

Enforced Widowhood

A widow whose children are only girls does not fare so well. But it is on the child-widow, or childless young widow, that the abuse and hatred of the community falls, for "a husband having died sonless has no right to enter heaven or immortality. There is no place for a man who is destitute of male offspring."

Of the young widow what shall we say? If she is a mere child, the cloud passes over her head and for several years leaves no shadow. She is, in her happy, innocent glee, unconscious of what has happened. She romps and plays, and makes "mud-pies," nestles by her mother's side, or clammers up on her father's knees as confidently as any other child; though she may live to know the bitter truth that, some day, custom and religious faith will have a stronger hold on them than parental love. Now and then, some one says some bitter thing or pushes her away as if her touch was defiling. It jars her child-heart, but childhood is full of spring and it may soon be forgotten in some absorbing game. Some day, childlike, she runs to some neighborly scene of festivity only to be sent away, as a widow is a bad omen. She does not understand why she should go, and hence, says Mr. Ragunathrao, "she is removed by force. She cries and is re-

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warded by her parents with a blow accompanied by such words as these: 'You were a most sinful being in your previous birth, and you have therefore been widowed. Instead of hiding your shame in a corner of the house, you go and injure others.' It begins to dawn on her that she is different from other girls. She cannot bathe as they do: if a priest comes around, she may be shaven and dressed in widow's garb and stood before him. She often asks why these things are done to her. During the earlier part of her life she is appeased with some story or other. Later, such devices fail and the truth breaks fully upon her mind."

At fifteen or sixteen her beautiful glossy wealth of hair must be shorn; her bright clothes removed; no ornaments allowed her; she must eat but one meal a day; must fast twice a month; and must never join in the family feasts or jubilees. She is frequently the family drudge; must never think of remarriage; must bear the taunts and suspicions of others and be guarded lest she bring upon the family disgrace by some improper step; she is never to wear the bright red paint on her forehead that other women wear; she has no right to be bright and happy; and if she weeps much, she may be taunted that she is crying for another husband.

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Her life becomes hopeless and intolerable. It sometimes ends in a neighboring tank or well, or launches out desperately and defiantly into a life of shame, or becomes entangled in some social infamy that may or may not reach the public gaze; but, at any risk, the family must be shielded from disgrace, even if crime be resorted to. A wide difference is made between the disgrace and the crime. At the disgrace, all tongues wag; at the crime, the neighbors may be mute and say: "Who knows how soon such a trouble may come to our own house."

If the young wife is sixteen or seventeen when her husband dies, and without children, the trouble engulfs her without delay. When her husband lies dying, if his parents are there, *she* is not the one that tenderly ministers to him in his last moments. *It would not be proper.* If she is in the room at all, it is by sufferance. And when he is gone, it is as if the sun were suddenly blotted out of the clear sky. The mother-in-law's grief may be blended with bitter curses, and with the declaration that she is the one that has brought all this misfortune on the household.

The village barber's desecrating hands are laid upon her hair, and womanhood's glory and cov-

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ering is removed ; for her husband's body cannot be borne away till this is done. The barber does his work roughly and with no pitying hand, and she endures his coarse taunts and insults in silent agony. Her ornaments are stripped from her, and a coarse widow's garment, white or red, is brought her. How the very iron enters her soul as she touches its coarse texture; and she remembers her lot and disfigurement with a fresh shriek and wail. What a wide, wide chasm this dear soul crosses that night between the past and the future ; but those about her simply say "It is our custom," and that is what nerves their hands and hearts.

And what is her future ? It all depends upon herself, and her circumstances. If she remains in her parents' house, her lot may be much softened, but they do not always dare to defy all for her sake. If she is independent, with some daring and a fund of animal spirits, or if she accepts her fate stolidly, she may still extract a good deal of comfort out of life. Cruel and unkind relatives have it in their power to heat the furnace seven times hotter for her. Men of *her own household*, or strangers may desecrate her womanhood, and complete her ruin. But in the case of the high-spirited, sensitive girl who feels

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that it is God's curse upon her, we can only say God pity her!

We know one such case. She was married at eight and widowed at nine. As she began to comprehend her situation, she began to suffer. She was in her own father's house, and treated kindly, but her father was an orthodox priest and she was not allowed to deviate from a widow's lot. She felt she was cursed of God, and that was to her sensitive spirit the hardest of all. What had she done? From the day her head was shaven, she never put foot outside the front door, and never appeared before a stranger. Her heart and spirit were broken, and she is now fast sinking in consumption. A few more months will complete the sad story; and when she is laid in the grave her coarse widow's garb will be her only burial robe.

We know another young girl who was widowed at ten. She did not know her husband was so ill, and he died while she, in her girlish glee, was taking part in a neighbor's wedding. She tells how, when those about her heard the news, they were in a procession, and how her heart was cut with their contemptuous looks and manner. She could not comprehend what it meant. She is only thirteen

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now, but her spirit is breaking, and her life is blighted.

The alternative to the *Suttee* was for the widow to live, but to never mention the name of another man, and by an austere life of piety, she might be reunited to her husband after death. This austere life of piety, of fasting and devotion, no doubt also atoned for the sin in a previous birth that brought the widowhood upon her, and she would also escape by it the same awful fate in a birth to come.

Middle-aged widows are much better able to hold their own and to meet and live out this alternative to the *Suttee*. They are not left entirely desolate, as they have their children left to them, and are comforted in them, and are often loved, and keep their old place of authority and respect in the home. Even if she have no children, her age, in addition to her piety, may win her a place and respect. We know no more touching sight on our streets than the sad face of some elderly pious widow in a group of happy, well dressed daughters-in-law, sisters and nieces. Her face, often wan and pinched with repeated fasting, her shaven head, and her bent form clad in coarse garments, speak volumes as to her attempt to make an atonement for a widowhood for which she was never to blame.

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The custom of enforced widowhood is confined to the Hindus, and that chiefly to the higher castes. Many of the lower castes allow widows to remarry, though some of the low castes copy the custom even to the head-shaving. Among Mohammedans, child marriage is not common: and widows remarry as they do in any land: but they heap up wrong against woman in their customs of polygamy and divorce. The *Koran* allows four wives, while a man may divorce his wife at pleasure, on any pretext, by breaking her marriage necklace and bidding her depart.

