passive being rather than an active. Such a partiality of conduct is highly dishonorable to our nature, and highly injurious to the best interests of society over which woman has so great a control. Let, therefore, every Hindú parent treat his daughter with the same degree of attention as he shows towards his son. Let him consider them as beings created by God to serve their peculiar purposes in existence. Let him avoid his extreme predilection for the one, and his aversion to the other.

One great reason, besides, for which Hindú parents treat their daughters with such neglect and have such aversion to them, is the idea which they entertain of the natural inferiority of their mental endowments to those of the other sex. This however, as will readily be admitted by every enlightened person, is an erroneous idea, the indulgence of which has done incalculable injury to their highest interests, both in their relation to this world and to that which is to come. Hence their education, by which alone they may be improved, as moral and intellectual beings, is systematically neglected; and hence are they subjugated to the tyrannizing will and authority both of their parents and husbands. Considered as it naturally is, that their mental endowments fall infinitely short of the important duties of life which they may be called upon to perform, they are entirely neglected as useless human agents, and generally used as mere tools in the hands of their superiors. But it is needless to observe, (for who can assert the contrary?) that woman possesses a mind capable of the most refined cultivation, that she is endowed with faculties and powers which would enable her to search into the refinements of literature and the depths of science, to follow out the most difficult processes of abstruse reasoning, and to indulge in the loftiest flights of imagination. We also perceive in her a breathing after immortality, which betokens a creature destined for a life to come. He must have a very narrow acquaintance with human nature, who goes to the length of saying, that woman is only fit for the affairs of the kitchen, and not for the duties of society at large. History and experience tell us that women have turned out great writers, poets, philosophers and divines; and their beautiful productions — the offspring of their talents and genius, — do now adorn our libraries. What folly and ignorance, then, on the part of Hindú parents to treat with such harshness and contempt, a being so fair, so useful, and so great! What cruelty and harshness in the conduct of those parents in allowing their daughter to grow up in total ignorance, not only of the elements of learning, but of all moral obligations, a daughter who, if trained and well educated, would prove the greatest blessing to her parents and to society! Instances are not wanting, even in the remotest periods of history, to show that women have proved themselves useful members of the family in which they once lived, and that they are scarcely inferior to men in point of natural talents and understanding. To Cicero the conversation of his daughter was a comfort under every affliction. To Milton his daughters proved most useful in writing for him his *Paradise Lost* and *Regained*. Several women have ruled over kingdoms and governed states in all ages and nations, and displayed great skill in political matters in which they could be concerned. The wives of several foolish husbands in the families of the Peshwas have distinguished themselves for their learning and wisdom as well as cunning. And now Britain furnishes us with an interesting host of excellent female writers and divines. Woman then at all times has displayed her powers by no means inferior in perfection or excellence to those of man. These instances, few and solitary as they are, would still be quite enough to discountenance the tyranny of Hindús who confine woman wholly to the drudgery of the kitchen, and never allow her to look into the world, and to participate in the enjoyments of refined society. O! if Hindú parents could divest themselves of all their prejudices and attend to these con-

considerations, they would at least discover no shadow of reason in that superstitious belief which makes them glad when a son is born, and discontented at the birth of a daughter. Such extreme predilections for the one and such aversions for the other, are rather the dictates of a most cruel despotism, and of a most dishonouring and debasing superstition. Ignorance and superstition alone can uphold them. Humanity however shudders, piety is abashed, reason shrinks, at their very idea.

In the manner and on the principles described above, are son and daughter universally treated in Hindú families, one like a lord, the other like a slave, one like an ornament of the family, the other like a mere tool in hands that can wield it. But this is during the earliest part of their childhood. The scene however soon changes, and circumstances soon put on a new appearance. The son, the beloved and respected child in the family, becomes a boy of perhaps five or six years of age, the daughter, the most neglected and disrespected child in the family, becomes a girl of perhaps the same age. Their marriage is the point which then engrosses the parents' attention.

The manner and the principles on which the marriages of those children are formed shall now, in fulfilment of our promise, be adverted to. When they arrive at an age fit for their betrothment, the father's anxieties turn about the acquisition of money, and the careful mother exerts all her economical diligence in saving. He resorts to every means by which he may acquire money. He engages himself to form intimacy with great and wealthy men of the land. He constantly waits on them, flatters them, and uses every artifice or stratagem, by which he might succeed in securing their favour, and making them subservient to contribute to his own selfish ends. His thoughts being wholly bent on the pompous and splendid performance of the great marriage ceremonies that are to take place in his family, he thinks of nothing but filling his coffers with cash from every quarter he can. The ambitious mother, who loves money, gold, silver and nothing else, — who is anxious to shine in rich and gaudy trappings and to attend to several expensive ceremonies, — who is extremely desirous to attract attention and procure respect by a display of her riches, — the ambitious mother, I say, who takes a great pride in presiding over all her domestic affairs, and glories in the idea of her being the head of the whole family which fears, obeys, and respects her, — such an ambitious mother ever feels vexed and discontented when her husband maintains an humble establishment, brings no money home, and is too poor to satisfy all her aspirings after gold and silver. His own wife gets in that case tired of him, the family does not like him, and his kindred are even ashamed to own their connection with him. Apprehensive of the odium of his relations being cast on him, he engages himself more zealously in his pursuit after money. Be this as it may, having gathered in a sufficient mass of money by whatever means or stratagems he can, he is ready to pour it out in every form and shape of luxury on the great occasions of his childrens' marriages. The daughter is the first object in view. At her proper age, that is, when she is 5 or 6 years old, she is married to a boy perhaps a year or two older than herself. And married how? By consulting her own choice in the adjustment of the matter? No! How then? By bringing the boy into her presence and allowing them both to remain in one another's company so as to acquaint themselves with each other's views, motives, and abilities, and to be able to judge whether there is a mutual harmony and accordance between the tastes and sentiments of both? No! They both are yet too young for that; the whole matter is left to the disposal of the parents themselves, who settle the business either as it suits their own convenience, or their present benefit, without regard to their daughter's future interests. How then is she married? By taking into account the mental abilities



and moral qualities of the boy to whom she is to be given, his attainments in learning, or general competency in useful knowledge? No! Money, large estate, large family, preponderate far in their views. How then? It is by inquiring after the external appearance of the boy, the proportion of his limbs, and the neatness of his features, — next, after the amount of riches possessed by his parents, the extent of their property and interest, and the nature of the family with which he is connected, — next, by inquiring after his father's and mother's disposition, his sister's habits and temper, the influence which she has over her parents and the character of all the members of the family, — and lastly, by sending the girl's birth-record to the boy's house to be examined there, and to assist both the parties to come to a decisive conclusion as to the propriety of the match. Whether the arrangement, so far as it is got up, will succeed or not, is another thing. But the results which follow the custom by which the marriages of Hindoo children are formed, will clearly appear from the following observations. The marriage state is the most important event in the history of one's own domestic life. It is that state upon which his happiness, or misery in the world does in a great measure depend. It is generally believed that high and charming as are all the enjoyments of the family fireside, marriage alone is best calculated to give a higher tone to the sacred endearments of the domestic circle. The great, the grand, and the beautiful, may be described by the beauties of language. But who can describe love as it springs up fresh in the bosoms of the newly married couple, that love which beams in the bright intelligence of the eye, and which carries an air of grace and loveliness in those persons by whom its stroke is felt, that love which likes to dwell on the grace and beauty of youth when they are already gone by, and which outlives even the shrivelled form of old age, the infirmities of our nature, the wayward humours of an unsteady health, and the temporary langour which checks our better purposes, — that love which carries the animation of its early spring through all the varied forms of old age, and languishing health — and of tenderness and care, which life requires in its passage from youth to age. Such love, regulated by high moral sentiments, raises us, if any thing can do so on earth, even to the pure and unalloyed bliss of the angelic creation. In a family where the hearts of a husband and wife are united by such an affection as this, purity and virtue burn like vestal fires which are in the sacred keeping of both: and mutual tastes giving interest to their generous pursuits, animation to their intercourse, and variety to their daily conversation, render their passage through life, beset though it may be by many ills, gladsome and happy. The world wears no threatening aspect; and the allurements of pleasure and ambition lose their danger, when the sacred halo of virtue, love, and affection rest over home, and when there is an angelic being within, the radiance of whose countenance is shed on every thing around. Who that has once tasted the sweet delights of such a companionship, does not afterwards look back on it with a longing heart? But we can scarcely hope to have such pictures realized in the case we are considering, and under the circumstances by which marriages in our families are attended. Here the picture is reversed. Here, as it is often found, the tastes of both the husband and wife disagree, the views and pursuits of both do not harmonize, collisions of jarring interests ensue, and turbulence and discontent are at hand when that interference which the wise and upright will never attempt, except for a reasonable and consistent purpose, the selfish, the ill tempered, and the unprincipled employ, only to gratify their own caprice and wayward humours. And it is no wonder that these things have often occurred and do occur when marriages are formed with such views as we have already described, views in regard to the property, largeness of the

family and the bodily qualities of the married parties, and not in regard to their mental endowments, their virtuous habits, their attainments in general knowledge, and the degree of their moral worth, as also when the marriages are formed without any reference to the consequences that might arise from them, without any regard being paid to the agreement or disagreement between the mutual tastes, views, and pursuits of the parties, and without their free choice and will being consulted as to their mutual union. But the evil is not only that they are married without any determination of their own choice, without consulting their own judgment and will. The evil is not only that they are married under such circumstances, but that they are married at a very early age, an age when they are neither capable of thinking for themselves well, nor of understanding the nature of objects presented to their notice, when they cannot entirely depend upon their judgment as to the undertaking they must enter upon, the pursuits they must be engaged in, or the ways and principles which they must follow in the world, --- an age when they are extremely unable to understand the nature of their union, and the several duties which from such a union must necessarily arise, an age in which the only escape which they can have from the sensibility of the injury, which by such a step is inflicted upon them, consists in their ignorance. Alas, that a point of so serious importance should not claim the regard and attention of the Natives, who by their laziness and apathy are the destroyers of their own interests. But we will see the mischiefs arising from this system of early marriage more clearly by and by as we progress on. The evil appears to be greater on reflection than at first sight.

