Jerome’s careless glance went from one face to the other, without, however, perceiving anything to please his mother’s wish.

“I did not know that Etienne took any interest whatever in politics; he is coming out in quite a new character.”

“One advances naturally as one gets older—that is, wisdom grows where it has once taken root. I wish she had obtained even the smallest of settlements in your breast, my son.”

He shrugged his shoulders, and lifted his shapely brows with comic depreciation.

“Everything in its own season, ma mère—wisdom and grey hairs, youth and folly. There is a time even for the sowing of wild oats.”

“And for reaping the fruits thereof. As a man sows, so must he also reap; do not forget that.”

“The harvest will be my own. What does it matter?”

“You will be entirely your own? Are you sure of that? Etienne, have you nothing to say to this foolish boy?”

Etienne rose resolutely to put an end to the interview, which he saw was particularly trying to his mother.

“Yes,” he said; “but I will say it to him in private. You promise you will speak with me, Jerome. The mother has already had, as much excitement and fatigue this morning as is good for her.”

With his arm thrust through that of his brother, Monsieur St. Just bore the Marquis away to that little parlor with Damaries on the public staircase.

(Girls’ Work in the Mission Field.

1- IN INDIA.

Fear that more than one girl who takes up this vocation will be inclined to pass over an article with such a heading as having no interest for them. And yet I believe that there is not one reader of this magazine who, did she but know the importance of this mission, would not only feel interested in it, but also impelled to help it by any means in her power.

To understand the necessity for the Zennan Mission, we must first see clearly the condition of the women, and the position they occupy in India.

It is difficult for our free happy English girls to realize at all the misery and degradation of that position. There are some emancipated souls in England who work hard to uphold the rights of women here; but if they could change places for a month with an Indian lady, even of very high rank, they would not content with their own lot for the future. So little are women thought of in India that when telling the number of his children a man will frequently mention only his sons; the daughters are worth reckoning being considered only as a trouble and expense.

But a short time ago it was a very common thing for baby girls to be actually killed, and by their own mother, not because they were being that in course of time they would have to be married. This in India is such a troublesome and expensive ceremony that two or three such would seriously deplete even the most wealthy families, while it is a very great disgrace to have a daughter unmarried, so that the simplest way out of the difficulty was to do one’s little bairn in the most merciful and peaceful manner possible. At last this inhumanity became so general, and so openly practised, that the British Government interfered and made the act punishable by fine. But even at the present day it is to be feared that a considerable number of deaths are occasioned by want of proper attention if not by deliberate intentional neglect.

The life of those who grow up, however, has so little happiness that one is inclined to judge those who die young are the least to be pitied.

When the little girl reaches the age of five or six years, or sometimes much younger, the father begins to look father begins to look for a suitable husband for her; and this is not always an easy task, as it is essential that the bridegroom should be at least of as high, and, if possible, of higher birth, than herself. If she should reach the age of thirteen or fourteen without a suitable husband having been found, her father is in despair, as she is getting quite too old to be married. No orthodox Hindu would allow his son to marry a girl as old as that. When the father has found a boy to his mind, he offers his parents handsome presents to pull them to consent to the marriage. If his offerings are considered sufficiently costly, and an alliance between the families desirable, the children are betrothed, and this ceremony being considered as binding as the actual marriage, the little girl’s lot in life is fixed.

Hitherto she has lived a comparatively free life, but now all that is changed. She is strictly confined to the zenana, and even in the house of well-to-do men these apartments are sometimes of a wretched description. At any rate, if there is a room in the house a room more uncomfortable, and in a worse position than the one assigned to the ladies of the household.

If, as is often the case, the husband has other wives, the new bride will not be very cordially welcomed to the zenana, which is the scene of endless quarrelling and petty jealousies.

The old hymn says—

“Satan finds some mischief still
For little hands to do.”

And we can hardly wonder that these poor ladies, shut off from all means of either amusement or usefulness, should beguile the time by quarrelling in default of anything else.

The poor creatures have absolutely nothing to do but dress themselves up in fine clothes
GIRLS WORK IN THE MISSION FIELD.