When we consult the Census Report of 1891, we find that of the 287,000,000 inhabitants of India, 207,000,000 are Hindus and 57,000,000 are Mohammedans; while the remaining millions are distributed among the other races living in the land. These figures will help us to proportion the wrongs of women. The number of widows is 23,000,000, *and of this number, many are mere children and girls, and many of them never knew what it meant to be a wife.*

Hon. P. Chentsalrao says: "I confess it has always been a puzzle to me how a system so inhuman and cruel has found existence in this country among a class of men who have cultivated their feelings of kindness to such a nicety

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that they dread to kill an ant, or cut open an egg." At what antipodes is the cruel treatment of widows and the *panjarpole*! (the hospital for aged and disabled horses, dogs, bullocks, monkeys).

Rao Bahadur C. H. Deshmukh says: "It must not be forgotten that the priests derive a very large benefit from perpetual widowhood. A widow thinks that her misfortunes arise from her not having attended to religious duties in former lives, and therefore she must devote her time and wealth to pilgrimages, and so on. The wealth of most widows is devoured by priests. It is the widows, rich and poor, that maintain the priests in luxury." What is to be the remedy?

1. We would have remarriage made optional. Manu, the greatest authority next to the Vedas, says that it is unlawful for a woman to mention the name of another man after her husband's death; and that by remarriage, she brings disgrace on herself in this world, and shall be excluded from heaven. He also says: "Nor is a second husband anywhere prescribed for a virtuous woman." There is no choice, the edict from which there is no appeal says, "Once a widow, always a widow."

In July, 1856, Lord Canning legalized the re-

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marriage of Hindu widows. It is called the "Widow Remarriage Act of 1856." But he did not preserve to them their civil rights. By remarriage a widow forfeits her life-interest in all property left her by her husband, both movable and immovable. Provision is made in this law that if a widow depart from a life of rectitude she does not forfeit this right. But if she remarries it is forfeited, "as if," says the Act, "she had then died." The law also declares that the offspring of a widow by a second marriage shall not be held to be illegitimate or incapable of inheriting property.

There is not sufficient explicitness in the act about the widow's *stridhan* (her own personal property). To avoid giving occasion to her late husband's relatives to bring against her at the time of, or after marriage, the charge of theft, she either abandons this *stridhan*, or else has to go before a magistrate and make a declaration in respect to it.

The government was right in sanctioning such marriages, but it did not go far enough. The code says to the widow, "you may marry," but caste says, "you shall not;" and caste triumphs. A widow may lead an immoral life, and if she gets into trouble, caste winks while she gets out

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of it, even by crime, and the widow is retained in caste. Real sin has not unfitted her for society, nor has the crime lowered the social standing of those who committed it. But let a virtuous widow remarry; a perfectly lawful step in the eyes of the state; and caste hounds her out of society.

The loss of property is not the only loss. Both husband and wife are excommunicated, and perhaps their nearest relatives with them; and these relatives can only be reinstated at an enormous cost. Europeans can hardly judge what this social ostracism is that separates a man from all that he holds dear. No one, on the pain of excommunication themselves, can eat with them; no one is willing to marry their children; no one, at the time of death, is willing to bury them; nor are they allowed to worship in the public temples. To the clannish Hindu this is an awful price to pay. Caste, if it chooses, can keep up its petty persecutions and make a man's life unendurable. Mr. Malabari in speaking of this says: "In human custom, caste is more potent in its secret persecutions than was the inquisition of Spain."

At the beginning of remarriages, the little persecutions were even sorer than now. No one was allowed to trade with them, no barber would

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shave the man, they were not allowed to use water out of the public wells. Rao Bahadur was a government official, being a judge of the Bombay Small-Cause Court. He was the first one to marry a widow in the Purbhu caste. A short time after his marriage, the corpses of both husband and wife were found floating in a well. None could tell whether they had committed suicide, or whether it was the work of villainy. So deep was the feeling of bitterness, and the sense of shame and disgrace, against widow remarriage, and against the parties who broke the old custom, that the latter was not improbable.

Ramabai tells of a high caste man in Cutch who, feeling unable to endure the persecutions that followed his marriage with a widow, committed suicide. At present the subject is more familiar to all classes, and even in villages, one can express his sympathy with the subject of remarriage without rebuke. But the lot of those who do remarry is still sore enough, and the penalties of excommunication can never be lightly despised.

Madhowdas Ragnathdas, the first Guzerati Hindu to marry a widow, says his experience has taught him that "the Widow Remarriage Act of 1856 is nothing more than a pronounce-

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ment of pious intentions. For all practical purposes it has proved a dead letter, and will remain so unless the legislature will introduce into it special clauses for the protection of the parties to a widow remarriage from caste persecutions. The unfortunate couple becomes, under existing circumstances, not only the victim of a formal excommunication by caste, but also of dark designs and secret plottings, and it is impossible to bring the authors of them to book." In proof, one has only to read his interesting book, "The Story of a Widow Remarriage," and see how, for eighteen years, influential castemen never forgave him but sought to injure him on every occasion.

Once, after the resignation of Sir Richard Temple as Governor of Bombay, the Acting Governor, Hon. Mr. Ashburner, held two evening parties at government house to which he and his wife were invited. This was too much for some of his fellow-castemen who were determined to stop future invitations, and they even to the length of having one gentleman wait on Mr. Ashburner and tell him that many respectable gentlemen had been displeased with the presence of excommunicated persons at government house parties. The latter agreed that he would make inquiries and then do what he

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thought proper. Friends of Mr. Madhowdas took up the matter, and when Mr. Ashburner understood the case, he said he saw no reason whatever to remove his name from the list of guests of the government house.

Mr. Justice Rande estimates the number of widow remarriages to be about five hundred; and in his address before the Eleventh Indian Social Congress which was held last year at Amraoti, Berar states that in all India last year there were twenty-five widow remarriages celebrated. In the Punjab there were ten; in Bombay, six; in the Central Provinces, four; in Madras, three; and in the Northwest Provinces and Bengal, one each. He said the paucity of the total number was partly due to the calamities—plague and famine—of the year, and partly to the prohibition of all marriages on account of the year being a Sinhast year. And may we add that it may be in part due to the fact that at present, there is a decided retrograde movement on the subject of reform in India, and a disposition to return to the old ways. But we are glad to say that Bombay presidency is said to average six remarriages a year.

