

DURING THE PAST WINTER, which was an unusually severe one at sea, the fish commission succeeded in hatching thirty-five million cod-eggs, bringing the young up by hand, so to speak, to the age of self-feeding adolescence, and turning them loose into the ocean. This crop will be 'ripe' four or five years hence. The fish commission will also attempt to repeople our coastal waters with halibut, the supply of this valuable food-fish having been depleted in waters where it was once common. The attempt will probably be first made to plant the halibut in Chesapeake Bay. Advices just received from New Zealand state that a million and a half white-fish ova, sent by Professor Baird from Northville, Mich., last December, to Sir Julius Vogel of New Zealand, arrived there in January in excellent condition, only five hundred having died.

#### CRUELTY OF OLD CUSTOMS.

WE have several times referred to the case of Rukmibhai, the native lady whose wrongs aroused so general a feeling of sympathy in England and India; but, as the case now appears to be on the point of reaching a crisis, it may be well to recapitulate the facts briefly, as given by the Calcutta correspondent of the *London Times*. Rukmibhai was married, according to Hindoo usage, at the age of eleven, to a youth some years her senior. She remained at her parents' house, was carefully educated, and grew up, according to all accounts, into a refined and highly cultivated lady. Some eighteen months ago she published in the *Times of India*, under the *nom de plume* of 'A Hindoo lady,' a series of forcible and striking letters on the miseries entailed on her sex in India by the barbarous customs of infant-marriage and enforced widowhood. Last year her husband tried to get her to live with him, and, on her refusing, instituted a suit for the restitution of conjugal rights, in the Bombay high court. The case was tried in the first instance by Mr. Justice Pinhey, when, it having been proved that the husband was too poor to support her, was utterly ignorant and uneducated, — in fact, a mere coolie, — and was, moreover, consumptive, the judge expressed the opinion that it would be a barbarous, cruel, and revolting thing to compel her to live with such a man. He further held that such suit could not lie under Hindoo law, and dismissed it.

The husband appealed, and the case was argued before the chief justice and Mr. Justice Bayley. Those learned judges, while expressing their entire sympathy with Rukmibhai, felt compelled to rule that Mr. Justice Pinhey was wrong in law,

and remanded the case to the lower court for trial on its merits. It has now been reheard before Mr. Justice Farran. Rukmibhai's counsel could only repeat that his client had never consented to the marriage, and never regarded the man as her husband; that the husband was poor, ignorant, and unhealthy; and that if ordered to return to him she would be forced to disobey, and was prepared to take the consequences. The court had no option save to pass an order that she should join her husband within a month. Should she fail to do so, she would be liable to six months' imprisonment. The case has excited much sympathy among the Anglo-Indian community. The English newspapers are publishing articles and letters on the subject, and steps are being taken in Bombay to raise a fund on her behalf. Among the native community, however, hardly a single voice, except that of Mr. Malabari, a Parsee gentleman, has been raised in her favor, and the so-called reformers who agitate loudly for representative institutions, etc., say no word for the alteration of the cruel law which the Bombay court has been reluctantly compelled to enforce.

Upon this case the *Times* comments as follows: "There can be no doubt to which side opinion in this country will incline. Our correspondent tells us a tale of monstrous wrong and of injustice in the disguise of law. But the disguise, unfortunately, is impenetrable. The law is the law, and in the view of Rukmibhai's fellow-countrymen there is nothing shocking or revolting in the end which it has been employed to serve. The Hindoo marriage-law can claim, with justice, to have the sanction of immemorial usage. Whether it is based or not on a correct interpretation of the sacred books, — and there is room for grave doubt on this point, — it has prevailed for some thirty centuries, and it is closely interwoven with the moral and religious sentiments of the people. Religion pronounces that every Hindoo girl must be married. The parent who has an unmarried daughter of full age in his house is not only an offender against social usage, but is guilty of a religious crime, threatened with punishment in a future state, and one which his outraged neighbors will not be satisfied to leave to its deferred theological sanction. The father would be a degraded man. His daughter, therefore, must be married to some one, and if no fit person is forthcoming, she must be joined to some unfit person, and this at the earliest age possible, so as to settle the matter and make things safe for the father. Rukmibhai has been treated with somewhat exceptional favor in having had her marriage ceremony put off until she was eleven years of age. Many

