

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

the same privilege, but was forestalled by the French delegates, owing to the perseverance of MM. de Mouy and de Montholon. Whether French or American workers do the work, matters little: the essential thing is, that it be well done and profitable to archeology.

A recent paper read at a meeting of the Biological society spoke at length of the possibility of obtaining glass or crystal lenses thick enough to resist a pressure of a thousand atmospheres. In order to study *de visu* the influence exerted on animals by high pressures, it was desired to fix in an iron or steel apparatus a lens allowing a constant supervision of what was going on inside. Quartz was first used, but it could not withstand more than four or five hundred atmospheres. Then glass was used, and also a different manner of securing it. The results were very good. By means of the leather half-cylinder used in hydraulic presses, the glass lens was very well held and made fast, and the lens itself (fifteen millimetres thick and forty in diameter) supported a pressure of a thousand atmospheres without the slightest inconvenience.

The first two numbers of the *Annales de l'institut Pasteur* have been published, under Professor Duclaux's direction. They contain much good material. In the first number there is an interesting letter from Pasteur, concerning anti-rabic inoculations in general. The second number contains a paper by M. Roux on culture-methods for antirabic microbes, which will be of use to many. Dr. Gamaleïa has contributed a long and very interesting paper on paralytic rabies, showing that this form of the disease, considered uncommon, and believed by M. Peter to result only from experimental rabies, is in fact common, and has been frequently met with by himself and others.

The vine-growers of Algeria are now seriously troubled by the destruction caused in their vineyards by an insect, *Altica ampelophaga*, which threatens to become a curse, very troublesome, but less dangerous than phylloxera has been to continental vineyards. This insect is becoming very numerous, and its effects are considerable already. In some places more than a third part of the whole production is destroyed by it. It feeds on grape-vine leaves only, eating them as fast as they appear, and ultimately killing the vine. As it is a very prolific insect, giving over five generations in a single summer, much is to be feared from it. During the winter it hides in recesses under the bark of trees, under dead leaves, in the earth, etc. Many methods have been tested to destroy it, but those that are good cost too much. This plague has been long known in

Spain. In mediaeval times public prayers were ordered in Andalusia when the insects became too numerous. It is unnecessary to say that no results whatever were noticed, and even Catholic Spain now deems it better policy to try and fight the plague without asking for supernatural aid.

At a recent meeting of the Biological society, M. Ch. Ozanam presented a paper on the use of carbonic acid as an anaesthetic. The carbonic acid, mixed with air, is inhaled. The anaesthesia so induced is a very complete one, without danger, and may last a long time. M. Ozanam has used this method in operations on man, and is quite satisfied with the result. These facts have been confirmed by M. Grihant. It must be noticed that the anaesthetic properties of carbonic acid have long been known. Carbonic acid was most likely the first anaesthetic used, as it has been surmised that the anaesthesia induced by the physicians of ancient Egypt and Greece was due to the carbonic acid evolved by the contact of vinegar and marble.

M. E. Bérillon has recently published an excellent little book giving an accurate account of Paul Bert's work in physiology. It is equally readable for scientists and the general public. The principal results of M. Bert's work in the various branches of physiology are analyzed and explained in a very clear and correct manner, and a list of his principal contributions is appended.

A new medical paper has just been started by Professor Grancher of the Paris medical school. It is the *Bulletin medical*, and is expected to prove a success. Medical papers are generally of little value in France, save, of course, those which contain only original matter. The papers intended to keep practitioners well posted upon the progress of medical science are very incomplete. None can compare with the *Lancet* or *British medical journal*, or with the best American papers. Many of them are worth nothing, and it is a wonder they contrive to live. The *Bulletin medical* has correspondents abroad in great number, and contains a great deal of matter in the shape of original contributions, chemical lectures, reviews of books and scientific papers, society transactions, etc. It is published twice a week. V.

Paris, March 9.

#### GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

##### Asia.

The Russians and the English are equally earnestly engaged in exploring central Asia. Mr. A. D. Carey of the Bombay civil service is now making a journey of considerable interest. *Nature* says, "Mr. Carey left India in May, 1885, and