The congress also passed a resolution which is in itself a running commentary on the defective

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working of the act of 1856. The resolution was in substance that a widow on remarriage be allowed civil rights in regard to her late husband's property that had been left her; that there be a better understanding as to her rights in respect to her *stridhan* or personal property; that the pair be allowed religious liberty to worship in the public temples; and lastly, a protest against the disfigurement of widows by head shaving.

We devoutly wish that the work of the Social Congress did not end in resolutions. Perhaps no one says harder things of the inconsistencies of the *congresswala*, than some of their own number. Says an editor in a recent issue; "Educated India at any rate was expected to come to the rescue, and give a new direction to the trend of public opinion; but the hope has never been realized. Speaking from congress platforms and loudly demanding political rights and privileges from government, might certainly direct their attention with great effect to social matters."

But what of the reformers whose practice does not tally with their preaching? Ramabai says: "I have known men of great learning and high reputation who took oaths to the effect that if they were to become widowers and wished to remarry again, that they would not marry a child

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but would marry a widow. But no sooner had their first wives died, than they forgot all about the oaths and married little girls. Society threatens them with excommunication, their friends and relatives entreat them with tears, others offer money and maids if they will only give up the idea of marrying a widow. Few have been able to resist all this."

A better authority than Mr. Madhowdas Ragnathdas could not be found on this side of Indian life, for he not only married a widow himself, but openly identified himself with the cause. His home became an asylum for those who wished to remarry; and he assisted them not only with his sympathy but with his substance. He says there have been widow remarriages in this province both among Gujerati and Marathi Hindus, *but in almost all cases the bridegrooms came from the uneducated classes. The educated have not led the way.*"

We would not be unfair. The verbal agitation of the subject has no doubt done much to clear the atmosphere, but how much greater a power would the agitation have been had it been backed by the personal action of the reformers. The back of the difficulty might have been broken by this time.

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In the world money is power. This thought is borne out by the names of the coins in other lands. We have the British "sovereign," the French "napoleon," and the American "almighty dollar;" and so in India the silver rupee can atone for much. Widow remarriage is not an inviting prospect for a poor man. But the wealthy and influential have been better able to bear the difficulties and live them down. Money can get husbands and little wives for the children of out-casted parents; and money can alleviate the common lot; though we have heard of men who have gone back to their villages and, after four or five years, when their anger had cooled off, they were reinstated in caste without a word.

What we ask is, that government, having made it lawful for a widow to remarry, should still feel she is a government ward and protect her from the persecutions of caste. Caste should not be allowed to defy law with such a high hand as to deter one of its members from acting according to law. A man may refuse to eat with another if he likes, or to marry his children, or refuse to associate with him; but he should have no power to prevent others doing so if they so choose, nor power to persecute or hinder or injure the man or such of his friends as may

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choose to support his cause. We feel that it is the duty of government to protect the rights of individual members of society, as is done in other lands.

To men whose only crime is that they followed their own convictions of right, convictions which the law has sanctioned, there should be some means of redress. This is not a matter of religion. It is downright iniquity to allow any class of people in these enlightened days to deprive their fellow-men of all social and religious liberty. Had America handed back the Philippine Islands to Spain, it would have been on the condition that, throughout the islands, there should be religious liberty. This would have been one of the very first conditions. If the facts were known, as they really are, of the religious and social tyranny existing among the Hindus under English rule, there would be much greater indignation than there is. Reform will never come from within. Among the Hindus and Mohammedans the A B C of religious and social liberty is unknown.

2. Head shaving is a cruel wrong. Men have no right to disfigure a woman without her wish and consent, simply because she has borne a great sorrow and lost her natural protector. It

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must be done if the wife is fifteen years or more of age, before the body of the husband can be carried to the burning-ground. A priest is unwilling to burn the body without its having been done. The hair is burned with the dead body. It is popularly believed that if the woman keeps her hair on her head, that it binds her husband's soul in hell. Others say that it is done to make her less attractive to other men. An increasing number of widows refuse to submit to it, but it is considered a shameless and disgraceful thing to do. Perhaps none are harder upon young widows than old shaven widows, although they have suffered themselves.

After the first shaving it is periodically done. Among the Deccan Brahmans it is done every two weeks. If the widow be a mere child she escapes till she is fifteen or sixteen, and then the hour can no longer be evaded. As an illustration of how deep-rooted this custom is, we knew of an old couple, of sixty and seventy years of age, who were both smitten with the plague last year. The wife survived the husband but four hours, yet when he died, iron custom laid its hand upon the aged wife, though she was unconscious and dying, and shaved her head!

A woman's hair is her covering and crown of

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glory, and it is a cruel indignity to deprive her of it. Government must see that the custom is not enforced if the widow is unwilling: that it should at least be optional.

3. We protest against the social position given to widows—the ban that is put upon them for widowhood. If a plain dress is considered becoming to a woman as a widow, why should it be of a coarser texture than that of her sisters? Why must she fast and other women not? Why should she not share freely in the comforts and pleasures of the family? Why should she not be allowed a part in the religious portion of any family festivity? Why should widows be made to eat by themselves at weddings and other feasts? Why must they shrink guiltily back as they cross some one's path, for fear of being a bad omen to him? Why should the widow be so often an object of suspicion and solicitude for fear she bring disgrace upon the family? Why should men treat her as they dare treat no married woman? Would a man be willing to live under such a ban? Never! Is it strange then if many widows lose heart and ambition; or that this very ban increases temptation for them? They lose self-respect, and men more oft respect them less than other women.

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Says Mr. Madhowdas: "It is contended that 'it tends to the spiritual exaltation of the widow. Deprived of her lord, she renounces the fleeting joys of the world, and consecrates her life to works of piety and benevolence. She is a sister of charity and of mercy in her house and on the street. She is by the bedside of the sick; she comforts the weary and miserable; she has a word of advice for all; she is the centre from which radiates a divine light. Her heart is full of happiness and she looks forward with eagerness to the day when her life of devotion and unselfishness will be ended and she may rejoin her husband.' . . . There may be a widow here and there, one in ten thousand, whose beautiful life approaches this ideal. The unnatural restraint put upon them cannot make angels of them. There is nothing to exalt and uplift them: there is much to debase them. There are undoubtedly many who are leading exemplary lives; but they are good and pious, not because of the custom, but in spite of it. I do not suggest for a moment that all young widows go wrong, but I do say that the prohibition is calculated to lead them wrong, and not to their spiritual exaltation, as has been vainly supposed."