When the marriage contracts are formed on the principles as explained above, it is evident what results may follow from such. But in addition to this, it is most lamentable to think that enormous sums of money are vainly spent away upon those occasions. Of the large expenses that are then made, the long splendid processions that pass by our streets in those days, the magnificent equipage in which the young pair are accoutred, and the heavy ornaments with which their bodies are loaded, the great show of powder work that is then exhibited to the view, and the large number of Indian musicians who then crowd our streets, echoing the air with their discordant tunes as they pass along, can only serve to give but an inadequate idea. This is only the public exhibition of the thing. But who that is an alien from native manners and ways, can without difficulty conceive the innumerable incidents that occur to render other and larger expenses necessary, the incredible sums of money lavishly expended in grand shows of ornaments, and clothing, — in splendid feasts and in other jovial entertainments, in the extensive distribution of plates, laden promiscuously with varieties of dress, playthings, sweetmeats, fruits, and in various other things which would merely swell any paper into a tremendous bulky volume. In such kinds of enterprizes, however much almost all natives may feel themselves interested, the people of Bombay especially take the most prominent lead. And, indeed, I can, without fear of contradiction, say, that such exhibitions of grandeur are at few other places marked with the same uniformity of fashion, and the same effect, not to say a word about the great folly of natives in performing early marriages of their children and the lamentable effects arising therefrom, how much have we still to deplore, considering the very poor and unhappy circumstances in which many of our people are now-a-days plunged, the immense expenses which they are on those occasions obliged to incur even beyond their incomes, and for a purpose too, from which there is generally no good hope left of better results to issue. Ere the marriage day itself arrives, we have already seen what extreme solicitude seizes the bosom of the anxious mother, and what dangerous enterprizes the industrious father is ever ready to encounter. The large debts in which the latter is at times obliged to run in order to save his character,



may be easily conceived by any class of my readers from the state in which the generality of natives are placed, — and the extreme fondness which our women display for shows and expenses may also be easily judged of from the deplorable ignorance under which they labor. Every Hindu who has a family around him may well feel the force of what I say, but the enlightened head of our native families may have the solitary lesson pressed to his heart that the education of females is *a great blessing*. For half of the expense that takes place in native families arises from the ignorance of women; and I fully believe that in consequence of their enlightenment the greater portion of misery now entailed upon poor natives would be effectually prevented.

I would request the serious attention of my learned native friends to this point, especially of those who may have become fathers. Let them set a fair example when it is high time for them to do so, and by their own economical conduct, discourage the more expensive pursuits of their semi-enlightened brethren. If they have daughters or sons to marry, let them act upon the principles set forth in the preceding article; let them not yield to the fancies of their wives, their mothers, or their sisters; let them not heed the suggestions of the priesthood; but let them walk erect amid the dull multitudes which may surround them, and, with a firmness of purpose, trample down under their feet the “ill-bred worms” of old custom which tease and annoy them. If you do so my friends to-day, India’s sun will shine on a better land to-morrow, and peace and happiness would dwell, as it were, in matrimonial friendship in the families of all our native brethren. But also the present system of things here, so far as it goes, is the most lamentable of any that we know. The generality of our native parents are so taken up with the importance of making expenses, on occasions of marriage ceremonies, that a failure in this part of their duty as they call it, is regarded as an indication of the meanest spirit, and a fairest acquittal in it, as a mark of great magnanimity. During the wedding days the expenses that occur in the family, it is not in the power of language to give an adequate idea of. Mutual interchange of presents passes between the houses of the bride and bridegroom, the new candidates for the marriage state. And when emulation operates, as it often does, an acting principle between the opposite parties, the ceremony reaches its utmost height, and the expenses pass all bounds of credibility. Much money is cost principally upon gold and silver. Other articles are, on such occasions, objects of minor importance. Dresses, ornaments, sweetmeats, furniture and various other things, which the fruitful imagination of the native woman can invent, are distributed between both the parties in luxuriant profusion. The parents of the bride however have indeed little to do in comparison to what the others ought. But it is the bounden duty of the bridegroom’s parents to confer every kind of rich gift on their boy’s wife. In preparing large ornaments of gold and silver for the use of the girl, great anxiety is evinced by the parents of the boy for his wife, or else her parents, but especially her mother, will take offence, and the people at large will regard the omission on the part of the boy’s parents as a token of effeminacy or meanness of spirit, and not only as wholly unbecoming of the community to which they belong but as highly derogatory to the honor of the customs and usages which are handed down from their ancestors, and which they profess to hold in sacred reverence. Applause and admiration follow the display of an unbounded profusion of wealth on ceremonies of this kind, and the author of such ostentatious shows flutters with joy amidst the acclamations of the people. Elated with delight which the voice of the admiring public affords, he looks with careless indifference on the shrunken appearance of his bags of money, and in his enthusiastic ardor for acquiring he name of a rich great man, forgets to exercise his foresight as to the several drawbacks, disappointments, and discomforts to which he may by such a vain, useless, and extravagant show of his money, be hereafter necessarily exposed. By the fear of the world’s contempt the poorer



classes of the community too, who, in the ordinary circumstances of life can not even well afford to maintain their families in decency, are induced on such occasions desirous to keep up the common forms and shows of the ceremony even by running into large debts far beyond their power ever after to repay. Afraid of being rendered the subject of laughter and joke in other families, the poor man, notwithstanding the hazards which may likely befall him is tempted, in order to satisfy the people, and please his own wife, children, and relations, to observe, though in a less showy manner, the several ceremonies which custom enjoins, and thus to be somewhat able to maintain the dignity and honor of his ancestors, and to countenance the cunning policy of the priests who attend on him in numbers for the sake of money. Believing firmly that it is a duty imposed upon them by nature, as well to marry their children as to feed and clothe them, the rich and the poor are alike occupied with serious thoughts concerning the marriage of their children as soon as they are born. From this time they commence preparing some small articles of use and ornament for their children, so as to unburden themselves from half that load of troubles, expenses, and anxieties which would befall them on a sudden in a few days afterwards like an oppressive weight at the time of their children's marriages. They go on preparing ornaments in this manner for their children until the approach of the grand ceremony. The day of ceremony at length arrives, and the expenses attending it are surprisingly great and enormous. What was hard earned, what was obtained by the sweat of the brow, what was accumulated by the labour of years, is dissipated in one day in shows, grand expenses unbounded, and pleasures unheard of. The swollen bag shrinks into empty nothing in a day. The coffers so long carefully filled with cash, now spontaneously vomit forth their contents. The hand that was ere long unweariedly employed in drawing in money, is now as untiringly busied with throwing out the same. As greedily was it once sought after and accumulated, so liberally is it now squandered and lavished away on frivolous ceremonies. Merchants come in with their goods of merchandise, goldsmiths with their quantity of the yellow metal with spectacles to their eyes, and scale-balances in their hands, jewellers with their admirable jewels, and almost all dealers in different trades come out from every different quarter of the town to have their respective articles sold off in bargain at the house where the great expensive ceremony is about to take place. Every silvery coin is then converted into pieces of gold. The goldsmith who is just at hand transforms the gold into a variety of ornaments such as anklets, bracelets, &c. which are intended to grace the body of the future bride. Plates, richly laden with a profusion of different articles, are distributed among friends and relations as tokens of joy and delight. The restless and ambitious Bráhmans come from all quarters of the town, city, or village, as the case may be, and run into the joyous home of marriage festivity for the sake of money with an avidity scarcely paralleled. Thus and in a variety of several other ways, is spent away on such vain and frivolous ceremonies the money of native parents, which, as acquired by great labour, they ought to employ for some nobler and better ends. Thus under an impression that their chief duty consists as well in marrying their children as in feeding them, the parents in this country lavish away profusely and unscrupulously all their money on a class of unnecessary and trifling ceremonies — that money which they acquired by the sweat of their brow, the labour of their hands and the length of years — that money in acquiring which they had to contend with many hardships, dangers, and difficulties, and for the sake of which they willingly at times submitted to the sacrifice of being separated from their home, their relations and their friends, even by leagues of distance. No one can escape from the necessity of making such enormous expenses. The poor as well as the rich are alike enjoined by custom strictly to observe ceremonies so expensive yet so unnecessary. The higher classes of the community who may enjoy an income far exceeding the ut-

most bounds of expenses which attend such ceremonies, would perhaps not be in the probability of injuring themselves so much seriously by following on these occasions an extravagant mode of conduct as might be imagined. But what soul thinks of the fate of the poor who enjoy no real certainty even of the means of daily subsistence, and who spend almost the whole term of their existence in amassing that money which is so easily dissipated and lost in the marriage of a single child, and the numberless ceremonies by which it is attended. Instances are not wanting of many poor families of our country being ruined by a fatal observance of such unnecessary, useless, and expensive ceremonies. Those families which ere while appeared to be placed amidst fulness of domestic comforts and enjoyments are soon afterwards found going into ruin. The poor old man who but yesterday was the father of several healthy children, and the head of a flourishing family is seen arraigned to-day before the city judge by his creditors for some large sums, which he borrowed of them likely for such purposes, and which he could not afterwards repay. The sentence passes, and the fetters are rivetted to his neck or hands or feet. He is put into prison for some long term or other, and is condemned there without hope of exciting pity or obtaining redress, to endure all the hardships and torments of a tedious confinement. The wretched mother is left alone in her miserable abode at the head of her few children. She now accepts some low mechanical work in the neighbourhood and subsists herself and maintains her family by the scanty pittance which she earns. The children are now left to themselves without a father to attend to their education or to train them up in the ways of goodness and holiness. Think of the condition of the married child itself, whose marriage probably subjected the father to those enormous expenses which carried him to the bar of the city court, and entailed upon him at last the miseries of a solitary prison. If the child be a girl, she might look for dependence upon her husband. But if it be a boy, he is then placed in a situation of great trial. Not to speak of the present domestic misfortunes to which he might be exposed, he is left amid circumstances which preclude the possibility of his enjoying those resources of mental improvement which he has none so much interested in his welfare as to provide. Being too young he is yet insensible of the responsibility which his late union enjoins upon him. He is ignorant of the duties he owes to his wife as well as to those by whom he is surrounded: and deprived for some time of the assistance of so valuable a guide as a father, probably during his earlier days which are the best season of improvement, he is removed to a distance from every possibility of his being thoroughly prepared for an intelligent performance of those duties. O! how in such cases are the early marriages of children, and the enormous expenses which usually attend them, detrimental, both to the happiness of the family itself and the interest of the children. Now to what advantage, we may ask, does an expense so enormous, and made for such purposes, turn at last? Does it lead to produce any favourable result which without it could not be possibly brought about? Does it do any thing more than merely procure a bare name to the party who expend money so profusely? Does it do any thing beyond leading to procure them the reputation of possessing large sums of money, and the title to being called the wealthy men of the world? Is the marriage of children rendered more productive of beneficent results by expending money so profusely upon it than otherwise? No! Such enormous expenses by which the marriages of Hindu children are accompanied, are dictated by no higher motives than those which superstition and ignorance alone can supply. Rather than lavishing money on ceremonies which are so vain and frivolous, and which, in the end produce such unhappy results, how far advantageous would it be to the public at large, if they would employ the same money in the erection of hospitals, schools, &c. and in the establishment of several other institutions calculated to promote the common good! Certainly we hope the adop-



tion of such a method of procedure would bring about a happier and better change in the aspect of things, and the renunciation of prejudices and customs which lead to such enormous expenses, and consequently to the ruin of native families, would produce results highly interesting and beautiful.