The other girls usually leave the school at a very early age, either to be married or to join them on the mission fields, but a few boys and girls frequently remain with their parents for some time after they are married, if the ceremony is performed when they are very young. But the boys and girls who are supposed to become the missionaries of the gods, have nothing before them but drudgery. The object of these widow schools is, in the first place, to render their dark lot a little more endurable, but also to teach them how to become Christians, they may be educated to become missionaries to their countrywomen, for which they are more fitted than any other class of females. This has been carried out in several cases with great success.

One young woman, married at eight years of age, became a widow at thirteen. Soon after she went on a pilgrimage for some years from shrine to shrine, wearing man’s dress, as the custom for pilgrims, and living on alms. Coming, by chance, into a Christian school, she was struck by what she heard, came again and again, and finally renounced her idolatry and pilgrim’s life, and is now being trained in the Christian faith, whence she hopes soon to go out amongst her countrywomen to bring them also into the light. These widows’ schools are but few in number at present, but it is to be hoped that the funds of the mission may be increased, and the missionaries offer themselves, so as to allow of the establishment of more schools.

How are the English to help on this good work? The harvest is great, the labourers are few, and recruits are sorely needed. Though we cannot all give ourselves completely to the service and go and work in the field itself, we can all help at home. Of course, funds are always needed, both to support those mission stations already established, and to start new ones. It is always easy, however, to raise much money among our friends; but the Indian mission may be aided more easily than many others, because money is not the only means of helping. Working parties are frequently organised at which a number of articles are made, which are then sent to India and sold at one of the mission stations. This plan is generally more successful than selling the articles at home, as English made things as a rule sell for much higher prices in India than they would here.

It is only comparatively recently that the practical work of Suture, or burning the living wife along with the dead body of the husband, has been prohibited by British authority. In South India, which are preserved to be cast into the Ganges at some convenient time, are left to the mercy of the winds. And thus closes the history of the most favoured of the women of India. Should she have the misfortune to become a widow, then indeed her lot is the most miserable that can be imagined.

It is quite comparatively recently that the practice of Suttee, or burning the living wife, along with the dead body of the husband, has been abolished. The Indian women’s missionary John Lawrence introduced three clauses into the agreements by which lands were leased under British authority: "Thou shalt not slay thy children; thou shalt not burn thy widows alive; thou shalt not burn thy stepchildren." And it was only after agreeing to these stipulations that the leases were allowed to take over the land. Now the widow is allowed to live, but it is a life of ignominy and wretchedness for which she is spared.

One must be understood that after betrothal, if the woman is as much a slave as she was before, although the marriage ceremony had been actually performed. Thus many are widowed while they are quite young children, and having never seen or done anything, are doomed to perpetual widowhood. From that moment the poor girl is treated almost as though she had been guilty of some crime. All her gay clothes and ornaments are taken from her, and she is sent to some poor house where she may never wear anything but an old, patched dress. She is not allowed to do any work, or think of anything beyond religion, and the only useful sight the marriage-bag, answering to the European wedding-ring, is taken off. She was, till recently, prohibited from ever contract-

ing a second marriage, she must only eat once a day, and that the coarsest fare, and if she grew fat, her husband was allowed to castrate her. The dowry, however, is not a thing to be despised. The poor widow is left to herself to bear her sorrows. She may, with no one to nurse her or say a single word, and no little dainty dishes provided to tempt her appetite, besides being shut up, probably in some condemned house, with none of the conveniences for cooling the air which the hot climate renders so necessary.

There are native doctors, it is true, but their skill is doubtful, and if they are called in they are not permitted to see their patient, but only to speak to her through a curtain.

Supposing she grows worse, and the doctor announces her case to be hopeless, if they live within reach of the Ganges, the family make preparations for conveying her to its shores. Here the dying woman is laid down, with a little water, in a sacred water. The body is washed and dressed by all seven sons or brothers, who occasionally moisten her lips with the mud of the river.

When her last breath is drawn, and her spirit fled (for in such a position she is not likely to recover, though careful nursing might in many cases restore such a one), the body is cast into the Ganges, as far as the depth will allow, dragging the poor body after him, then giving it a final push out into the current, he turns away and goes homeward.

If they live too far away from the sacred river, the body is burnt instead, and the ashes, which are preserved to be cast into the Ganges at some convenient time, are left to the mercy of the winds.

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GIRLS' WORK IN THE MISSION-FIELD.