If it is true that this treatment of the widow is

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for her spiritual exaltation, then why must the ban follow her even after death; for if a widow dies without children, she is not allowed a religious ceremony at her funeral!

When we remember the words quoted at the beginning of this subject, we do not hesitate to say that we believe that India is suffering to-day in part for her treatment of the widow.

V

THE ZENANA

As we alighted from the Bombay mail one morning to the platform of the station of one of our northern cities, we saw a Mohammedan gentleman hurrying about the platform. Then there appeared four men bearing a palanquin, who, under his direction, placed it opposite the door of a second-class carriage that had its windows all closed. There was a good deal of bustle, and finally servants held up a cloth on each side of the carriage door, thus making a covered passageway from the carriage to the palanquin. What was it, that had arrived in the train for this man that he so zealously shielded from the gaze of the people crowded on the platform? Had some one sent him a Mysore tiger, and was he afraid it would get away? We carefully watched the proceedings, and lo! beneath the cloth, stepping out of the carriage, we beheld the feet—not of a tiger, but of a woman. In a moment the servants dropped the cloth, and the bearers picked up the palanquin on their shoulders and walked off. Its doors were closed, and

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we saw no one but the gentleman and the servants that followed it. He had probably come to meet his wife, and their greeting could remain until their home was reached. She, in her seclusion, is what is popularly called in India a *Zenana* or *Purdah* lady.

"The veil, as instituted by Mohammed and prescribed in the *Koran* is," says Sir William Muir, "obligatory on all who acknowledge the authority of the book. Taken in conjunction with the other restrictions there imposed on domestic life, it has led to the institution of the Harem and Zenana—that is, the private portion of the home in which women are, with more or less stringency in various lands, secluded from the outer world."

The harem is an Arabic term meaning anything forbidden or not to be touched. And as we become more fully acquainted with the system, we find how fitting the name is. The seclusion of women has existed among other peoples, "but it is among the modern Mohammedan peoples that it has attained its most perfect development; and the harems of the Sultan of Turkey and the Shah of Persia, may be taken as the most elaborate and best known specimens of the type;" and to these we might add the Zenanas

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of the native rulers of Mohammedan states in India.

The word *Zenana*, confined in its use to India, is of Persian origin. *Zan* is the word for women and *Zenana* means pertaining to women. The word *Zenana*, as popularly used, means the apartments devoted exclusively for the women of the household of an Indian gentleman. When we use the term "Zenana woman," we mean one who lives in seclusion. The word *pardah* means a veil, and a "pardah lady" is a term used in the same sense.

The veil or *pardah* as instituted by Mohammed, has the following history. Mohammed was married at the age of twenty-five to a widow of forty by the name of Khadija. But in spite of the disparity of years, it was a happy union. She believed in him, in his visions and in his call; and was a great source of strength and encouragement to him. Two months after her death he married Sauda, another widow, and was betrothed to Ayesha a little girl of six or seven who, till his death, remained his favorite and most beloved wife.

It was after his flight to Medina, that his domestic life, as well as his general character, underwent so great a change. He had married

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five wives since the death of Khadija. Muir says: "He was now going on to threescore years: but the weakness for the sex only seemed to grow with his years, and the attractions of his increasing harem were insufficient to prevent his passion from wandering beyond its ample limits. Happening one day to visit the dwelling of his adopted son, Zeid, he found him absent. As he knocked, Zeinab, wife of Zeid, started up to array herself decently for the prophet's reception. But her good looks had already, through the half-open door, unveiled themselves too freely before his admiring gaze, and Mohammed, smitten by the sight, exclaimed: 'Gracious Lord! Good heavens! How thou dost turn the hearts of men!'

"Zeinab overheard the prophet's words, and proud of her conquest, told her husband. He went at once to Mohammed, and offered to divorce his wife for him. 'Keep thy wife to thyself,' he answered, 'and fear God.' But the words fell from unwilling lips. Zeid was ten years younger than Mohammed, and he was short and ill-favored; and now that his wife seemed to court so distinguished an alliance, he probably did not care to keep her any longer as his wife, so he formally divorced her. The

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prophet hesitated. Zeid was his adopted son, and to marry the divorced wife of an adopted son was unheard of in Arabia and would create a scandal. But the flame would not be stifled. And so, casting his scruples to the winds, he resolved to have her. The prophetic ecstasy seemed to come upon him. As he recovered he said, 'Who will run and tell Zeinab that the Lord hath joined her to me in marriage?' and this was done without delay."

The marriage caused no small obloquy; and, to save his reputation, Mohammed had recourse to revelation. The Almighty sanctioned it, and the scandal was removed by the revelation, and Zeid was no longer called the "son of Mohammed," as the revelation had included the admonition that adopted sons were to go by the names of their natural fathers.

"About this time," says Muir, "the veil was established for the female sex." "The reason for its imposition was said to be that Moslem women were exposed to rude remarks from men of the baser sort as they walked about. *But the prophet's own recent experience in the unwilling sight of Zeinab's charms was perhaps a stronger reason.*" He then promulgated the following command:

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"Speak unto women that they restrain their eyes and preserve their modesty, and display not their ornaments, excepting that which cannot be hid. And let them cast their veils over their bosoms and not show their ornaments saving to their husbands, their fathers, their sons, nephews, slaves and children."

Muir adds: "Out of this command of the Koran have grown the stringent usages of the Harem and Zenana, which, with more or less seclusion, prevail throughout the Moslem world. However degrading and barbarous these usages appear, yet, with its loose code of polygamy and divorce, some restraints of the kind seem almost indispensable in Islam, if only for the maintenance of decency and social order."

Mohammed was even severer with his own wives. "No one, unless bidden, was to enter their apartments; they were not to be spoken to but from behind a curtain; and, to slake the last embers of jealousy, a divine interdict was declared against their ever marrying again."

According to Muir, Mohammed had eleven wives, including two slave girls. The number seems uncertain. Abulfeda limits it to fifteen, while other Arabian historians make it as many as twenty-five. He limited his followers, however, to four wives each; but on account of the facility of divorce among them, though a man may never have more than four wives at one

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time, yet he may be married many times. A traveller once met an Arab, not an old man either, who had been married fifty times. We knew of a family where the first and second wives were permanent, but the changes kept taking place in Nos. 3 and 4.