16. Having so far enlarged on the expenses attending the marriage ceremonies of the Hindus, I shall now proceed to point out the effects which early marriages are calculated to produce, in as much as they affect the interests of the parties concerned. (1). Early marriage is calculated to render boys who are thus married indifferent to their own education, the children rather being fully assured in consequence of their being married so early that their parents themselves have put within their power the means of gratifying their natural passions, and by endowing them with valuable ornaments and some portions of money, have conferred on them the ability of supporting the family which might arise from their conjugal union, are apt to become not only sluggish but grievously indifferent to their own education. There are few amongst the natives who desire knowledge for its own sake. They seek it that they may obtain a just title to be recommended first to a good match, and afterwards to a good situation. They do not desire knowledge that their views may be enlarged and enlightened by it; but that they may get a good wife belonging to some respectable family, that they may be qualified for the common business of life, and that they may be better enabled than the ignorant and unknowing, to procure money so as to live decently and honorably among their own family and the different relations and friends with whom they may be connected. With these objects before their view, most of them set themselves on in the career of learning: and it may therefore be justly concluded that so soon as these objects are removed from their view, just as soon will their anxiety and zeal for learning cease. Whatever degree of zeal and diligence they may evince in the pursuit after learning, all that is done is with an especial reference to those remoter objects. When therefore those objects are placed within their reach altogether, when they get themselves married so early by their parents without any labour or anxiety on their own part, the necessity of self education does not press itself home so forcibly to their minds. They then think little of cultivating their understanding, and enlightening their mental faculties. They then care little whether they are learned or unlearned; for what they needed learning for, has already been placed within their reach, without any expense on their own part, and whatever now they may happen to turn out whether good or bad, they can enjoy its possession so long as frail humanity permits. They have now no prospects to gain, no fear to lose, having no important object to engross their attention, they indulge themselves in every trifling pursuit with all the wantonness of an unrestrained liberty. The chief circumstance, therefore, which opposes a formidable obstacle to their progress in learning consists in the removal of these objects, caused by their being married at an earlier age, when besides, their minds are the least tainted by worldly prejudices, and when therefore they are the most favourably situated to receive the blessing of education. Their coldness and indifference to the cultivation of their minds are not only to be accounted for by their being married at such an early age, but at an age when they are not in a fit condition to be able duly to appreciate the feelings displayed, by their parents in getting them married at such an enormous expense of their money, labour, and influence, and to feel the necessity of rewarding the labour and exertions which their own marriage costs their parents by a cultivation of good disposition, and an acquirement of superior abilities, which their parents can only expect from them as suitable returns. Surely the extremely young age at which they are married would not warrant any such expectation on our part. They are yet too young and ignorant to think in this manner. Nothing can induce them to direct their attention to the acquisition of useful



knowledge without being prevailed upon by the persuasion of some one superior to them ; and even when they grow up, they still cling to that lethargy which they have long since hugged, and which the prospect of future marriage could alone in their case have sufficed to shake off. But in consequence of their being early married, the boys feel less disposed to learn than they otherwise would have been. They give up all thoughts of study. They live idle. They rest contented with the boon their parents conferred upon them that of having married them. Their parents are consequently put to the two-fold trouble and expense of getting them educated in addition to their having so profusely lavished their thousands and tens of thousands on their marriage simply. Their idleness and their total indifference towards their education beget new cares and anxieties in their parents' bosoms. Other cares and anxieties arise. Other objects rivet the attention of the parents—namely their sons' wives whose welfare or misery depends wholly upon the circumstances in which their husbands may be situated. The parents are taken up with the consideration of what might be the state of the poor girls in case that their sons grow up in ignorance and error. Hence we may come to the conclusion, that the marriages of children at an early age, attended as they generally are by very enormous expenses, instead of doing any good, prove the source of much evil. Thus we see that the early marriage of children, so far from relieving their parents from half the portion of that heavy load of perplexities and anxieties which prey upon their spirits, only tends to aggravate their misery, and increase the number of their cares and regrets. Thus instead of any material benefits resulting to parents from the enormous sums which they expended on the marriage of their children beyond the impression left upon the multitude of their great riches, they are only repaid in the bargain as it were, by the wanton indulgences of their children, their careless indifference to the cultivation of their own minds, and their extreme avidity for the pleasures and fashions of the world. How much would the peace of the parents be secured, and the sources of unnecessary vexations and disappointments be removed and the cause of education be promoted, if they wisely deferred the marriage of their children to a period when they themselves shall have grown big and become well experienced by an acquaintance with the different scenes and chances of the world, when their judgment shall have been matured and enlightened, and when their pursuits shall have been properly directed, their objects settled, and their views enlarged.

(2.) Early marriage is calculated to throw obstacles in the way of those who may be willing to learn, by multiplying too soon the cares of the family.

Boys are married here, as we have already said, at an age which is the most favourable season for their improvement. From the circumstance of their being married so early it often happens that while they career on in their pursuit of knowledge they are in fact gradually approaching nearer to days of cares and anxieties. Their wives grow up and soon arrive at womanhood, carrying along with them a train of prejudices and associations to which they were accustomed in their infancy. Hitherto the young husband was engaged in the quiet pursuits of literature and science. Hitherto the young student was immured in his closet, poring and dreaming over his ponderous volumes, undisturbed by any cares but those of outstripping his fellows in the race of learning. But soon the silence of his closet is broken by the buzz of relations, the noise of tom-toms, and the sounds of music. Every day now presents fresh subjects for observation and notice in the family. He is called in to the performance of certain ceremonies. His wife becomes a full grown being, looking upon him for her support, for the satisfaction of her desires, and the supply of her wants. She therefore becomes the object of his anxieties and cares. His mind is insensibly diverted away from those objects and pursuits upon which it was so long firmly intent. He is gradually led to feel an interest in every thing relating to his

wife. New duties and new ceremonies daily press upon the notice of the young husband. He is now drawn within a circle of household affairs and ceremonies where he must move his round in common with others. The young student is thus frequently interrupted in his pursuits. His attention is occasionally drawn away by numerous calls of family concerns, by some trifling ceremonies to be engaged in, some petty cares to be attended to, some small business to be settled, some frivolous disputes to be adjusted, some bargains to be made, some expenses to be performed, some presents to be sent or exchanged, some small requests of the wife to be listened to and complied with. Should his parents be living, should they be so favourably circumstanced as to enable them to encourage his education, and to prevent his being under the necessity of being too soon employed and getting his livelihood through the labour of his own hands, and should the family consist of members living in mutual amity and friendship and having no disposition to quarrel; he is then not so likely to be stopped in the career of his studies as otherwise, by the several duties which he might have to observe as arising from his connection with his wife, or by the oft repeated necessities by which he might be obliged, on account of her, to submit to certain expenses of an intolerable nature. But if on the other hand, as instanced in a majority of cases, the parents be poor, and the family be constantly agitated by domestic feuds and quarrels, he suffers a grievous pause in his studies. The demands of his wife grow daily more importunate and his means not allowing him to comply with them, he seeks for some employment or some situation which might confer on him the power of satisfying all her desires and gratifying all her tastes. He must make for her new ornaments of gold and silver, buy for her new clothes, and place every thing within her reach which her wants might demand or her fancy might dictate. Brought up in habits of idleness, accustomed from her infancy to an indulgence of all her foolish whims, and ignorant of every subject which leads to strengthen the understanding and counteract the influence of petty cares, the wife becomes, in fact, an intolerable burden to her husband. Ambitious of decking her body with glittering ornaments and dressing it in rich and gaudy apparel, she becomes the cause of heaping upon her poor studious husband a multitude of vain cares, and involving him in a thousand intricate and perplexing expenses. He then strongly feels the necessity of renouncing his studies, and enters upon those pursuits from which he can expect to derive no new accessions to his knowledge, but can draw some pecuniary resources for the gratification of his wife's ambition. He is obliged to leave his school where he can see no prospect of his being rendered able to provide for his wife and supply her diverse wants. He goes to some office in his town, and there works like a sordid worldly drudge, whose thoughts are wholly bent upon gaining money. The importunities of his wife at home, the necessity of complying with all her wishes as a being dependent upon him alone, and the fear of shame consequent upon a display of his want of power in satisfying them, act as powerful stimuli in his pursuit after money. There are not a few native youths, however, who are thus drawn away from their intellectual pursuits, and obliged to engage in those that are purely worldly, because of their wives whose demands it were otherwise impossible for them to satisfy. But the evil does not stop here. It extends itself gradually to that long train of cares and anxieties which the increase of family brings along with it. The husband young though he be, becomes, in a short time, the father of a few children and gets himself surrounded by a little family arising out of himself. New scenes now open to his view. He is now loaded with new cares, new difficulties, new anxieties, and new duties. And the meagre education which he received at school, and which he was obliged to leave off on account of his wife, is infinitely far short of the requisite ability to discharge those duties, which, both as a husband and father, he must observe in relation to his wife



and children. Unless therefore he has some one to direct or to assist him, or unless he enjoys a moderate income, he can have worse hopes of coming off better in the world. He is involved in difficulties and embarrassments which for want of method, become the more intricate and perplexing, and with which he must now without intermission continue to struggle. He has brought beings into existence without the requisite ability to support them. He must therefore be in good speed to procure means for their support, and the proper supply of their own and their mother's wants. He then looks about for some employment which would relieve him from his present inconvenience. But his meagre education fails him; his age is too young: his experience is premature. Yet he is a husband, a father, and the head of a little family. Unavoidable difficulties press upon him on all sides from which he can hardly get soon clear off. He is discontented and perplexed! He knows not what to do! He no longer looks upon his early marriage as a boon conferred upon him by his parents, but rather as a curse laid for him in store. Hence marriage unions formed in Hindu families so early, instead of promoting mutual enjoyment, lead to burden them with many unnecessary cares without compensating for it by an accession of happiness and comfort to the parties themselves.

(3.) Early marriage tends to prevent a Hindu from travelling to distant countries, and thereby sets a most formidable bar to the improvement of his knowledge. It is admitted by all, that travelling is one of the best means by which knowledge is promoted, and truly so it is. Combined with observation and reflection, it proves the means of vast improvement of the human mind, by presenting before it several objects for the exercise of its various faculties. It enlarges the sphere of man's observation, and increases the amount of his general information. It extends the sympathies of his nature by bringing him as it were into an intimate intercourse with new people, new objects, and new scenes, and by removing from his mind all those prejudices which he may have imbibed from a long and habitual intercourse with people by whom he may have from his infancy been surrounded. Thus travelling leads to produce a great change for the better in his moral and intellectual character. But an institution so hateful as that of early marriage among the Hindus is a bar to all the improvement that they can expect to derive from travelling. If we carefully examine the state of things as they exist in this country, we would find that of all those prejudices which are generally held forth as presenting most formidable obstacles to travelling, none can really be said to have greater influence over the Hindus in that respect. It is not religion which renders travelling impracticable. It is not the fear of losing caste which prevents a Hindu from travelling to distant countries. It is not the law of the country, it is not the prejudices of home, it is not the 'old custom' of ages — it is neither of these things that comes in the way of going to distant and foreign countries. What then is it? Why! it is early marriage itself. It is this, and this alone, which operates as a formidable check on his inclination to travel, and prevents all possibility of his enjoying those advantages which travelling is calculated to afford. What difficulties then a married youth has to contend with in carrying his intentions about travelling into execution, will appear from the following observations: — This early marriage involves him sooner than otherwise in certain connections which exercise a considerable influence over him. It draws him earlier into a vortex of worldly cares which become every day more intricate and numerous, and from which he cannot in the whole of his life easily extricate himself. This marriage multiplies his relations and thereby increases his difficulty of travelling far into distant countries. He becomes the husband of a wife and is bound to discharge all those duties which his marriage enjoins upon him. This separation therefore from her, which might be caused by his going to distant places, is rendered impossible. From a son he becomes a son-in-law and engages the affections and anxieties



