

The Woman's Missionary Society.

[This Department is in the interests of the W. M. Society. All communications for it should be addressed to Mrs. Ios. McLeod, Fredericton.]

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Ten Years' Progress of Women in India. (Concluded.)

3. *Industries.* For the thousands of girls who would have made third-rate teachers and Biblewomen there is something better adapted to their capabilities—work that will encourage self-respect, not self-conceit; activity, not indolence; prosperity, not poverty. Ten years ago industries for women were scarcely thought of. Lace-making in the south was giving employment not only to widows but also to the wives of Christians. In the north needlework was taught in some zenanas and in one or two homes for widows. Plain sewing and crocheting was taught in many schools and to a few Christian women—not so much as a means of support as a means of furnishing spending-money. Gold thread embroidery in the Madras district was an industry also ten years ago. The great army of women and children whom the famine brought to the missionary door has necessitated a serious consideration of the question of their support. And while necessarily dependent at the first on outside help, the obvious thing to be done was to provide for their self-support. With this aim in view many industries have sprung up: Rug-weaving, embroideries in silk and linen, drawn thread work and lace-making, weaving sarees, field-work and gardening, plain sewing, basket-weaving and chair-making, chick-making, embroidery of shoes, rope-making and bead-work.

Most of these are employments indigenous to the country, but taken from the men who had nearly the exclusive right and transferred to the women. In most cases the outcome will be natural and stable, and the income better assured if men and women fit their work into each other's hands, and not each woman work independently for herself. Progress in this direction has not meant merely that so many thousand women and girls are learning things they did not know before, nor even that they are relieving their parents or husbands or the mission of the burden of their support by the annas of their daily wage. These industries keep them from the gossip of the street or the veranda of the chawl. It enhances their self-respect, in that they find themselves capable of doing things, and in being able to bear their own burdens and help bear those of others. Last, but not least, this independence has often saved a widow from selling her soul and body for a piece of bread.

We consider the general opening of industries to women as one of the greatest signs of progress in the decade. It is still but an opening, a start; but it is in the right direction.

4. Our next inquiry would be whether there had been tangible progress in the line of what has been called *mission work*, teachers, Biblewomen, nurses and assistants in hospitals? No general statistics are available; of those received from different parts of India, the rate of increase has been over 200 per cent. While the rate shows progress, still the most hopeful thing about it is that the quality has greatly improved. In 1891 the report was that many of the Biblewomen were untrained, now they

are mostly trained; the grade of the teachers is higher in nearly every report, while trained nurses and assistants doing Christian work in hospitals are almost the product of the last decade. Bible-schools, training-schools, and medical schools have more than quadrupled in the last ten years, which shows that while the increase in numbers is very hopeful, the efficiency is greater in proportion. The same state of things is true in regard to female education among all religions in India. The aggregate increase is encouraging, but the increase of those in professional avocations, and especially of those in places of responsibility and power, gives great hopes for the future of the women in India.

After all, it is the spiritual progress of the women in which we are most interested. Has it kept pace with the physical and mental progress, or has the growth in these directions had a retrograde influence on the spiritual? This last we cannot believe, although some missionaries have expressed this fear for their own women. It is life that gives growth; what is the new life that has quickened India? It can be no other than the eternal life, which is the Son of God. If this Power is working through head and hand, it can surely be doing no less through the Spirit, which is of its own substance. There may be less of Bible language freely used, but we believe there is a greater abundance of the fruit of the Spirit, a steadier flow of spiritual life in the heart and the home of the women, and a greater dignity of character born from the love of the truth that is in Christ Jesus.

MISSION NOTES.

—An interesting visitor who is now in England is the Rev. T. K. Chatterji, who since 1889 has been the pastor of the Bhowanipur church, the leading native church of Calcutta. A Brahmin by caste, it was not until he reached manhood that he accepted the Christian faith, and when he was twenty-eight years of age he was baptized. For many years Pastor Chatterji has carried on successful work in Calcutta in a church which is now self-supporting.

—Dr. H. H. Jessup, a veteran missionary, writes: "The wedge is beginning to enter the Mohammedan world—the wedge of Gospel light and Christian civilization. A Moslem emir in Cairo has published a volume called 'The New Woman,' advocating the abolition of the veil, the harem, polygamy, etc., and the Mufti of Cairo has publicly endorsed the book. Mr. Michael Ibrahim, a converted graduate of the Azhar University, in Cairo, is preaching to hundreds of Moslems."

—There are those who believe that in a few years the great mass of the population of Japan will accept Christianity. Dr. J. B. Hail, a missionary in Japan for many years, writes: "Education in Japan has tried the experiment of antagonizing religion and ignoring it also. The result of this on the morals of the teachers, officers and pupils has proved disastrous. Now thinking men in Japan are saying that religion is the basis of morality, and many are looking for the best religion, and to this end are investigating Christianity."

—The latest reports about Protestant missions in Africa gave a grand total of 95 societies working in Africa, with 1,158 ordained and 634 unordained white

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missionaries, 779 missionaries' wives, 480 unmarried women workers and 15,732 native workers. There are 94 high schools and colleges, with 3,574 students, and 3,479 day schools, with 201,473 scholars; 126 missionary hospitals and dispensaries in charge of 66 male and 9 female doctors. The communicants number 274,650, and other adherents 576,530.

—In the South African Conference of the African Methodist Episcopal church are fifty mission stations, and in most of these a school is being conducted. A missionary writes: "We have established several mite societies, and they are very helpful. We have what we term home and foreign work—the work that is in and about the larger cities we call home work, and that which is far removed from the centres of civilization we call foreign. We have some urgent calls for missionaries from new places where civilization has not yet reached."

SUNDAY FUNERALS.—The ministers of St. John, West, have adopted the following resolution as to Sunday funerals: *Whereas*, The practice of Sunday funerals is against the spirit of the Lord's day, and interferes with our church work, we, the undersigned clergymen residing in Carleton, pledge ourselves hereafter to conduct no Sunday funerals, except by order of the Board of Health, or under special circumstances that render funerals on Sunday imperative.

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