When the Mohammedans invaded India, they brought the custom of the Zenana with them. They often forcibly added a beautiful Hindu woman to their households, even though she had a husband. Hence, to protect themselves from their unscrupulous Mohammedan neighbors, the Hindus began to keep their women indoors, and to veil them carefully. Miss Thoburn says: "Oriental women have always lived more or less in the background, but Mohammed shut them within four walls and turned the key." The custom prevails among Mohammedans wherever they are found in India, except the very poor whose wives are forced to labor as well as the husbands; and they often have only one room for all the family to live in. But, here and there, you find a poor man who even in his poverty clings with great pride to the system as tenaciously as his wealthier neighbors.

Among the Hindus the system prevails largely in Bengal, the North, and the Northwest; es-

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pecially where Mohammedanism is the strongest, and in the old Mohammedan capitals, and in the Mohammedan native states. In the Western and Southern portions of India, it only prevails to a certain extent among the better classes. With the exceptions of the royal families in the Marathi native states, the Zenana does not exist among the Marathi people. That no doubt accounts for the freedom of the women in the city of Bombay. A lady who lived in North India for several years, told us that she had seen more women on the streets in Bombay in one day than she had seen during all her stay in the North. The thing that struck us most on our first visit to the North was the small number of women we met on the streets.

While the Zenana system has not been adopted by the lower castes in the North, and not generally adopted by the Hindus of the West and South, yet it has affected public opinion and thereby restricted the liberty of women to a great extent throughout the country; and when you speak of the women of these sections being free, it must be remembered there are many limitations to their freedom.

We have no idea of the number of women who thus live in seclusion, but it is, we are glad

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to say, a small proportion of the whole number of more than 140,000,000 of women in India. But this fact does not lessen the wrong of the institution.

1. It deprives them of outdoor liberty and recreation, and must affect not only their own health, but that of their children. It is asserted that a large percentage of Zenana women die of consumption. Where the Zenana is very strictly kept, as at Hyderabad, the women and their young slave-attendants are practically prisoners, servants guard the front entrances to their apartments, and if the ladies make a call, or take a journey, the greatest precaution is taken to secure their seclusion. In Lucknow we have seen ladies borne past in closed palanquins over which was spread a covering of cloth. How stifling it must have been!

A Mohammedan gentleman in Bombay, accustomed to some laxity in his own household, told us that when he was in Northern India, he saw, on one occasion, a lady put in a closed railway carriage and then over the whole carriage was thrown a tent. "That," he added, "was a little too much Zenana for me." A Hindu gentleman who has lived in Hyderabad for many years, told us that when a wealthy Zenana lady

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wished to make a call, the street was cleared for her, and she was conveyed to her destination in a palanquin shielded by a cloth on both sides. He also said that once he had some workmen repairing a house, and as they worked on one high corner, they were discovered by the occupants of the Zenana below in the next house. The husband rushed out with a gun and would have fired, had not our friend interfered. They were suspected of climbing to that point so as to look into the Zenana.

2. It makes a woman constantly conscious of her sex. All this is done to shield her from the gaze of man. In ordinary Zenanas, if a water-carrier or other workman has to come into the Zenana court, warning is given so that the lady can flee to her room, or two servants hold up a cloth before her and screen her till the man passes out. The *Koran*, as quoted above, allows her to see her father, brothers and nephews in addition to her husband, and, as one lady added to us, "and an uncle if he is older than our father." But in very strict Zenanas this liberty, even, is much limited.

We know of a Mohammedan lady whose husband was absent. Through a lattice or window, she saw her little boy, an only child we think, in

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physical danger. Mother-love forgot every ban and she rushed into the street to rescue him. On her husband's return that evening, he was told of it and expressed no displeasure but spoke to her "words of honey." *But she was never seen after that night.* Another husband, of whom we know, killed his wife because a man by the merest accident saw her back through an open door, though she was unconscious of it. A lady described to us a pilgrimage to Mecca. She was confined to her cabin all through the voyage, while her husband enjoyed the ocean breezes from the deck and had the monotony of the voyage broken by whatever there was to see.

3. The confinement limits their experience of life to a very small horizon and keeps them children. If they cannot read, their knowledge of the outside world depends on hearsay. If a husband is so minded, he can greatly misrepresent events and the world to her. We recently heard of the statement made in a paper conducted in the interests of the Zenana, that the Western world was beginning to adopt the system.

4. The segregation of the sexes is a great evil. It was never the Creator's plan, but, guaging human nature, it was man's plan to save the purity of his wives and the sanctity of his home. But

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like all man's remedies for man, it is a failure. An author quoted in Dr. Murdoch's book says: "Instead of promoting virtue, it has tended to render the imagination prurient." Dr. Fallon scandalized the Anglo-Indian press with the quotations and proverbs used in his Hindustani-English Dictionary, but in defence he said: "There is much to be learned from many an otherwise objectionable quotation, if one is willing to learn. It is of the greatest importance, for instance, to know to what depths human nature can sink in the vitiated atmosphere of enforced female seclusion, as contrasted with the purity to which men and women rise as social restraints are withdrawn, and they are permitted to breathe the pure air of liberty and indulge in free social intercourse."

Miss Hewlett says: "The idea that because a woman is kept in seclusion she is more modest or womanly, is a sentiment without foundation in fact, as frequently where purdah is more strictly observed, the greatest impropriety prevails behind the scenes." "God meant the home," says Murdoch, "to be a place of intercourse, where husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, male and female relatives and friends, gather together round the same hearth in loving

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confidence and mutual dependence." It is the only safeguard of domestic happiness, and even of national blessing. Says Muir: "It is impossible for a people who, contrary to nature, exclude from their outer life the whole female sex, materially to rise in the scale of civilization. Men suffer from the loss of the refining influence of woman's society. In such society they cease to talk of what they do not want their wives and daughters to know and hear. We have known the basest man to check his oath or coarse jest, and drop into a reverential, confused silence in the presence of a refined woman. Let the sexes intermingle, and many men will become what they want their women to be."