IT.—CHINA.

HINA—the land where tea grows; a land of green hills. That is all that many people either know or care about it.

And yet China is an enormous kingdom, with nearly four hundred million inhabitants—a third of the whole population of the globe. Of every three children born into the world first sees the light in China; of every three who die, one is a Chinaman who closes his eyes on this life, with no hope of the future beyond an unhappy wandering amongst other restless spirits, till some of the immovable rocks, the heaven and hell whom he worships shall shudder proper to send him back to this life in the form of an animal or reptile. Many have not even this doubtful hope of immortality, but believe that death ends all things.

And China is not only a large, but a very ancient and interesting land. Nearly five hundred years before the birth of Christ, when England was unknown, inhabited by savage tribes, and overrun by wild beasts, the Chinese were a great nation, living reverently to the words of wisdom which fell from the lips of their great teacher Confucius.

At the time of the birth of our Lord the belief that a great king was about to be born was universal amongst all civilized nations. The belief was so strongly shared in the general expectation that the time for His appearance was come, that an embassy was sent to seek and wait upon till they should hear some news of the Messiah. And they travelled a little farther they would probably have reached the Holy Land in time to worship the infant Saviour with the shepherds and the wise men from the East.

But in India they fell in with the Buddhist priests, who told them that their god, Buddha, was the king they were in search of, and they sent teachers back with them who introduced the religion of Buddhism into China.

But how are the mighty fallen! These people, once the foremost in knowledge and enlightenment, are now slaves to the most degrading superstitions. Their objects of worship are almost innumerable.

There are three principal religions—Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. The services performed by the Buddhist priests are wholly unintelligible to the people, as the language employed is really the original Sanskrit, written in Chinese characters, which will convey the sound though not the meaning of the words. The Buddhist priests are detested by the people, though all classes resort to them in case of illness, or any reason they require a religious ceremony. The Taoists are fewer in number, but in many respects resemble the Buddhists. There are two sects, whose customs are somewhat different. The priests of the one class do not live in monasteries like those of the other religions, but remain among their own people. Some shun the flesh, and live on only the vegetable food. Their religious services consist of chants and recitations, with the burning of incense and offering of gifts to the gods, communing with some spirits to which their neighbours to help them eat what is left—that is to say, all the material part of the food, the spirits having dined on the intangible, spiritual essences.

Some generous people provide occasional feasts for the unfortunate spirits condemned to hunger in the lower world. These "gentlemanly spirits," so politely called, are supposed to be wandering about naked and hungry; they are the spirits of lepers and beggars and thieves, so a very small expense to keep them in order. But, in addition to these, the other misfortunes, some of these, as a punishment for their sins, have lost their heads, and consequently have no mouths to eat. To meet this difficulty a few dishes of gravel are provided, and it is thought that with the aid of spores they can manage to eat this solid food through their mouths.

It is almost impossible to realise that grown-up people can believe in these absurd superstitions, but their faith in them seems to be quite sincere. Since the Boxer war the majority of the people are more or less educated, and the upper classes are by no means indifferent to science and art. Perhaps one or two of them are curious customers, and the extraordinary mixture of credulity and shrewdness in their mind, is that observed at an eclipse of the sun or moon. The people believe in all the limitations and characteristics of a ravenous monster, and all haste is made to the temples to save it from destruction by offering incense and going through a formula of recitations and singing, which, strange to say, is always successful, for the partially-devoured sun always emerges again safely from the jaws of the monster. What makes this custom so extraordinary is the extraordinary designation of the foreigner, the "Royal Agent," by the chief mandarin (Government official), may be present in the temple in his official robes, and have everything in readiness for the ceremony. The objects of the ceremonies are various, but one always hears of the offering of "mock money," or clothing. This money is made of paper covered with very thin silk. Some of it is left the natural colour, to represent silver, and some painted a yellowish colour, for gold. When these coins are burnt it is believed that the smoke ascends to the spirit world, and being claimed by the person for whom it is intended, changes back into the censors the paper represented. The clothes, umbrellas, and other articles ordered in the same way are simply paper representations of ordinary garments.