of the parents of the girl to whom he is married, and whose interests therefore wholly depend upon him as her husband. Being involved in such connections he has, as a matter of course, to contend with several difficulties which otherwise he might have avoided. Of all those difficulties, however, be they what they may, his connection with his wife and her relations, is the most formidable. This connection with his friends and with his own parents is indeed a great difficulty in his way, but that he may be able successfully to get over. By persuasion or remonstrance he may prevail over them so far as to prevent their presenting any great hinderance to his inclinations. But he can not with so much ease get over his connection with his own wife whose destinies wholly rest upon him, and from whom therefore he can not be removed far off, without doing injury to the interests of her, who is the bride affianced of his future career. All her worldly happiness depends upon him. Without him her existence is a mere blank in creation. She can enjoy all the rights and privileges of her sex only during the life of her husband, and after his death she loses her claims to a greater part of them. Her welfare then necessarily arises, as it every from that of her husband. When such is the state of her dependence upon her husband, he cannot leave her, though for his own advantage, and remove himself to a distance which might preclude all possibility of communication between them both. The parents of his wife are much interested in his welfare as the husband of their own daughter, and would therefore be the first persons to oppose him in his views, and in the accomplishment of every one of his designs which might prove fatal to the interests of their daughter. They would never allow him to do that which, though advantageous to himself, would tend to affect in some degree the welfare of his wife. They would, therefore, exert all their power and influence in preventing him from going to a distance where he can not take along with him his wife, and consequently his being separated from her whose whole good is, as it were, altogether embodied in her husband's welfare. Imagine for a moment that a married youth, enlightened by sound education, and directed by motives of benevolence, is desirous of travelling into different countries, and of having the opportunity to reduce all the knowledge which he acquired from books to its practical applications. Imagine that no religious prejudice comes in his way, that his friends, kindred, and even his own parents, give their consent and express their approbation of his noble intentions, that he is furnished with all the requisites for the purposes of travelling, and with all that may be needful to the best furtherance of his views. Now he would seem to want nothing for setting out on his expedition. Nothing now might seem likely to prevent the accomplishment of his object. But, indeed, the greatest and most perplexing difficulty is yet to be removed. It is really a formidable difficulty. No sooner do his father and mother-in-law hear of his intentions, than they become astonished and change colour. Holding the life of their son-in-law dearer than that of their own daughter who is married to him, they feel it their interest and duty to use all their entreaties, their power and their influence to prevent him from entering upon his intended enterprize. They would rather have their own daughter dead than suffer her husband to go away from her. All the power of his persuasion and remonstrance which did well with his parents and his other relations, loses its effect amid the urgent importunities of the father-in-law, and the fervent appeals of the mother-in-law. The married youth feels himself already overpowered by the entreaties and remonstrances of his wife's relations. He is naturally thrown into a dilemma as to what he should now do. He is at last prevailed upon without the power of resistance to stay at home, and give up all thoughts of going abroad. If notwithstanding all the affecting appeals of his wife's parents, and notwithstanding his consciousness of the dependent state of his wife upon him, he leaves her and all her relations, who can conceive the misery of the poor girl? What then is she to do? To

whom ought she to look for her future maintenance and support? How is she to spend the future days of her life? How, when she becomes a full-grown being, how then can she go on in the world? Upon whom can she depend for her food and clothing and all kind of happiness, when he is separated her, and her old parents go down to their graves? Such questions would naturally suggest themselves to the heart of the husband, and they are sufficiently affecting to weigh him down from his purpose. How then can the husband, desirous of going abroad, avoid this perplexing dilemma? By taking his wife along with him, and journeying with her through several distant countries? No! That he can hardly do. It would subject him to an enormous expenditure of money which the majority of poor Hindus cannot well afford. The life of a woman, besides, whose character is not marked by that energy and vigour which distinguish the male sex only, is not well fitted for travelling either on sea or land, and visiting distant and inhospitable climes. True examples can be produced to prove the contrary. But the ignorance of native females combined with the prejudices and superstitious notions which they imbibe at home, disqualifies them entirely for travelling; and moreover the peculiar circumstances in which they are generally placed in this country render their going abroad almost impracticable. Under these disheartening circumstances, for the husband to leave his wife, who is a creature so wholly dependent upon him, whose welfare and misery are, as it were, so closely entwined with his own, for him, I say, to separate himself from a being who is the bride affianced of his future career, it is not only incompatible with the relation in which he stands to her and her parents, but highly repugnant to the feelings of love and affection which his marriage with her might have involved. Thus then the young husband, or the married youth, as we have termed him, though he may not yet be burdened with the cares of a family or any thing of the kind, is prohibited from travelling and enjoying all the benefits derivable from it by the single circumstance of the peculiar relations which the marriage state involves. He is thus obliged to lay aside all his intentions of going abroad. So much for the difficulty which lies in the way of the husband alone!

But the difficulty of travelling to distant countries is rendered still greater by the cares and anxieties which a family brings along with it. Native boys, from their being married at their very early ages, soon become the fathers of a few children, and are consequently drawn into a vortex of new cares and perplexities from which they can not without difficulty get clear. All the cares therefore which attend a family must now detain the father. The several difficulties and dangers to which his wife and children might be exposed by his being separated from them, render his stay at home absolutely necessary. For who can discharge all the duties of the family without him? His wife is of course, under present circumstances, scarcely able to procure the means of subsistence for herself and the rest of her family. It is scarcely necessary to advert to the manifold distresses and perplexities to which native families here are subjected from the want of a proper person to guide and regulate them. Thus the difficulty which would be experienced in carrying on the common business of his family during his absence, and the fear of its being exposed to several disasters and accidents, when it shall be thus left alone, strongly enforce the necessity of his staying at home. But there is yet one other view of the subject which imperatively demands his stay at home when he has got a family of his own around him. He has still higher and more important duties to perform in reference to his family than those above alluded to. Those are in relation to this world, and these in relation to the eternal world. He has only to look around him and reflect seriously in order to feel the importance of those higher duties which he owes to his family. He shall find himself surrounded by beings who have the strongest claims upon his regard, beings who depend upon



him not only to be clothed and fed, but to be cared for, especially as regards their relation to an eternal world. If deserted by him, who is to guide their feet into the ways of peace, of goodness, of virtue, and of righteousness? There is, indeed, a very valuable charge laid to his care, which he cannot neglect entirely without violating his most important duty. He is bound to his wife, his children, and all his family, by ties which it is sin for him to break asunder. He is bound to stay with them, and never to go abroad where he pleases. Such, reader, are the obstacles which early marriage presents to his going abroad. Such are the cares and anxieties in which early marriage so soon involves a Hindu. Indeed, single life, which is not burdened with the cares of a family is best adapted to the accomplishment of an object so desirable as that of travelling, and best calculated to promote the improvement of the mind. It affords the best opportunity for any man to prosecute his studies with perseverance and even with success. But when he is surrounded with several other objects which demand an exclusive share of his attention and care, all his plans of improvement, however founded on motives of benevolence, are apt to be prematurely ended and grievously frustrated. We do not, however, mean to insinuate that celibacy is preferable. No: by no means. But what we mean to urge on the attention of the reader, is, that marriages instead of taking place so early, should be delayed to a later period of life, so that the youth may have ample opportunities of improving his knowledge without being interrupted by those unseasonable cares and anxieties which marriage begets and family increases.

(4.) Early marriage is the source of much of that unhappiness which dissimilarity of taste, or disagreement in views, or difference of temper, is calculated to produce. The marriages of children here, are, as we have said, founded upon no free choice or will of the parties who enter the marriage state. Parents alone settle as well as perform the marriages of their children. On what principle and manner they do so, we have explained under that particular head. The young age of the parties themselves, whose judgment is not yet informed, nor whose understanding is yet enlightened, does not of course admit of their free choice and will being consulted in the arrangement of matters relating to their marriage. They are, therefore, wholly dependent in this as in other things upon their parents, whose judgment is well displayed in the consequences that issued from their union. And indeed the consequences are greatly deplorable. After the marriages of children are formed, after the general afflux of oriental luxury and magnificence has passed on the sides of both parties, after halls have resounded with the chorus of Indian music, after jests and laughter have diffused animation throughout the whole family circle, and after the whole routine of ceremonies has been gone through, the husband and the wife mutually separate from one another: A sudden stillness falls in and custom throws between the newly formed pair a line of separation so broad that, those faces, which just lately glanced with joy, see one another only when a succession of years, months, and days has rolled over. But those germs of love, which sprung up in their bosoms on this occasion, wither and die away for want of that nourishment which can only be supplied by mutual intercourse, mutual converse, and mutual communion of sentiment and feeling. The girl does so long live under her paternal roof, always busy with the trifles of the kitchen. The boy does so long live with his own parents, busy in preparing to follow the profession of his forefathers. One looks into the kitchen. The other looks abroad into the world. Both are engaged in different pursuits, under different circumstances, and in different societies. That portion of life when their minds are yet the least biassed by prejudices, and when the firmest kind of attachment is yet capable of being formed between them both, is spent away in a state of mutual separation from one another, and in different situations, without the opportunity of enjoying the mutual interchange of their ideas, and determining their mutual choice of the mode of life they both should



follow. But though they were to live together, and to enjoy the benefit of mutual intercourse, their age is yet scarcely fit for the accomplishment of any such object. They are yet too young and unable to form a correct judgment as to the mode of life they should pursue, and to determine their choice rightly about things by which they are surrounded. Unable, from the circumstance of their extremely young age, to exercise their judgment in matters presented to their notice, all the different scenes and circumstances by which they may, from the earliest years of their childhood be surrounded at their respective abodes, make deep impression on their minds, and become at last, as they grow up, the principles of their reasoning and conduct in life. The consequence of all this, is, that when, after so long a separation, they meet together, the incoherence of their mutual views and tastes becomes evident in the mutual discontent and unhappiness which follow. Mutual disagreement in their views and pursuits ensues. One does not like the other. What pleases the one displeases the other, the objects which occupy the attention of the one are always different from those which occupy the attention of the other. Their tastes disagree, their pursuits differ, their views are opposed, their interests jar. If one is engaged in the higher pursuits of science, the other is busy with the trifles of the kitchen. If one takes delight in the exercises of the intellect, the other is pleased with some meaner kind of occupation. Each despises or scorns the employments of the other; or, at least, both do not derive pleasure or interest from the same kind of pursuit. The consequence of this inequality between both as to their pursuits and tastes, proves very injurious to the happiness which the marriage state is calculated to produce. Supposing, for instance, what is often the case, that the husband has received a sound education, and enjoys the result of real instruction, and the wife is utterly ignorant of the very first elements of learning, then they both cannot derive from their mutual society that amount of pleasure and happiness which an equal degree of mental cultivation would have proved capable of affording. A husband of enlarged views cannot possibly draw solid enjoyment from the companionship of a narrow minded creature, who cannot appreciate even the value of things which engage his attention. When the wife is altogether incapable of sympathizing with her husband in his views, and of appreciating the worth of his attainments, he cannot enjoy that blessing which marriage is otherwise calculated to afford. And such unhappy results always follow when marriages take place early, at an age when both the parties are incapable of judging for themselves, or of finding out the right views and tastes of one another.