A "Kashmiri Pandit," after residing some time in England, thus gives his experience in the *Indian Magazine*:

"To live for three or four years in a society in which men and women meet, not as *masters* and *slaves*, but as friends and companions—in which feminine culture adds grace and beauty to the lives of men; to live in a society in which the prosaic hours of hard work are relieved by the companionship of a sweet and educated wife, sister, or mother, is the most necessary discipline required by our Indian youths, in order that they

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may be able to shake off their old notions and to look upon an accomplished womanhood as the salt of human society which preserves it from moral decay. There is a very pernicious notion prevalent in India, that a free intercourse between the sexes leads to immorality. I confess that, before I came to England, I believed there was some truth in this notion. But now I believe no such thing. My own impression is, *that the chief safety-valve of public and private morality is the free intercourse between the sexes.*" This is the sore need of India, and we hope the purdah will soon be rent in twain, and woman be emancipated.

It is often suggested to us that the different denominations among Christians must be a great hinderance and stumbling-block in India. Some of our Indian contemporaries have learned this objection, and occasionally assail the missionaries and the cause of Christ with it, as if sects were unknown in India and unity of mind was a characteristic of the country. The difficulty should not be an incomprehensible one to an Indian mind. India is full of sects, so that in writing an article for the press, it is difficult to make a statement that covers all India, or even one of its divisions.

The Hindus are divided into innumerable sects

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that vary from one another in customs and even in dress. The Braham community consists of divisions and subdivisions that will not intermarry or eat together. This is also true of the Indian Reformers. We have the Brahmo-Samaj, the Arya-Samaj, the Prarthna-Samaj, and the Adi-Samaj. The *Arya-Messenger* has complained most bitterly of late of divisions in the camp and of the danger of greater splits; but when it was hinted that the Arya and Brahmo-Samaj unite, the thought was most indignantly resented. "Never!" said the *Messenger*, "why, the Brahmo-Samaj is only a kind of Christianity!"

When we turn to the Mohammedan community we find the same conditions there. True, the pious Moslem cries, "There is but one God, Allah, and Mohammed is His prophet," but with this general creed and the *Koran* we find them divided into Shias and Sunnias, and these are divided and subdivided until it has passed into a proverb that there are seventy-two sects of Mohammedans. Hence it is easy to see that in speaking of the Zenana, it is difficult to make general statements that would cover the whole Mohammedan community.

The customs and practices in North India are often very different from those of Bombay;

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while a different state of affairs from all other sections of India exists in the Hyderabad State, where perhaps the Zenana in its strictness, severity and style corresponds more with that of other Mohammedan countries. In Bombay the Zenana can be hardly said to have taken root at all. Strictly speaking, it does not exist among the Khojas. The women of other sects move about more or less freely. A glance at the house in Bombay is proof of this. In Lucknow houses are built with reference to the Zenana. The front of a house may look most unpretentious, but if you pass through into the rear, you will find an open court surrounded on its four sides with the women's apartments. In our rows of tall four and five story houses in Bombay, where do we find the court, and the Zenana? The land that makes the square court up north, would represent too much money to a shrewd Parsee, or a speculating Hindu investor; and he would run up a four or five-storied *chawl* on it. It is only in the bungalows with more or less of a compound, that the wealthy Mohammedan, the Arab, and the Persian finds a proper home for his Zenana among us. Perhaps our free Marathi atmosphere of Western India is unfavorable to the Zenana's growth.

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In speaking of the Zenana, Sir William Muir suggests that in addition to its being a command of Mohammed, that it may be a necessity to the system. He says: "With polygamy, concubinage, and arbitrary divorce, some such restraint may be necessary to check the loose matrimonial standard which might otherwise undermine the decencies of social life. But the institution of the veil has nevertheless chilled and checked all civilizing influences, and rendered rude and barbarous the Moslem world. The veil, and the other relations that make it necessary, are bound up together with the *Koran*, and from the *Koran* it is impossible for the loyal and consistent Moslem to turn aside."

It would be much easier for the Hindus to give up the custom, as it is not commanded by their sacred books and is only custom with them. In speaking to an Indian gentleman of Muir's suggestion that the Zenana holds the social fabric of the Mohammedans together, he said it was not true; that thousands of poor Mohammedans did not keep *purdah*, and that some communities were very lax in its observance, and yet there was no difficulty. "But," he added, "Mohammedans are considered the most immoral of nations, and it is the Zenana that has made them so."

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The seclusion of women is bad enough, but when intensified by polygamy, it is much worse. A man is allowed by the *Koran*, if he wishes and can support them, to have four wives and as many concubines as he likes. Perhaps the larger number of Mohammedans have only one wife, and an increasing number oppose polygamy; but many still avail themselves of the privilege. It is an expensive luxury. Most of the native princes have been polygamists. It is said that when the last King of Oude was deposed, that there were seven hundred women found in his harem. The majority of this number were no doubt servants and attendants of his wives, for even in some homes of one wife there are from ten to twenty attendants and servants.

If the polygamist has the means, he usually sets up a separate establishment for each wife: *i. e.*, a suite of rooms, a set of attendants, and a separate courtyard, though one large wall may enclose the whole. But where there can be no such arrangement, and the wives live together, it does not require a very great stretch of the imagination to know that there must often be unhappiness, and strife among them: as jealousy must play a part if the husband is more attentive to any one wife than to the others.

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Mohammed himself, had his favorite wife in Ayesha. There is an inherent desire in a woman's heart that, next to God, she shall be first in her husband's affections, and she naturally resents the thought of a rival. The system of polygamy has never been able to eradicate this desire. The fact that some polygamous families may live happily and peaceably under the rule of the head wife, is no proof to the contrary. A Moham-medan government official told us once that he had three wives: that his parents had chosen the first one; that she had no children, and they chose a second, and that he was so dissatisfied that he chose a third himself. "But," he added, "between the three, I live a life of it." The parents of young girls before they are married often take a written promise from the intended husbands that they will not take another wife. One young girl added in telling of this promise they had obtained: "And my intended husband is a good man and he will never do it." Said her friend in reply: "Yes, but a pious Mussalman is allowed four by the *Koran*." We knew of a wife whom the husband deceived for a long time. She thought she was the only wife, but was almost heart-broken when she discovered that he had another wife living in a little house not far away.

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Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, the celebrated traveller in all lands, speaks even yet more strongly: "I have lived in Zenanas and can speak from experience, of what the lives of secluded women can be—the intellect so dwarfed that a woman of twenty or thirty is more like a child, while all the worst passions of human nature are developed and stimulated; jealousy, envy, murderous hate, intrigue running to such an extent that in some countries I have hardly ever been in a woman's house, without being asked for drugs to disfigure the favorite wife, or take away her son's life. This request has been made of me nearly one hundred times. This is a natural product of a system that we ought to have subverted long ago."