When the head of a family dies, very long and expensive ceremonies are performed. His spirit is supposed to require material comfort, the same as on earth, so a paper sedan chair is burnt, that he may not have to walk to his destination. But it is doubtful whether it will be provided, for besides the large number of small paper figures of sedan chairs, and one other attendant with an umbrella, buried with the table is a meal which is laid on which are a bowl of rice, a cup of wine, and a pair of chopsticks, that the spirit may come back when hungry and find everything prepared. There is also a small box and chopsticks provided for the use of a little imp who...
THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

is supposed to be told off by the king of Hades to attend on each newly-arrived spirit, and the surviving relatives supply him with food and burn paper money for his use in order to ensure his being attentive to their departed relative; but even in the assistance of the guide they think he would be very likely to come out all right, and they did not foresee incidents of unceasingly burning to light his road. It is generally believed that he arrives at his destination after forty-two days, and only then becomes aware of his own death.

There is no idea of the dead being happy and at rest; on the contrary, they are in the same manner served for, and sacrifices constantly offered to the ten gods of hell to preserve them from torments. At the end of five generations they will probably be born again into this world, either as human beings, or as birds or beasts, according to their merits.

What a miserable destiny to die thus with no hope! Yet we, having received and rejoiced in the good news of a loving Father and a glorious home awaiting us in heaven, are content, since we are permitted by our loving God and by the grace of Jesus Christ, to dwell in darkness and despair, with no voice to tell them of a Saviour, and no hand to lead them into the paths of life.

A well-dressed and devoted missionary there are, but in that great land their small numbers are like a drop in the ocean. It is said that all the Christian missionaries are deaconesses, or deaconesses inEffect. As there were to go to China they might each have a congregation of four thousand souls. Women are much wanted earns, Christian servants, much help, much needed for the women of China, and help to raise them from the state of degradation to which they have fallen, and our missionaries write that they are, but, however, constantly hindered, and even have to give up most favourable openings, for want of help.

One missionary says:—"For ten years I have been praying for a lady missionary here"; another from Cheung King: "It is a great pity there is not a lady missionary here; yesterday I had to speak to twenty women who came in," and messages in the same strain are not at all rare.

Work amongst the women of China is in some respects easier than that carried on in India. They are not confined in the churches, as in this case, and there is no constant danger from their walking away; but there is, nevertheless, much greater restraint than among Europeans, and our male missionaries and considerable difficulty in getting an understanding with them, as the sex live so much apart, and never appear together in public. The women have a hard life, and very little pleasure. The girls receive no education; even that of the boys is very limited, to our ideas, consisting, as it does principally, of learning by heart the writings of Confucius.

Confucius is much more common in some localities than others. In some provinces it is still more practised, and is regarded with indulgence. Both boys and girls are considered intelligent enough to learn the books, and are instructed in them as early as possible. Occasionally proclamations are issued forbidding the drowning of girls, but no steps are taken to find out or punish the offenders. Few care for all those children for slaves, instead of drowning or leaving them to die by the roadside. Perhaps the chief reason for infanticide amongst poor people is the practice of Confucius, which makes them pronounce it necessary for a man to be able to walk, and consequently unable to earn their own living.

In some parts of China all the women bind their children's feet, so that only a daughter in a poor family would have small feet. It is considered as a mark of gentility, irrespective of the wealth of the family. When the child is about five years old its feet are firmly com-

pressed by means of a long hamstring wound tightly round and round the foot from the ankle to the toes, and then behind the ankle. This everts the circulation and stops the growth. The foot eventually shrivels up, and the ankle becomes large and swollen, giving just the appearance of a club foot. Bindling causes much suffering, and it is no uncommon sight to see a woman, who has no rest night or day, and, in fact, their ease and comfort in life is practically over when the compressing bandages have been put on such young girls. They cannot walk properly, and their movements are little better than staggering. Short narrow shoes are worn on the feet, with very high heels, so that the wearer stand almost on tiptoe. The shoes of a full- grown woman are about three or three and a half inches long, sometimes even smaller than that.