Again, in cases of such early marriages, the husband and the wife may not only differ with respect to their mutual pursuits and views; they may have also very different dispositions. The effects of this difference are greatly deplorable. Perhaps the husband may happen to be an unprincipled and violent man. He then exercises over his wife an absolute authority, the limits of which can scarcely be defined. He tyrannizes over her in every way and inflicts upon her the severest tortures. The slightest mistake of his wife clouds his brows and sours his temper. Her condition indeed in that case is so wretched, that the humblest slave that trembles under the lashes of his master is far better treated. She spends her days and nights in the most unhappy manner. Her mind rests with melancholy broodings over the several instances of harshness she daily receives from her husband. Her pillow is wet by many a nightly tear, and her time wasted in many sobs and sighs during the day. Mutual hatred and envy prevail, and their marriage state so far from producing any real happiness, presents to the view a perpetual scene of animosity and brawl. They both dislike one another. A smile is never seen on their cheeks. Anger always furrows their brows. Mutual discontent and hatred are then given vent to in those abusive languages with which they wantonly charge one another; those horrid imprecations in which they speak of the conduct of their parents in forming their union; those se-

vere beatings which the violent and unprincipled husband inflicts upon his wife ; those tears of sorrow and repentance which frequently bathe her eyes ; those breaches of fidelity which they were bound to observe towards each other, and those mutual separations which not unfrequently take place between them. This, reader, is no fanciful picture ! It is attested by fact and experience. As an effect of this difference of tastes and disposition between the parties, occasioned by their early marriage, divorces take place, and second and third marriages are necessarily resorted to. The consequence of this we will treat under a separate head ; and therefore we proceed as follows.

5. Early marriage having produced, as has been shown, mutual discontent between the parties, leads at last, to their mutual separation. Vexed and discontented with the present wife, the husband divorces her and turns his thoughts and affections to another object \* He performs his second marriage with the greatest pomp and splendour. He deprives his former wife of all her ornaments which were given once to her by himself, or, which is the same thing by his parents and which he has the right of taking back from her when he pleases. He exposes her in every way he chooses, and tries every argument in his power to convince the people of his innocence, who may be inclined to put an unfavourable construction on his conduct. Thus having vindicated himself in the sight of the people, and married another girl as he wished, he feels somewhat contented at the time, resting assured that his future days now would pass better and more happily. With an apparently warm, but really assumed, fondness does he embrace and kiss his second wife on the one hand, while on the other, with bitter jealousy and hatred he spurns away from his presence the poor creature to whom he was first wedded. Those relations of the first wife, who used first to caress him with all marks of fond attention and regard, now look upon him with the eye of an enemy, frown at the very recollection of his name, and contemplate his conduct like that of a wild brute. Party feelings are excited, disputes set on foot, each other's evil is sought after, hatred and animosity reign in the families. The poor relations of the despised and neglected girl feeling themselves powerless, weep and bewail the fate of the unhappy poor and nearly divorced girl, and at last spend their wrath upon her, and give vent to all their excited feelings in severe expressions against her alone. Married then, as he now is, it is difficult to say whether or not under present circumstances the husband would be subjected to the same troubles and vexations to which he was exposed in the society of his first wife, unless the second should prudently forbear crossing him in his views and inclinations, and unless from the fear of bringing down the same disgrace and mischance which befell her fellow. She should take care to agree with him in all his views and patiently submit to every species of tyranny, which her lord may choose to exercise on her. When the proper season arrives, the new wife goes to her husband's house. There, perhaps still, she sees her rival, and burns with jealousy towards her. But every thing there is her's. She usurps the place of the former wife of her husband, quarrels with her, and finds out every subject to tease and vex her. She now wears all the ornaments of which the former wife was stripped off naked. She dresses herself in all those rich clothes which had first covered the body of her rival. She gains an important station in her husband's family, an uppermost place in her husband's affections. Interesting scenes open to her view, and important duties press upon her notice, and all this to the disadvantage of her rival. Now the poor degraded first wife is compelled to seek refuge from the violence of her husband and jealousy of her rival under the roof of her parents. If they be living, she is received into their arms. And what is her state there ? They outstretch their pro-

\* There are not few instances in which the Bramins and Purvoes have, from the cause above alluded to, been obliged to leave their first wives and marry again.

tection towards her as they do towards every other member of their family. They watch over her with peculiar tenderness and care, as a being rejected by her husband, and removed far off from all the sources of conjugal felicity. But all the rest of the people regard their conduct with suspicion and hatred. She there spends her days most miserably in a dark solitary chamber, having no fixed object in view, no particular avocation to be engaged in, in fact, having nothing else to do but to eat and sleep. All her relations except a few of the most dear, and her parents, despise her as unworthy of being seen and talked to. If disease attacks her, and lays her prostrate on the bed of sickness, she is doomed to suffer all its horrors without any kind of comfort or relief. Even her nearest relations refuse to administer to her any necessary medical aid, thereby seeking to get rid of one on whose account they are exposed to public odium. The silence of her sick chamber is broken only by the rude voice of a few strangers to whom she was probably a friend, or with whom she was merely acquainted. She is nearly reduced to a state next that of a real widow. If she were now to die, difficulty is felt in finding people to attend on her remains. It is a custom in reference to all Hindu women, that on their death the relations of their husbands are entitled to attend to their funeral obsequies, and to perform all the other ceremonies connected with them. But the relations of her husband are utterly prejudiced against her, they refuse to wait on her remains, much more so, her husband who had divorced her. Such is the condition of the unhappy wretch who after her separation from her husband, lives under her paternal roof.

If her parents be not alive, or if they be unwilling to receive her into their protection from the fear of drawing down public odium over their heads, she is then lost to the world without pity — without redress. All her prospects of conjugal felicity vanish away "like the baseless fabric of a vision." The religion of her country and parents forbids her second marriage entirely. She is left to the solitary enjoyment of her own resources, if she has any. Suspecting the jealousy of her rival and the harsh treatment of her husband, if she should remain in his house, having none to assist her in her distress, and to provide her with food and clothing, trembling with the fear of receiving the most unwelcome treatment from her relatives, she has no other alternative left but one. She therefore agrees with herself, as it were, in deep despair and in the agony of mental anxiety, to consign herself as a prostitute to the mercy of the world, regardless of the honor of her father's family, and the incalculable injury she may thereby do to the credit and reputation of her husband. Hence, while passing through the streets of this large city, we meet with immense numbers of prostitutes, a great part of whom consists of Bramins and subordinate castes of the Hindus, who probably in consequence of some disputes with their lawful husbands, were obliged to leave them, and consent to lead such dishonorable lives. Such are the wretched consequences of early marriage. If the custom then of not marrying early prevailed generally, these disastrous effects would entirely be prevented. There should be familiar intercourse between the sexes allowed, and it should be regarded by no man in the light of an intrigue. Much opportunity might then be given to the parties intending to marry, of finding out kindred dispositions and of forming those strong and lasting attachments without which the married state is often more productive of misery than of happiness. Marriages formed on this plan would be productive of much good. Such separations and such instances of matrimonial infidelity would less frequently occur, and such open divorces less frequently be observed. The husband and wife would live in mutual esteem and love, and the ardour of attachment between them, accompanied by a purity of conduct, would so much heighten the enjoyment of their mutual comforts and happiness, as to make the married state really capable of affording the blessings which it is certainly calculated to produce.



6. Early marriage of children is calculated to subject their parents to many unnecessary cares, expenses, and perplexities which might otherwise be avoided.

First, with reference to the parents of the boys. They are particularly careful to observe and watch over the conduct and character of their son's wife. As she is in future to form a part of their family, they become extremely anxious as regards her behaviour to those by whom she is surrounded. Once having married their son with her according to their own choice and will, they begin afterwards to display some anxiety as he grows up with regard to the probability or improbability of his liking her. Apprehensive of many disagreeable circumstances being likely to be produced in the event of his not being pleased with his wife, and of a mutual difference of views prevailing between them both hereafter, the parents of the boy occasionally invite their daughter-in-law even when she is yet young to their own house, set her some particular work to be busy with, or tell her to attend to some duties of the house, the performance of which would require some exertion of skill and talent, thereby seeking to afford their son the opportunity of making himself acquainted with her real merits. But true love between the sexes is not founded upon such forced external exhibitions of character. It resides in the mind, in the feelings, in the affections. It yearns towards that which is kindred, that which is congenial to its nature. It does not yield its sympathies, its emotions, to what is bodily and external. It cries aloud for congeniality of nature, of aim, of disposition. And this congeniality, if it really exists, is founded only on close and intimate intercourse. But this is not allowed to take place between the husband and wife before a certain time. However solicitous, therefore, the parents may be to make their son pleased with a girl of their own choosing, their anxiety is unanswered by the result. Few pairs could be found to love each other sincerely, whose union is not founded upon love itself, but upon the present and wayward humour of some elders or superiors. The parents of the son are moreover put to several enormous expenses in addition to those which they had made for his marriage. The expenses grow as the wife and the son grow in years. Though the parents are poor and unable to stand all the necessary occasions of expense, yet the tyranny of fashion must prevail. Their son is yet young and drudges at school. The whole weight of expenses must fall on the shoulders of the poor parents. When his wife arrives at the age of puberty, a great ceremony follows as elsewhere noticed, on which not less than quarter of a thousand rupees is imperceptibly lost. Innumerable other ceremonies of a similar kind frequently occur, and they must also be duly attended to. The parents of the boy have to make ornaments, to buy clothes, and to do many other things for his wife which he is yet incapable of doing. They must gratify all her wishes, supply all her wants, satisfy all her tastes, and lastly exercise all their control over her. Their son is indeed a husband, but he is yet incapable of discharging all the duties of a husband. In lapse of time the husband is converted into a father. He brings new beings into existence whose wants and necessities his own parents are obliged to supply. This is no hasty conclusion.\* The several expenses attending the feeding, the clothing, the education of his children, his old parents still must submit to. He is yet young and scarcely competent enough to discharge himself his duties to his children whom he has brought into existence. He involves his parents in expenses more and more intricate without the ability of helping them by his means. They become quite exhausted by the successive pressures of expenses rising upon them, and look towards their son for his help and assistance in lightening their burden, and making their way smooth and easy through those dif-

\* Many Hindû boys upwards of 16, reading a spelling book in the Native Education Society, are fathers of more than two children.

difficulties into which he was the cause of involving them. They wait in anxious expectation of seeing him employed. Days after days, weeks after weeks, months after months, years after years, roll away : but the youth, the inexperience, and the meagre education which the boy received, unfit him for any respectable or important employment. Their parents' anxiety daily increases, their cares daily multiply, and their patience is exhausted. They become so extremely anxious as to their son's being somehow or other furnished with the means of supporting his wife and children and their being consequently relieved from the duty of providing for them in his stead, that they cannot sometimes contain themselves. They occasionally feel the necessity of breaking out into such disagreeable expressions as almost to wound the feelings of the boy, and in fact to draw a tear of repentance from his eye. The parents daily continue to threaten and scold the boy till he gets himself somewhere well situated, and attains the ability of providing for the necessary wants of his own wife and children.