Among one sect there is a shameless custom of temporary marriage, which may be contracted for six, nine or twelve months, or for any period that may suit, even for a day. In our astonishment, we asked: "And are these marriages legal, and does the *Kazi* unite such couples?" The reply came in the affirmative. It was instituted by Mohammed Jaafel, sixth Iman from Ali. Some writer in referring to it speaks of it as a great blot upon the morals of Mohammedan social life.

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In addition to polygamy there is the custom of arbitrary divorce. A man may divorce his wife on any pretext and he need give her no reason if it so please him. In reading through the divorce law of Mohammedans, we were baffled and bewildered by what seemed to us the petty discriminations in the terms used in divorcing a wife. The first chapter opens up with the sentence; "There are thirteen different kinds of separation of married parties, of which seven require a judicial decree and six do not." We at last understand this, that when a man had repeated the words of divorce, "*talaq*," three times it was irrevocable. And not until the wife had been married to another man and divorced again, could the first husband remarry her. A wife cannot usually divorce her husband, but she can ask him to divorce her; and unless he choose to do it, she cannot be released.

There are many checks to divorce, and one is that the husband is required before marriage to make a settlement upon the bride called "*mahr*," and that he cannot divorce her without paying this. In well-to-do communities, it is fixed at from one thousand to fifteen hundred rupees; but to make it impossible to divorce her we have heard of the sum being put at a very fanciful

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figure. We read of one case where it was set at twenty-six thousand rupees; and the other day we heard of a young clerk on a salary of ten rupees per month signing an agreement to a "mahr" of three lacs of rupees. Though Mohammedanism sanctions a loose system of divorce, yet in India it is greatly limited in practice as compared with other Mohammedan countries. There are whole sections of its society in which it is rarely found; and in certain portions of the country this is true even among the better classes. If it did not affect the lot of woman so sorely in making domestic happiness insecure, we would have been glad to have overlooked the subject altogether.

In conclusion we must say that the Zenana, aside from its being a Mohammedan institution, is at present in India largely a custom, a fashion, and a standard of respectability. The majority of women in the Zenanas do not look upon themselves as martyrs to an evil custom; but, says a writer, "It has now become to Indian ladies part and parcel of their creed. Modesty, in a word, is to them as the very breath of their nostrils. To do away with it is a violation of one of the virtues of a woman."

They even take a great pride in their seclusion.

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The custom has become a token of great respectability. Dr. Murdoch quotes Miss Bielby, as saying: "A man's social standing in his own class depends, in a great measure, upon whether he can afford to keep his wife and daughters in Zenana or not." We have known of families who have lost wealth and become very poor; and the women have been forced from behind the purdah by great suffering to seek to earn a livelihood. It has been to them like parting with their respectability to do it. We knew of a Hindu lady who had never left the house but once, and that was to go to her husband's house as a bride. With what pride she must have viewed such intense respectability.

Hindu women have a little more laxity than Mohammedans in going on pilgrimages and to bathing ghauts. The *chadar* well drawn down over the face preserves the purdah for them. It is amusing to know that in Benares the purdah is most strictly kept. A prime-minister of some native state came to Benares and drove about with his wife in a carriage, when he was asked by the Hindus to desist from it. Marathi and Guzerati ladies on going to Benares to live, go into seclusion. We know of one such Guzerati lady who came to Bombay on a visit and went

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about the city freely. On her return to Benares in the seclusion of her purdah she laughingly told a lady: "Oh, when I was in Bombay, I went about the streets with a bag in my hands just as you do." A friend writing from Guzerat, in speaking of the seclusion of Hindu ladies there says: "Amongst Hindus other than Rajputs and the better class *Kunbis* (cultivators), the Zenana custom is very little in vogue. However there is a tendency among the wealthier families of all classes to affect the Zenana seclusion. It is coming to be considered fashionable and good form for the ladies in the houses of the rich."

But it is said that women are contented in their seclusion. This is true. So is the canary, that was born in the cage and never tasted the sweets of the free air. It is also asserted that the women are not clamoring for emancipation. But these statements, though true, do not in any way lessen the evil of the system to woman and to society; and we earnestly hope that it will soon be done away.

VI

MURALIS

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

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

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was removed by her relatives, and is now a young woman living a life of shame, supporting her mother with her earnings. We never see her, but we think of what she might have been, and the words come unbidden:

“Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these, ‘it might have been.’”

Now what are *Muralis* and who is Khandoba, this Indian Blue-beard? There has been considerable agitation on the subject of late, and we will try to answer these two questions for our readers.

Khandoba is a deity of the Marathi country, and is popularly believed to be an *avatar*, or incarnation of Shiva. *Muralis* are girls devoted to him by their parents in infancy or early childhood. The custom is confined to the Marathi country, with the exception of the Konkon, but it has its counterparts under different names in other parts of the country, as in the Devadasis of South India, and in the Jogtins, Bhaoins and others.

1. The headquarters of the worship of Khandoba is at Jejuri in the Poona district. There is also another place of worship called Pali in the Satara district; and we have been told of a third

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at Agalgaon, sacred to one of Khandoba's wives; but of the latter we could get but little information.

A friend who is an authority on this subject has given us the following account: "Jejuri is a small village situated at the foot of a little hill. The temple on its top, and the general surroundings, remind one of Parvati at Poona. The temple of Khandoba closely resembles the temple of Parvati with the exception of its glittering, gold-plated crown.

"The shepherds of the Marathi country are special favorites of Khandoba, because one of his wives was a shepherd girl. She was probably a young widow whom he secured and kept shut up for some time, calling her his brother's wife. But after a while he wooed and won her, and carried her to his home at Jejuri on horseback.

