

a bell glass, and moisture are the three requisites needed to make our moorland treasures flourish. The little plant will continue to produce its fairy-like foliage and flowers in full beauty from July till September.

We might enumerate many more species of bog plants which are noticeable for their beauty; but these will, I think, suffice to show how much pleasure we may derive from their cultivation in our gardens or greenhouses. At

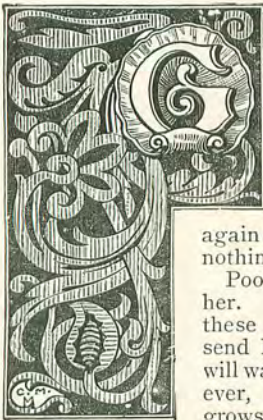
the same time, I would earnestly entreat my young readers to take but a few specimens, and never wantonly to destroy rare plants of any kind.

Where plants are growing in great abundance on a wild heath or moor, a root or two will not be missed; but if there are but few, let us examine and admire, and leave the lovely specimens to live on in the places they have been created to adorn.

ELIZA BRIGHTWEN.

CHILD-WIVES.

By EMILY DIBDIN.



LOOM and sadness reign in a Hindu house, for a little daughter has been born. The friends who have come to inquire, and who would have joined in songs of gladness had the infant been a son, now go silently away or whisper a word of condolence to the moody father, who repeats again and again, "Nothing is born—nothing!"

Poor little maiden! Nobody wants her. It is not impossible, even in these days, that a dose of opium may send her into a sleep from which she will wake no more in this world. However, more generally she lives and grows into the happiest stage of her life.

For some few years—five or six, or even more—the little maid is perfectly free. She runs in and out of the men's quarters as well as the women's, and even in the street beyond. She has no lessons, no needlework, nothing but playtime. The uncles and aunts and cousins who share her father's home pet and spoil her. No one controls her, no one opposes her. Her tricks are laughed at, her mischief overlooked or applauded.

But all at once a shadow falls over her. Her father has arranged that she is to be married; and after one day of exquisite enjoyment, when the house is decorated with flowers and illuminated with coloured lamps, when she is dressed in the loveliest clothes she has ever had, eaten fruit and sweetmeats without stint, and perhaps been taken to ride on the back of a huge elephant while music and songs have surrounded and followed her, and all the neighbours have looked on in admiration, she is torn from her mother's arms and led by her boy-husband to his mother's house, where she is henceforth to live.

The little wife may be scarcely nine years old, and as fond of play as any English child of that age, but her playing days are over.

She is led into the dark rooms of the women's court in her new home, and from them she must no more come out. She must not talk aloud nor may her merry laugh be heard. She must not speak at all in the presence of her father-in-law or any other of her husband's relations, but must stand respectfully when they come in or hide herself in another room.

From a life of idleness she has come to a life of work, very hard work, too, for the new arrival is expected to do everything that other people dislike doing, and her mother-in-law, though vigorous in her reproofs, has no words of praise for the little maiden.

Oh, how she longs for her own home and her mother's love! What bitter tears she sheds when smarting from harsh words and probably blows. She is rarely permitted to see her husband, and as he often takes his cue from his mother, she is not sorry.

She cannot read nor yet work. Her only amusement consists in arranging and rearranging her clothes, more especially her jewels.

Too often an even worse fate befalls her. Perhaps before she has grown accustomed to her new life her husband is taken with some childish complaint and, after a brief illness, dies.

Perhaps you may think that this is a good thing for the little widow, as she can return to her father's house and be happy once more.

Alas, no! Fresh miseries, and worse than any she has yet suffered, await her.

No sooner is it certain that the son of the family has breathed his last than some four or five women rush upon his child-wife, drag the ear and nose-rings from her face, careless whether the features are injured or not, ornaments plaited into her hair are torn away without waiting to unfasten the hair, her head is shaved, and she is dressed in a single garment of coarse white, red, or brown cloth. On the way to the funeral, to which she is led behind the other relatives, a woman goes before her shouting to the passers-by to keep their distance from the accursed thing, lest her shadow should fall upon them and bring them trouble.

From this time the poor child must only eat one meal in the twenty-four hours, and that of the coarsest fare, and for two whole days in each month she must taste neither food nor drink. If there should be a feast or a wedding in the house, the widow must keep herself carefully away. Any disagreeable task or menial work is, as a matter of course, left for her, and she must be at the mercy of every inmate of the house.

She has nothing to look forward to, for this miserable life must be hers till death ends it. There is no escape for her, no other way in which she can go. It is a happy thing for her if her more fortunate sisters-in-law shall have obtained their husbands' leave to get the white lady to come and teach them to work. It is true that she will not be permitted to share in the lesson, but she will hear the good news that the teacher never fails to repeat of another life beyond the grave, where sorrow and suffering are unknown and where joys untold will be the lot of all. She will hear, too, of the Blessed One Who has prepared a home for the homeless, and Who will and does love even the despised widow and will comfort and befriend her, though no one else does.

Such tidings must indeed be like cold water in a thirsty land. It is sad to think how very few of the widows of India can ever hear them, but must walk their sad path to the end and go out of the world without hope. If the girls of England only realised the needs of their Eastern sisters, they would do their utmost to share with them the good things they themselves enjoy, the best of all being the knowledge of God and of His Son, Who gave Himself for all—the dusky Hindu as well as the fair-haired Saxon.

It is want of thought more than any other thing that leaves the poor Hindu girl to her life of misery without making one effort to help her. There is not one amongst us who cannot do something. Have we done it?