Secondly, with reference to the parents of the girl. The expenses to which her parents are subjected on account of her go only so far as will, and not necessity, is concerned. Excepting those which attended her marriage, few occasions of expense occur to them compared with those to which the parents of the boy are called upon to submit. This circumstance arises only from the state of absolute dependence in which the girl is placed upon her husband, and the family to which he belongs. For the girl, as was observed before, when she is betrothed, is no longer the property of her parents. But though she is separated from her parents in form and fashion, yet she is not separated from the fibres of their hearts. Their solicitude for her welfare leads them eagerly to wish the good of her husband upon whom the dearest interests of their daughter depend. They become extremely serious as to the manner in which the husband of their daughter may be brought up, the kind of education he may receive, the line of profession he may follow, the accidents that may befall him, the temptations to which he may be exposed, the excess in which he may be led, and several other circumstances that might tend to affect his own interests, and with them those of their own daughter who is his wife. The good reports which they may hear of him overwhelm them with joy. His dispraise, however, sends a thrill of sorrow and indignation through their hearts. They are then vexed and disturbed by the agony of a restless anxiety. When they hear of their son-in-law as being engaged in the pursuits of dissipation, or as being confirmed in the habits of sensuality, or as being in the habit of sauntering about in the streets, or as growing indifferent to the cultivation of his mind, they are seized with just anxiety about the future welfare of their own daughter. Their irritated feelings are well depicted in the features of their countenance, in their reddened cheeks, and in the sneer which plays over their brows. They send servants after servants to the house of their son-in-law, to have a conference in their name with his parents regarding the conduct of their boy, to make them acquainted with the reports which they had heard to his disadvantage, and to warn them to keep a strict and careful watch over him in future. Every subject in which the interests of their daughter may be involved, rouses their anxiety. As in reference to the case of the parents of the boy, their cares and solicitude grow with the growth of their daughter. She may in a short time become the mother of a child, as is too often the case. But if her husband be young and incapable of providing for her, what is she to do ? Who is to provide for her child and supply all her wants ? The father of her husband ! True ; but how long is he to do so it is difficult to say. Not more certain is it however that he would live long. These enquiries occur to the minds of their parents as their daughter becomes a full grown being. Such cares and anxieties always agitate the breasts of the parents of the girl from the moment that she is betrothed to the moment that she is firmly established in life.



Such then, are the effects which the early marriage of their children is calculated to produce in reference to the case of their parents.

(7). The miseries entailed upon women by early marriage next merit attention. The injury done to the female sex by this pernicious system is indeed incalculable. We have already remarked that woman is married at the early age of five or six, at an age when she is incapable of judging for herself, and when no attempt can be made to distinguish her peculiar tastes, and to find out kindred dispositions in her future husband to whom she is intended to be betrothed. She is not at all at her disposal in her marriage. After her betrothment, she lives as was observed before in the house of her parents for a considerable time. If during this period her husband die, though she may never once have seen her husband, except on the day of their marriage, she is considered as a widow. Religion entirely forbids her second marriage, and the penalty imposed upon those who would disobey this solemn injunction of the shastras, is the forfeiture of cast, house and relatives. She is condemned to the miseries of perpetual widowhood. All her brighter prospects in life are covered by an eternal cloud of despair which not a single ray of hope is left to penetrate. She in fact ends her existence just as she began it. She was indeed married. But she knew as little of her husband as if she was not married to him at all. She was married with the prospect of enjoying the pleasures of conjugal bliss. But her prospects and hopes are buried for ever with her husband in the grave. She was married that she may have the pleasure of an happy intercourse with her husband, and be the means of leaving a few children on earth behind her and her husband, as representatives to commemorate their existence, and perpetuate their names. But she had never perhaps once seen her husband's face any more than on the day of marriage; far less could she have spoken a word to him. She may have attended on a few ceremonies in which females feel the extremest delight. But all ceremonies are now for ever lost to her, except those of shaving her head and stripping herself of all her ornaments. Her husband is suddenly cut off by the stroke of death, when yet the married couple had scarcely passed the portals of youth, and were yet lingering amid the scenes of childhood, when they were neither able to understand the important nature of their connection, nor to appreciate the important duties which arose from their union, when they could neither speak with one another nor could sympathize with each other in their thoughts and feelings, when they had no idea of the relationship in which they stood to one another, and the obligations they owed in reference to those by whom they were surrounded. When both the husband and wife were so young, and the world, as it really is, was just beginning to dawn upon them, the former is cut off from all its ties. The husband dies! And alas, the shock is stunningly great. Who is now to care for the girl, when she is thus deserted? Who is to guide her through the numberless cares and perplexities of the world, when she is thus left alone without him upon whom had depended all her hopes and prospects? But still the miseries of her bereavement are aggravated in a ten-fold degree by her age, and the circumstances in which she was placed, when such a bereavement beset her. She was too young as we have already remarked. She might be just indulging in all her plays and gambols within the doors of her father's house when the dismal news of her husband's death arrives. The news reaches her ears, but it passes by as unheeded and neglected as the idle wind that goes along. She is too young too appreciate her loss. O poor little innocent! Her parents fall crying out, beating their breasts, and bewailing the melancholy fate of their daughter, and crying out often that she is gone — lost for ever. Yet the bereaved wife is unconscious of the loss she has sustained, and not a tear is seen starting up in her eyes, but what may be drawn by the sympathy of passion. Thus unconsciously does she sustain the blow, but miserably is she obliged to drag out the tedious existence of a widow almost from her



birth. Parents and kindred may still all be around her, but he who was the bridegroom affianced of her future career, upon whom depended all her hopes and prospects, has withered away from her path, like a flower cut down in the dewy light of the morning. Alas! the cloud of grief which hangs over her is indeed a heavy one. Her's is a wretched dreary existence of a widow, and her's is an incomparably severe and heavy loss. She is solemnly prohibited from choosing another husband with whom to begin again her earthly career. She is condemned from her very childhood to all the miseries and privations which widowhood can entail upon her. She is deprived of all the rights, and privileges and duties of a married woman. She is rendered perfectly useless both to herself and to those around her. She can partake in none of the ceremonies performed at home. She can take share in none of the feasts which might take place either in the family of her parents or in that of her deceased husband. She is considered as a being wholly unfit for any of the duties of her life. The seeing of her face alone is considered as an unpropitious omen. In addition to the heavy loss which she has sustained by the death of her husband, an unspeakable injury is done to her by those who are living. Her hair is shaved off, her ornaments are taken off, the red powder which painted her forehead in a point is rubbed off. The fine apparel which had adorned her person is changed into a coarse dirty cloth, which she is obliged to wear till she is no more. She is obliged to keep herself confined for a considerable time in a dark room without being seen by any body, lying on bare ground covered sometimes with a few ragged clothes, eating sparingly and rejecting all wholesome food. For every thing sweet, she now contracts an aversion; and of every thing bitter and sour she is willing to taste a little portion. She in fact submits herself to all privations and sufferings. Instead of attending to the performance of certain ceremonies and the celebration of certain festivals which so frequently engage the attention, and occupy the time, of the wife of a living husband, she must now turn all her thoughts to pilgrimages to some holy shrines, and devote her life exclusively to religious and melancholy contemplation. She is secluded from all intercourse with society, and allowed no place in conversation or discussion of any kind either with men or with those of her own sex. O! mournful thought, that a girl who has not yet passed the portals of green youth, and upon whom the world is but just beginning to dawn, such a girl to be so deprived of all the enjoyments which she might be capable of enjoying, to be condemned to pass her valuable life in such dreary solitude of the world, and to be consigned, so to speak, to a living tomb, and all for the death of her husband alone. Observe then, reader, the dangerous effects of the system of early marriage which leads so suddenly to blight, as if by a withering blast, all the fairest prospects of a being so gentle and young, and buries all her hopes with her dead husband in the silent grave for ever and ever! Think of the miseries of her life, of the dreary solitude in which she is condemned to spend the whole term of her existence:—of her perpetual exclusion from all participation in the charities of the domestic circle and of her unhappy doom to suffer without pity or without any alleviation, all the privations and sufferings which the wretched system of Hindûism enjoins on widowhood. Think of a being who was certainly brought into existence for accomplishing the higher purposes of life, who possesses so extensive control over human society, and upon whom depends the formation of its character, to be so cruelly exposed to the harsh and wicked treatment at the hands of her relatives; to be so grievously neglected, and condemned to lead a life of uselessness and of unnecessary privations and sufferings; to be so entirely devoted to perpetual solitude, and to be deprived of the enjoyment of all those rights and privileges which she has a right claim in common with all her fellows of her own sex.

17. A minute account of almost all the particulars connected with the condition of widows is to be found in an *Essay on Female Education* written

by an intelligent native \* and recently published in one of the last numbers of the Christian Spectator. We shall therefore refrain from making more than a few remarks on the subject. Deporable indeed is the condition of Hindoo women on the death of their husbands. It is alike deplorable under whatever circumstances of life they may be placed. When the husband dies, the wife becomes a perfectly changed being—changed not of course for the better, but for the worse. Her head is shaved, and all her rights and privileges as a woman, are lost. She eats little, sleeps little, rises very early in the morning, and gives herself up to melancholy thoughts the whole day. She is exposed to the severest privations incident upon her state. She is generally excluded from all the enjoyment of her husband's property and the male portion of her relatives claim the possession of the far greater part of it. In the higher classes of the native community, widows of rich husbands, seem to command some degree of respect and attention, but this we can only say in reference to such few of them, whose husbands on their death, may have committed to them the management of the family, or left to their inheritance some valuable portion of their property in testimony to some extraordinary affection which may have existed between them both. With respect to many, however, we have the most melancholy truths to declare. They are placed under the controul of their sons if they have any, or of some male relatives who may have the power of supporting them so situated; the perplexities in which they are involved, the sufferings to which they are exposed, and the cruel treatment they receive at the hands of their relatives, can only be conceived. Subjected to the tyranny of their parents when young, treated by their husbands in a manner worse than slaves, and exposed to the harsh treatment of their sons and those around them after their husband's death, they present themselves forth as the most pitiful objects to the eye of benevolence. But indeed their state of widowhood is the consummation of all their miseries, and affords a full specimen of man's triumph over woman in this country. Neglected and despised during their lives, they also lie unnoticed and forgotten in their silent graves.