Hindoo girls are married much earlier, in their seventh or eighth year, and once married, there is no escape possible for them. Wifedom may be a revolting servitude, but widowhood is a living death. The widow is an outcast, with no civil rights and no social standing. Her proper place would have been on her husband's funeral pile, but since suttee has been forbidden, a fate more cruel, an agony more prolonged, has been the appointed lot of the woman who survives her lord. Now, whatever we may think of this system, it is quite certain that it commends itself to Hindoo feeling. So strong is the sentiment in favor of it that Lord Dufferin has not ventured to attempt a change in the law. He has sounded native opinion on the subject; he has consulted the local administrations, and the replies he has received have been unanimous against any legislative interference. Rukmibhai is, therefore, a wife in the eye of the law, and a wife she must remain.

"The present feeling of the Hindoo community in favor of the existing marriage-law has been signified in a variety of ways. When there was talk of the possibility that the government might interfere to change the law, a large meeting was held at Bombay to protest against such a course. It was not unanimous, but the voice of the majority was given, not only against a compulsory change in the law, but in support of the law, which they cherished as being of social and religious importance. The daily conduct of the people is in agreement with this declaration. They inflict the social penalties which are the main sanction of the law, and without which the law would speedily fall into disuse. But as long as there is a minority of dissentients, social penalties are not very dreadful to those who can dare to face them. The meeting at Bombay shows us only what the men think, and it shows us that even they are not entirely of one mind. It tells us nothing about the women. We know from Rukmibhai's case that there is one woman, at least, who has cut herself free from the superstitions and prejudices of her country. As education spreads, and as the medical missions to women begin to bear the full fruit which we may expect from them, the number of the emancipated will grow. Hindoo women will learn the rights of their sex elsewhere, and will demand a share in them for themselves. It is the women who suffer under the present Hindoo marriage-law, and it is from one of their number that the first act of open rebellion has come. We trust that the example will be of service towards a general enfranchisement of the sex. When the day comes at which the women refuse to be bound by the tyrannical rule imposed upon them, the men may

resolve as they will, but they will be forced to yield nevertheless; and we are quite sure that the sacred books will be found quite elastic enough to justify both parties, the rebels and the consenters to the rebellion. The process of change may be slow. The customs of thirty centuries are not to be uprooted at a stroke. It will be enough if there is some progress made. If Rukmibhai finds even a few who will support her in her stand, she will have dealt no light blow at the law which has driven her to revolt."

#### PARIS LETTER.

THE sugar-beet industry in northern Germany is in great apprehension, owing to the destructive effects of a newly described parasite, a nematoid worm, which, according to M. A. Girard's recent paper read before the Academy of sciences, is doing great damage in the beet-fields. This worm is found at the end of the roots, in the so-called 'suckers' of the smaller radicles, and uses for its own benefit all the alimentary matters absorbed by the roots. The consequence is, that the plant soon withers and dies. But not so the animal. It is ploughed out of ground to be swallowed by any chance animal. It is finally expelled, in good order, perhaps in a beet-field, where it immediately begins again its depredations. No method is yet known for the destruction of this parasite. It is, however, of some value to know how it lives.

An interesting paper on therapeutics has been published by M. Jacobelli, who is trying to cure pulmonary tuberculosis by means of inhalation of caustic vapors, believing they will cause the ulcers on the lungs to heal. No good results have yet been detected, and it does not seem likely that any will be obtained. Unless the vapors kill the bacillus, there does not seem to be any possibility of a useful influence. Tuberculosis is the result of the presence of the bacillus; and so long as this microbe remains in the body, tubercular symptoms must be present. As the old saying goes, '*Sublata causa, tollitur effectus*,' and in this case it is not the cause, but a symptom only, that, very uselessly it seems, is being combated.

The French government has recently obtained from Greece permission to prosecute archeological investigations in what remains of Delphi. This city was, except Olympia, the most important sanctuary of ancient Greece, and it contained an abundance of art-specimens, which made it quite a magnificent gallery. It is generally believed that the remains of the temple of Delphi, at present covered by a small fort, contain many specimens of great interest for archeology and art. The American government petitioned for