One of the greatest, if not absolutely the greatest, evils in China is the opium smoking, and medical missionaries acquire a considerable influence amongst the people by helping them to give up the habit. It takes such a hold upon them that it is as difficult to cure as the habit of drinking in England, for when a person has once begun to take opium, the craving for it is almost impossible to resist. In the house of the upper classes a room is frequently set aside for opium smoking, and provided with utensils or beds, or a raising couch, for people do not smoke opium as they do tobacco, in the course of their ordinary pursuits, but recline and give themselves up to the enjoyment of it. One poor person is to the opium shops, which are open to all, like our public-houses. The smoking of opium ruins the health, causing great weakness and in- ability to do any work, and all the income, and great poverty is almost always the result. The people themselves are so fully aware of the evil effects of it that they come eagerly to the medical missionaries and begging earnestly for medicine to help them conquer the habit, as they believe that foreigners alone possess the antidote to opium.

This belief makes an opening for missionaries in many places where they would not otherwise be received at all. The medical missionaries are looked upon with wonder and admiration and by them is a great help to the spread of the science of medicine is very small in- deed. In some places hospitals have been established, and the patients who come in do very credit to our missionaries, and in some cases recover from incurable diseases, when the hospitals are for medicine to help them conquer the habit, as they believe that foreigners alone possess the antidote to opium.

One of the greatest hindrances of the missionary is the difficulty of the language. There is no regular alphabet, but each idea is repre- sented by a different sign, in exactly the same way as the ancient Egyptians and many other nations used hieroglyphics. To read ordinary Chinese books it is necessary to learn three or four thousand of these signs, but there are many more. The spoken language is also very different and the pronunciations of the voice will entirely alter the meaning of many words; and most of the Chinese have such a dislike to foreigners that they will not listen to anyone who do not speak the language fluently. The people receive books willingly, so that, if funds were forthcoming to supply them, and men and women to undertake the work, there is no doubt that the Chinese and other religious books should not be distributed and read throughout the length and breadth of the land.

Chinese books are very strangely printed to our ideas. They begin where our end, and read in lines up and down, instead of across the page, beginning at the right hand bottom corner. The name of the book and the number of the page are written down the right hand margin, and what we should call the “back matter” is placed at the top of the page.

So little understanding have the Chinese of a spiritual life that the language actually does not contain words by which to express the sacred truths of the Bible. Thus, there is the greatest difficulty in finding suitable translations, intelligibly, even with the aid of learned Chinese scholars.

Native teachers are particularly useful, as they are naturally conversant with their countrymen's superstitions and beliefs, and after a thorough training in the doctrines of our faith, and reasons for our belief, they are better able to combat the old ideas than any foreigner could do. They must be well educated in the Chinese classics, or they will be simply a laughing-stock to the upper classes.

The money required for the support of these native teachers seems to us absurdly small, and a very pleasant way for a Sunday-school to help on the missions is to undertake the support of one or more of them entirely, and receive in return periodical accounts of their welfare and the work they are doing. These accounts are obtained by application to one of the missionary societies, some of which also publish large maps of China, which can be sent to schools. In the schools with which I am acquainted, in addition to the map, the names of the evangelists they support are written up in large Chinese characters, and by the interest in the work is kept up by frequently reading small items of news about them, or about the part of the country where they are at work, and giving the children the opportunity of sending little presents to their friends. Failing this united Sunday-school effort, three or four girls might, by aid of a collecting-card or box, small sales of work, and little personal self-denials, between them make up the sum of £2 or so a year, which is sufficient to support one native missionary for that part of the year during which he can engage in evangelistic work.

Much more might be said about these extraordinary people. Their mode of eating with chopsticks, their peculiar dress, their strange eating utensils, by a “go-between” or professional matchmaker, and other strange customs, are most interesting and well worthy of study, but a description of the Chinese children's education and there are many books published from which girls can find any information they wish about them.

One thing more we must say in closing. Money is greatly needed for the Chinese mis-

sions. They have been too long overlooked, and greatly need help, but the missionaries in their letters beg earnestly that we will not be contented with giving money only, but will also help them with our prayers. Native Christians, and particularly native preachers in China, whose visits to this country are incomprehensible to us, and the missionaries ask us to pray that they may have grace given them that their light may shine brightly and lighten that dark land. Many girls make a list of subjects they wish to remember in their prayers, one or two for each day of the week.

Dear girls, when thinking for whom you need to pray, remember our millions of sisters who live in that land, and let us pray with a heart full of love to God, that they may be enlightened. Therefore pray for them and for the missionaries of China.

MARY BELLWOOD.