18. In connection with this branch of the subject, there is a remarkable circumstance which we cannot avoid noticing here briefly. It is the most revolting custom of a besotted superstition to be found in the records of ages. I mean the "Suttee." When the husband dies, the faithful wife must burn herself upon the body of her dead husband. The hope of effecting an emancipation of her husband from the bondage of his sins which he may have committed in this world, and the prospect of securing for herself the enjoyment of immortal felicity in heaven, motives which are supplied by her own superstition, prompt her to the perpetration of this horrible deed. The indifference with which she now observes those objects which had once most engaged her attention is remarkable. She leaves her sons, her daughters, her dearest relatives, with a firmness of purpose which the prospect of something higher, something nobler, than mere earthly good, can be expected to inspire, and absorbed wholly in the contemplation of some higher duty upon which her mental eye is henceforth constantly fixed, the unhappy victim plunges herself into the burning pile of her husband. Myriads of such miserable victims were a few years ago doomed in our country, to such premature deaths, and the most horrible death too. Myriads of such cruel piles were then seen continually blazing forth on the plains of India. But blessed be God! throughout all the British territories of our country, this cruel practice has entirely been suppressed; these cruel piles have entirely been extinguished. In some of the Independent Native States however, this abominable system is still reigning in all its unmitigated practical horrors. But were the voice of British majesty to be heard in those dark regions of superstition, to-morrow those cruel piles would then instantly be quenched, and the system would

\* Hari Keshavaji.

there too, be entirely checked the next day. But excuse me reader, to have detained you so long. Though the mercy of the British rule has rescued widows in this country from the fate of being burnt alive, yet no means is hitherto adopted to deliver them from the miseries of widowhood to which by the wretched system of Hinduism they are grievously condemned.

19. We shall therefore just proceed to offer a few remarks on the remarriage of widows.

After the death of their husbands, Hindû women are solemnly prohibited from marrying again. They are subjected to all the horrors and miseries of perpetual widowhood, as described above. Nothing, in my opinion, can be more tyrannical and unreasonable than the system which enjoins such unnecessary privations on widows. Whatever may be the religious sentiments of others on this subject, we deprecate such a cruel system altogether. Man exercises such a despotic authority over woman in this country, that she is held to be his slave and not his companion, and always treated as such. When the wife dies, the husband has the right of marrying another and then another, and he may go on marrying till he is unable so to do. Man's sway over woman here is so unprecedented and despotic, and yet so undisputed, that he is at liberty to dispose of his living wife just as it suits his taste, and even to marry another if he should dislike her, or, as was said before, if no congeniality of sentiment and no sympathy of feeling should exist between them. But alas! woman once married can marry no more. If her husband should die even when she may be very young, she is entirely prohibited from marrying another husband. It does not however clearly appear, why woman should be condemned to perpetual widowhood, when man is permitted to marry again. The great good and eternal Father, when he had formed our earth and all things that live and move and have their being on it, last of all created man and woman, placed them in the choicest spot, and endued them with an equal degree, with the highest range of intellectual faculties and moral capacities. When he had so equally constituted them both, and placed them under circumstances exactly fitted to their mutual condition, there appears no reason why a line of distinction should now be drawn between them, and why woman alone should be excluded from the enjoyment of those rights and privileges which man possesses, and which are calculated to affect the deepest interests of both. An argument generally brought forward by the bigotted Hindûs against the remarriage of woman is this, that if she be permitted to marry again, she may be inclined to kill her own husband in case she should not like him, and thus make it easy for her to marry another whom she would choose. But this argument, so far from proving against her re-marriage, only proves against the custom of early marriage itself. For, she would scarcely have found reason to dislike her husband, if she had been married late and left at her own disposal in choosing out a husband. The same argument rather tends strongly to confirm our own views with regard to the effects of early marriage, in its causing between the parties, dissimilarity of tastes and views, which ultimately produce their mutual dislike and hatred. Mutual separations do sometimes, as we have seen, take place in consequence. The result of this is easily perceived. In that case the divorced wife as it were, who is prohibited from marrying another husband, is obliged to be a prostitute and to support herself. In consequence of the same prohibition, many women after the death of their husbands find themselves necessitated to proceed to the same disgraceful extreme. Wearied with the miserable life of widowhood, and goaded on by passion or by pressure of wants, from which they have none in their present state to relieve them, they submit themselves to the base necessity of forming unlawful intrigues, and that they may break off at once from all restraints give themselves up wholly to the mercy of the world, to the great dishonor of their own families and of the community to which they belong. Instances of this nature too frequently obtrude upon our notice to be here enumerated. The



youngest classes of widows should in this respect be particularly guarded against. They are exposed to more powerful temptations than those of the other class. But however watchfully their conduct may be observed and scrutinized, the heart cannot be laid open to human view, and the ways of passion are often hid under an ambush. Hence many immoralities are secretly practised which the state of widowhood seemed directly to check. The fickleness of youth soon, however, hurries them into dangerous and open extremes, and not unfrequently do they too become the public ministers of vice and sensuality to the gay world. Not a few of them are led through deep despair to the necessity of committing suicide, whose wild inclinations the more immediate restraints of their family might oppose.

The prohibition of the re-marriage of widows tends to subject them to all those miseries which the want of connubial enjoyment is calculated to produce. Its too much indulgence as well as its want tend to commit incalculable injury on the health of body and mind. What we have now to do with, is its want. And to all the miseries and diseases, therefore, which it produces, all the native widows whose remarriage is prohibited are more or less necessarily exposed. It is a truth admitted by all medical men, whether European or native, that mortality prevails most in the two periods of human life, namely, young and old age. The young are apt soon to die as well as the old, the middle age is much less exposed to the attacks of mortality. Now according to the present system of early marriage among the Hindoos, young girls are married to husbands at least four or five years in advance of them. The girls at the time of their marriage are generally six or seven years old. And as the principle of mortality rages most in the two extremes of human life, a greater number of young husbands who are so early married, and who are a few years more advanced in years than their wives, are apt sooner to die. Hence the young wives become widows from a very early age, and in consequence of the prohibition of their remarriage, become necessarily exposed to all the miseries which are incident upon the want of connubial enjoyment. Many young widows in this country are consequently suffering very much from this evil. How great a blessing therefore might be conferred upon the poor native women by permitting them to marry again!

The custom of prohibiting the remarriage of widows, is again highly contradictory to the intentions of providence, and extremely injurious to the interests of society. God created woman to be man's help-meet for life, and to fructify unto him children who should be their representatives on earth, and when woman is allowed to remain unmarried after her first husband is dead without children, the benevolent design of providence is directly opposed. Society also would have been much benefitted by the addition of new numbers which the births of children may have supplied. But the circumstance of women not being allowed to marry again, prevents the fulfilment of this end. How many children would have been born and have added to the number of our population, if those women, who have been condemned to lead the life of perpetual widowhood, and to bemoan in vain the loss of their husbands in the silent loneliness of their chamber, were permitted to marry again, and to partake of the enjoyments of society.

Perhaps, the remarriage of those widows who have no children, might appear to some not so odd and strange as the remarriage of those who have. But if they divest themselves of their prejudices, they might see nothing of an odd nature in the remarriage of the latter class too. They must remember that among the natives the Hindú fathers of living children, when their wives die, marry a second time. On the same principle may widowed mothers of children be married again. Disputes and jealousies, it is true may take place between the new husband and her children, but they are no less frequent in the other case. This circumstance should not be allowed to operate over the minds of men so far as to affect the principle we intend to es-

tablish. Right education will have its due influence, and will produce its effects.

20. Polygamy was practised to a considerable extent among the Hindûs some years ago. The Brahmans, Kshatris, Vaishyas and even Sudras were allowed to marry many more wives, than one, two or three. The first of those were permitted to marry sometimes a hundred wives, and the latter classes looked upon it as a high distinction to be possessed of several. Jealousy and contentions were the inevitable consequences. But the system which prescribed this custom is not suppressed, and the spirit which excited it is not extinguished. Put a sufficient sum of money into the hands of the people and permit one example to be first set, and you will see thousand others instantly following it. Nothing can be more indicative of the complete ignorance of the natives with reference to the most important duties and relations which marriage involves than the prevalence of this odious custom among them. The evils attendant on this institution are obvious. The family that rises out of such an abominable and promiscuous intercourse is always divided and subdivided into smaller branches, and can never form itself into one compact body of union, all whose parts harmonize with another, and,

“Create the according music of a well mixed state.”

The affections between the sexes are exhausted in the highest degree, and the passion of love, which when its gratifications are few, burns with a brighter flame, is entirely extinguished by the excessive sensuality which is prompted by numerous temptations peculiar to polygamy. The attachment between the sexes, loses its ardor and fervor which diffuse gladness over the domestic circle and render the simple married state happy. It would merely be waste of time to dwell on this subject long. Enough it is, that its effects are well understood by the general reader. To the honor of Hindû families, may it be said, that a practice so abominable, so debasing to human nature, and so mischievous in its effects, has now been repressed to some, if not a sufficient degree, and the day will soon come when it shall be entirely extinguished. It is difficult, however, to account for the origin of this institution any other way than by attributing it to the peculiar circumstance of the procreation of children having been laid down as one of the chief duties of man on earth, and to the excessive desire, bordering almost on religious enthusiasm, which was evinced by the sexes to be possessed of children. Those who have the numerous offspring are considered as having best answered the end of their existence. And we may safely come to the conclusion, that the institution of early marriage has originated in the prevalence of the same moral sentiments which are universally held on the subject by the people of this country. Now we may here take the opportunity of observing, that the custom of early marriage has tended to lead to a result closely approximating to polygamy. Early marriage, I say, approximates to polygamy in rendering necessary, second, or third, or many more marriages, under circumstances already explained. It resembles polygamy in substance though not in form. Polygamy was or is practised through freewill and choice, unchecked by law or religion. And the several divorces and remarriages which are the consequences of early marriage are founded upon pretext and pass off under the plausible show of necessity, unchecked and unrestrained. Yea, under present circumstances, in which matters here stand, so numerous are the grounds on which a husband may dismiss his first wife and marry another, that if he would, he may never want a plausible pretext for so doing. The power of divorcing, reserved to him is unlimited and intolerable. And we may come to the conclusion that these unhappy circumstances, arise not only from the system of early marriage, but from those loose and incorrect notions entertained by the natives with regard to the marriage relation itself. We have therefore just as much reason, and perhaps more, to deprecate the practice of early marriage

as that of polygamy, both of which are productive of no small amount of evil, though different in its nature, and though modified by different circumstances.

Permit me now, reader, to request your particular attention to the following and concluding remarks on early marriages. If the custom of early marriage did not prevail; if it be entirely abolished by all the members of the community who practise it; if the marriages of children be not allowed to be dictated by the prejudices of custom, and the selfish views and interested feelings of the parents; if the marriages of children be delayed to that period of their lives when their judgment would be cleared and matured, and when they would obtain clearer views of their respective rights and duties if the sexes be allowed to have free and friendly intercourse between one another, so that better opportunities may be given to them for discovering kindred tastes and dispositions, and for forming those lasting attachments, without which the married state is more productive of misery than of happiness; if the choice and will of the parties who are to enter upon the marriage state be consulted, rather than the opinion and judgment of others, the marriage state would prove an overflowing source of felicity on earth, and be the means of great blessing to society in general. Late marriages taking place in this manner would be far different from those early marriages, where unions between the sexes are now only prompted by the pleasure and whims of the parents, and they would in the end prove highly beneficial in their results. The earlier years of life would be spent in the quiet pursuits of knowledge, and the future in the calm enjoyment of conjugal felicity. Mutual hatred, mutual jealousy, mutual separations between the sexes, and all the train of evils attendant on early marriage, would be entirely prevented or less frequently obtruded upon public notice. The affections would not be exhausted. The delay of gratification would add to the intensity of the feeling; and the passion of love so far from being utterly quenched, would only for a time be suppressed, that it might afterwards burn with brighter lustre. The sexes would be united by the strong feelings of genuine attachment, and from such a source of affection between them, there shall flow down beautiful rills of enjoyment, which shall branch into a thousand rivulets and at last swell into mighty river of human felicity, enriching, fertilizing, and adorning the whole field of life. The happiness of the married state which is now considered as the means of early indulgence or gratification would then be looked upon with delight as the reward of real attachment, founded upon the mutual sympathy of kindred views and dispositions.