"A little temple on the stairway is sacred to Banai, the shepherd girl who was his favorite wife. In the courtyard facing the inner temple stands a big image of a demon who is named Bali Malla. It was to kill this Bali Malla that the god Shiva took a *Khanda* or dagger in his hand, and in this way received the title Khandoba. A little book called *Malhari Mahatmya* tells the

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same story in a more elaborate manner. Malla was a terrible demon who used to vex the *Rishis* living on the top of this hill now crowned with Khandoba's temple. They complained to the king of the gods, but he was powerless. Then all the gods went to Shiva, and besought protection from Malla. Shiva plucked a lock of hair from his head, struck the ground with it in great fury, and created a female demon to fight with the Malla and this army of powerful demons. But this fury required some one else to help her. So Martand Bhairav, one of Shiva's chiefs, offered to fight Malla. He took his seventy millions of evil spirits to help him in the battle. This is the origin of the phrase, 'Khandoba's *yelkot*' which means seventy millions. The favorite title of Khandoba, the head of the seventy million evil spirits, is very appropriate, *considering the deeds ascribed to him, and what is still done through his devotees.*

"There is a stone in the courtyard that has seven cuts in it which are supposed to be the marks left by the blows of his sword when he struck at his elder wife, Mhalsai, who was angry with him for marrying and bringing home Banai, the shepherd girl. Khandoba punished her in his anger by striking at her seven times with his

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sword; but she hid herself under the rock and was saved. So we see that Khandoba is a model husband whose example is so often imitated by our Marathi people who offend their wives in many ways, and then punish the poor woman for being angry with them.

“The present temple is not the original residence of Khandoba. It was built by Ahalyabai, the Queen of Indore, (who also has become a goddess, because she was so very good, and is now worshipped all over the country, though more especially in the Marathi country). She besought him to come down from the top of the Kade Pathar (the old Jejuri hill) to reside in this temple built by her, so that he could be easily reached by the weak, blind, and lame pilgrims who visit his shrine. The old temple is still visited by some, but this modern shrine receives the general pilgrimages which take place four times in the year—when great bodies of pilgrims visit the temple and pay homage to Khandoba.”

2. Who are the *Muralis*?

“Outside the main entrance of the temple court, a stone column stands against the wall on the left side. It is about three feet high, and on the head of it is cut a filthy design. The column is called by the name of Yeshwantrao, who is

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supposed to be a great god that gives the pilgrims all they want. He it is who gives children to barren women.

"It is to this image that poor deluded women promise to sacrifice their firstborn daughters if Khandoba will make them mothers of many children. Then after the vow, the firstborn girl is offered to Khandoba and set apart for him by tying a necklace of seven cowries around the little girl's neck. When she becomes of marriageable age, she is formally married to the *khanda* or dagger of Khandoba and becomes his nominal wife. Henceforth she is forbidden to become the wedded wife of man, and the result is that she usually leads an infamous life, earning a livelihood by sin. Some of these girls become wandering *muralis*. Others become ordinary public women in any town or city; while a few are said to live for years with some one man.

"The parents of such girls do not feel ashamed to take her earnings, *because they belong to Khandoba, and what they do is not sin in the eyes of his devotees*. Kunbis, Mahars, Mangs and other low castes make *muralis* of their daughters in this fashion. Not a few high-caste people visit Jejuri to pay their vows; but they never give their own girls to Khandoba, but buy

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children from low-caste parents for a small sum of money, which is not a difficult thing to do, and offer them instead of their own children."

The vow is frequently made in their own homes in their native villages, and is often made in the case of sickness, that if the god restores the sick one, their child shall be offered to Khandoba. When the vow is made, yellow powder is rubbed on the child and the cowrie necklace put on. When a suitable time arrives, there is a pilgrimage made to Jejuri and the marriage takes place there with the dagger of the idol which is kept in the temple. But if the family are unable to make the journey, the ceremony is performed at home.

"The business of the *murali* is to sing impure songs in praise of Khandoba; to perform night worship and song-services in honor of their gods at different places; and they earn their living in this way. A manuscript book purchased from a *murali* was full of these filthy songs, which are sung in the night services and are called *Jagrane*, or night watches.

"From earliest childhood their minds are corrupted by singing these songs in Khandoba's praise. To these they add other similar songs for the entertainment of their patrons at whose

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houses they are invited to hold night services. So long as they are young and attractive there are many calls for them, and their parents receive large sums of money and other presents. But the life soon stamps its awful mark upon them, and their sad, pale faces can but excite the pity of the compassionate."

Boys are also devoted to Khandoba and are called *waghyas*. They wear a little tiger-skin wallet suspended from their necks. They are popularly spoken of as Khandoba's dogs. They are allowed to marry, and do not necessarily lead a wandering life unless they choose. The wandering ones are usually disreputable.

We have been unable to get any statistics as to the number of *muralis*. At Jejuri alone we are told that about one hundred girls are offered every year, and in some years more. In one town where we lived for years, in the midst of a population of ten thousand people, there were two hundred and eighty *muralis* registered by the police. These two facts give us a little clue to the many hundreds of girls, all over the Marathi country, who have been devoted to this shameful life.

You may search far and wide, and the only reason for this awful crime against young girls

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that you will receive is: "It is our custom." Just how old the custom is, no one knows. It is said not to be mentioned in the sacred books, but the principle, under different names, has existed in India from time immemorial. The *Puranas* mention *nautch-girls*, and also speak of public women at certain places who seem to be identical with the present *devadasis*, or temple girls. Custom and religion cannot be separated in this land. Custom is religion. Present customs, however ancient or modern they may be, make up popular Hinduism.

At the last yearly meeting of the Christian Woman Workers' Union, held in Bombay, the matter was taken up, with the view of calling the attention of government to the facts. Carefully collected information as to the custom has been laid before a firm of solicitors in this city by a committee from the Bombay Missionary Conference, to whom the ladies of the Union referred the matter; and the questions asked if any member of the public could rescue a "murali" who was under age from the life to which she had been devoted, through a court of law; and also, if a member of the public should succeed in getting possession of the person of a "murali" under age, could her parents or any one else take

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the child away again, if it had been proven that the sole object of the one who rescued her, was to save her from a life of sin.

The solicitors replied that they thought the object could be attained under Section 372 and 373 of the Indian Penal Code in cases of minors under sixteen years of age. These sections provide that persons disposing of minors for evil purposes, "or knowing that any minor will be so used," shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine. The committee add to this the hope that this reply "will be made use of, on the one hand, to deter those purposing to marry their daughters to Khandoba; and, on the other hand, by leading to the rescue of girls from the sad life before them. It is an exceedingly important point to be kept in mind that, in the act of marrying their daughters to Khandoba, parents lose the right of guardianship, and a third party can step in to assume the place, provided it is for the girl's rescue."

The difficulty in the above is, that it will require time, a great deal of disinterested effort, and the expense attendant upon it. Who will make the prosecutions? Will it be left to a few missionaries? Or will the educated classes co-