Much more indeed could be said on the subject of this essay, if time had permitted us. But we earnestly request the serious attention of our readers, especially of the natives to those considerations which we are conscious we have so imperfectly meditated. Remember, my dear native brethren, remember that the present subject over which we have just passed, is the most important one that can occupy your attention. Remember that you need not be admonished that the subject must come home to your hearts with all the might of an awful responsibility. See that you strain every one of your nerves in pursuing the reformation of your own families upon which depends the happiness or misery of your present or future life. Summon all your energies at this important crisis in battering down the strong-holds of prejudices and superstition, which set a bar to all useful improvement. If you neglect to do this now, when it is high time for you, depend upon it, that you are ruined — utterly ruined. But pause a little! Methinks there is a voice keenly reproaching me for being hitherto so unmindful of this awful responsibility, and neglecting to suggest or use the means by which the good of my countrymen may thus be accomplished. Methinks, it accuses all the most renowned lawyers and legislators of India, for their having allowed to grow to such a huge bulk, those institutions and systems which now-a-days we see occasioning such an unspeakable injury to many a family in this country. Methinks



it accuses you all, especially such of you, as have the means and power of thinking aright — it accuses you all for your having displayed such an apathy towards the dearest interests of your brethren in the circumstance of your neglecting to do that which as involving your concerns of the highest moment, you ought never to overlook, being the moral, intelligent, and responsible creatures of God. And that voice is surely the small still voice of conscience. Indeed, in this awful predicament do all of you my dear native brethren, from the least knowing to the most intelligent, really and fearfully stand. If therefore you have any regard to your own interest, and to those of the fellow members of your own community, do away instantly with every one of those prejudices and customs which have hitherto so debased your character and degraded you in the scale of civilization. If you have any regard to the eternal welfare of your friends, relatives, and your wives and children, instantly do away with those ceremonies which occupy their attention and engage their affections in detriment to the immortal interests of their souls. I do not say that your united efforts in levelling to the ground all those huge systems which have hitherto been fondly cherished by yourselves and your ancestors, will be without failure in accomplishing that grand and glorious task. We ought to feel our dependence on the grace of God. We ought never to separate in our thoughts his grace from our exertion, and we ought to undertake our plans imploring his aid and confiding in it. We ought sincerely to pray to God to help us and to guide us in the accomplishment of our design. We ought humbly to pray to him to direct us into a right path, and to lead us all into the way of salvation. For what avails it that we have gained the whole world and lost our soul? Think upon this, ponder upon this, my dear brethren; pray that your souls may be saved, or else your ruin is unspeakable, — is eternal. I beseech you again and again to press these considerations home to your hearts, and do not repudiate them as the effects of a heated imagination.

Before I take leave of this interesting and important subject, permit me, my friends, to say a few words with regard to the education of our females. We have already contemplated the state of our country-women, and found it greatly wretched. If it still remains so, civilization in our land can certainly make no great advance. It is indeed difficult to conceive any as the cause of the state of intellectual, and what is still worse the moral, destitution of women in India, but the want of education which is grievously neglected to the sacrifice of their interests in this world and those in the world to come. The degradation of the women of this country in the scale of intelligent agents is to be accounted for, not because that woman is endowed, as some suppose, with an inferior order of natural talents, that she is naturally incapable of a vigorous intellectual exercise and of mental discipline, but because the cultivation of her mind is here systematically neglected, because she is allowed no place in conversation or discussion, and because she is not permitted to enjoy the society of enlightened persons. In woman, however, we see a higher range of intellectual faculties, and moral feelings, aye, an ethereal spirit which betokens a creature destined for immortality. There is within her a peculiar sense which all mortals possess, and which not only enables her to regulate her passions and direct them into a proper channel, but also to understand the duties which she owes to God and to her fellow-creatures. She is impressed with all the characteristics of a rational and immortal nature. Woman is possessed of the same affections, the same desires, the same motives, the same inclinations, the same passions, the same appetites, as man, whose companion for life, by an all-wise and overruling Providence, she was intended to be, and of whose best affections, as far as their chief mutual interests in this world and the next are concerned, she was designed to be on earth, the great and the central object. She possesses a mind capable of the most refined cultivation, and is furnished with a variety of powers which when matured and unfolded by an enlightened education, will prove to her sources of the highest kinds of happiness that the world can supply. If then we admit that woman

is endowed not only with a higher range of intellectual faculties which can confer on her a superiority in cultivated societies, but is also possessed of a soul endowed with powers and with feelings dissimilar in nature and higher in their degree than those of the brutes, — if there is in those, her frail, ephemeral tenements of flesh, a soul of immortality which death cannot touch, but which is destined to survive the dissolution of the corporeal framework, and to expatiate with improved powers over another and a more glorious scene, — if she is distinguished with all the characteristics of a moral, intelligent, and immortal being, and possesses within her a faculty invested with powers more than merely human — I mean conscience, — if she has all the affections, the desires, the motives, and the feelings suited to the dignity of an immortal creature — which dignity she indeed holds but never enjoys, — if she must enter into eternity where alone her powers of mind are destined to reach a full maturity, — if there she must enter with a soul bearing the same stamp which it acquired in the world, and must carry the same ideas, and the same moral principles which she had formed in the world, and if her happiness not merely for a life's time, but for an endless duration, be dependent on the spiritual image which that stamp bears, then surely it cannot be a matter of indifference whether the mind of an immortal being be left shrouded in ignorance or be trained in the knowledge of its high destination. It must doubtless be a matter of the highest importance that she must be instructed in all the departments of knowledge which may tend to the enlargement of her mind, and to the discipline of her intellectual and moral powers; which may qualify her for forming more enlarged and comprehensive views of the purposes of God's moral government, for indulging, in the most exalted and sublime investigations of the divine perfections and operations, as displayed in the economy of the universe, and for relishing the pleasures and enjoyments of the future state. Nothing can be of a higher value and importance to an immortal being than to be grounded in the solid truths of physical, but especially of moral, science, and acquire a true knowledge of her Creator, of herself, of her duties, and of the several diversified relations in which she stands, to this world and to the next. From her state of mental bondage, how cheering and refreshing is it to see a woman of India trained to habits of reasoning and reflection, bursting asunder the fetters imposed upon her soul by superstition and priestcraft, acquiring a double relish for the noble delights of intellectual refinement, and making perpetual progress towards intellectual and moral perfection, to see her exerting all the energies of her thoughts and labour on subjects of high moment, indulging in the profoundest speculations of philosophy, pursuing with eager desire, the refined enjoyments of intellectual taste, and engaging in pleasures more lasting, in enjoyments more exalted, than the mere gratification of sensual appetites, or the enjoyment of bodily ease, can afford? How glorious again is it to see her rise to the knowledge, the belief, and the confession of truth, to see her forming enlightened ideas of divine perfections as displayed in the works and providence of God, to find her anxiously and devotedly engaged in the preparation for eternity, and in all those employments and pursuits which may qualify her for the higher scenes of the future world.

Let us, my native brethren, soon shake off our prevailing lethargy as regards the educating the females, and with perseverance and self command set about the task of instructing our wives, sisters, and daughters, in the departments of solid learning, not that learning, I mean, which would only qualify her to talk or write, for that is a foppery of literature, and so far from rendering her wiser or better, would only tend to deteriorate both her intellectual and moral character, so far from strengthening her virtue, only tend to weaken it, but that learning which will teach her her duty to God and to her fellow-creatures, give her enlightened ideas of the future state for which her immortal soul is destined, foster in her an ambition for excelling in every good, and enable her to recognize the far more interesting relation in which she stands to the Supreme Ruler and to an unscen but eternal world,



and clearly to discern the mere semblance of truth and moral rectitude from reality. Let us my native friends, from a consideration of the narrow and limited conceptions of an untutored mind, contrasted with the ample and extensive range of view presented to an enlightened understanding, and from a consideration of the debasing influences and tendencies of ignorance unopposed by the counteracting effects of solid knowledge and from a consideration of the noble nature of the intellectual faculties, of the state and interests of the immortal souls with which our native females are endowed, and of their capacity of making a perpetual progress towards moral and intellectual perfection, betake ourselves to the highly interesting employment of training our wives, sisters and daughters, in all the higher branches of education, which shall qualify them for habits of reflection, and by leading them to take clear and right views of all things, shall render them good and most valuable members of human society. It must be remarked, however, that the chief circumstance which of all others is most to be lamented with reference to the economy of the Hindûs, and which has tended to the destruction of those pleasures and enjoyments which are peculiar to domestic life, and to the production of vices and crimes fatal to the cause of virtue and the cultivation of social peace, is the education of the females being entirely neglected, and the apathy or indifference with which the improvement of their best interests is regarded by the generality of the other sex. How then can it be expected that while the education of the females is thus neglected, upon whom indeed much of the domestic happiness depends, the natives of this country will enjoy all those real comforts and enjoyments, of which home, above all other objects on earth, is decidedly the chiefest scene? When the mistress herself of the house is not endowed with a portion of useful knowledge, nor has acquired a relish for intellectual enjoyments and is destitute of all qualifications for engaging in rational and intelligent conversation, it cannot be expected that our home would be capable of conferring on us those blessings which are peculiar to it. Those pure and high enjoyments of which domestic life is the scene, cannot, under such circumstances, be enjoyed to their fullest extent. The stream of genuine love and pure affection issuing from the fountain head of family association, would then cease to flow and to adorn the field of life. Our home would then indeed present a most pitiful spectacle to the view. Instead of its being an abode of comfort and peace, vice and intemperance would be its reigning inmates — instead of a sweet communion of sentiment and feeling, there would be a perpetual exchange of mutual enmity and hatred — instead of its being a scene of mutual esteem, mutual friendship, and mutual love, it would present a spectacle of perpetual struggles, jarings, and contentions — instead of rational delights enlivening the scene of domestic enjoyments, a loud laugh of intemperance, and a wild mirth of insensibility, would be the substitutes. In short, alas! our fond home, instead of proving a blessing, would prove a curse. If, on the other hand, all the female individuals of a domestic association be endowed with a certain portion of knowledge, how interesting then the scene of family converse! An enlightened education, by expanding and invigorating the energies of their minds, would tend to a refinement of their manners, the amelioration of their tempers and dispositions, and the effectual subjugation of all the malignant and destructive passions which spring from the corruption of our hearts, and destroy the peace and harmony of our social and domestic enjoyments. The belief can be sufficiently grounded that when an enlightened education has subdued every moral principle, and reason resumed its sovereign authority, all the disagreeable effects would be prevented, and all positive enjoyments be introduced. Those feuds, those collisions of jarring interests, those contentions, those separations, and those bitter persecutions which now swell most of the pages of the calendar of crimes, would be less frequently presented to public notice, when over the family circle rests the sacred halo of education, and its general beams radiate from the heart all around.