WOMEN AND EMPIRE, 1750–1939

Edited by
Susan K. Martin, Caroline Daley,
Elizabeth Dimock, Cheryl Cassidy and
Cecily Devereux

HISTORY OF FEMINISM

ROUTLEDGE

WOMEN AND EMPIRE, 1750–1939

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

WOMEN AND EMPIRE, 1750–1939

Primary Sources on Gender and Anglo-Imperialism

Edited by

Susan K. Martin, Caroline Daley, Elizabeth Dimock, Cheryl Cassidy and Cecily Devereux

Volume IV

India

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Edition Synapse

First published 2009
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN, UK

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Simultaneously published in Japan
by Edition Synapse
2-8-5 Uchikanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0047

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Typeset in Times by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Women and empire, 1750–1939 : primary sources on gender and Anglo-imperialism / edited by Cheryl Cassidy . . . [et al.] .
p. cm. – (The history of feminism)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
1. Great Britain–Colonies–History–Sources. 2. Women–Great Britain–History–Sources. 3. Women–Commonwealth countries–Colonies–History–Sources. 4. Sex role–Great Britain–Colonies–History–Sources. 5. Imperialism–Social aspects. I. Cassidy, Cheryl.
DA16.W86 2008
305.409171′24109034–dc22
2008009463

ISBN13: 978–0–415–31092–5 (set)
ISBN13: 978–0–415–31096–3 (hbk) (Volume IV)

ISBN13: 978–4–901481–95–3 (set: Japan)
DOI: 10.4324/9781003101888

ES Series – Historical Sources of Women's Studies

Publisher's note
The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original documents may be apparent.

CONTENTS

PART 2
Philanthropy and Missionary Life

PART 3
The Zenana and Women of Colour

INTRODUCTION

In 1912, Sarojini Naidu, Indian poetess, political activist, first governor of the state of Uttar Pradesh, as well as wife, mother, orator, and envoy, published a book of poems, *The Bird of Time*, which captured the rhythms and images of the India she cherished. Perhaps a metaphor for the long century of British rule, one of Naidu's poems, 'An Indian Love Song', tells of a young woman refusing her lover's addresses because, 'The feud of old faiths and the blood of old battles sever thy people and mine' (Naidu 1912). Feuds and battles certainly characterized events in India beginning in the first third of the nineteenth century and continuing until India's independence in the 1940s. And many of the clashes in India throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth did indeed 'sever' Naidu's people from the British and Americans who travelled, occupied, evangelized, and succoured on the subcontinent. Yet, in significant ways, the events that created conflicts between Westerners and the peoples of India inevitably connected both groups, especially when seen through women's eyes.

The collection of which this volume is a part provides an anthology of women's voices that enlarges, refines, and defines the self, the landscape, and the other. The selections of women's writing in this volume are important additions to the historical record, particularly as the selected texts retrieve relatively unknown or forgotten female voices. The texts provide us with alternative perspectives to historical events that will help us understand how women thought about their lives and how women perceived events in India during the turbulent hundred years between 1830 and 1930. Despite current research on women in colonial contexts, there exists no anthology of documents representative of the broad themes included in this volume (nor indeed for the majority of work represented in this set). By including documents from a variety of women writing within colonial contexts, this volume represents intertextual as well as intercultural histories of women, locating

Please note: The page numbers listed in this text refer to the original page number of the documents

complex discourses that are connective rather than authoritative (Bakhtin 1981; Kristeva 1986; Heilbrun 1988).

The writing in this volume on India reflects a variety of discourses that combine literary and narrative forms with autobiographical and evangelical genres (Mills 1991; Melman 1992; Schriber 1995). Unlike rhetoric more common to Western male discourse with its binary oppositions between 'we', the civilized, and 'they', the other who must be objectified, the women's writing in this volume permitted a connective rather than an antithetical framework to emerge, producing what Chaudhuri and Strobel argue was a 'complex dynamic of complicity and resistance' (1992: 7). As Mary Suzanne Schriber (1995: xxiii) suggests, women's writing was 'something of a literary carpetbag' that reflected a flexibility of perspectives in the writers. Where traditional discourse supports a premise with logical proofs to establish a perspective, the disposition of meaning in women's writing was achieved through a centripetal structure, where factual information was combined with a variety of genres to move readers in an internally circular manner to the perspective or perspectives authorially inscribed.

The heterogeneity of women's discourse in this volume is underscored by its informality and its novelty, producing alternative images of the Orient, representations that are an indication of discourses gendered as heterogeneous constructs of the self and other (Mills 1991: 36–9; Chaudhuri and Strobel 1992: 21; Lewis 1996: 237). The narratives and accounts, whether fictional or expository, not only reveal a womanly gaze, but create sites where reflections about gender, class, and other are mediated through self-revelatory prose that is remarkably different from traditional male discourse. Moreover, because so much of the historical record of the subcontinent has been produced by male historians, presenting a female perspective to traditional historiography offers academicians and the public alternative perspectives to entrenched interpretations of historical events.

Central to this project is the notion that meaning is made through the negotiation of text and reader, and that meaning can be clarified through our understanding of the intellectual and social contexts in which writers compose. Carolyn Heilbrun (1988) argues that women experience the world differently than men, and that it is in this difference that perspectives move beyond the binary and into complex perceptions and observations. Certainly, as Anne McClintock, in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (1995), has argued, women and men experienced empire and colonialism differently, and gender ideology is a determinant in their experiences. British and American women saw their presence in India as operating both within and without gender ideology: in some cases, their presence provided 'a civilizing mission' designed to elevate heathens to Western status, while in other instances their presence supported British hegemonic control of the subcontinent; yet, the presence of British and American women challenged conventional gender ideology when women moved beyond gender

constraints to grasp opportunities for independent, professional lives (Mills 1991; Burton 1992, 1996; Melman 1992; Schriber 1995; Robert 1996).

The female writers collected in this volume wrote extensively about their experiences in India. All the writers, even those of colour, were, at times, travellers to India, within India, and beyond India. While some women were sent by evangelical societies to convert, educate, and elevate heathens, others travelled with husbands for military or administrative reasons. Still others travelled to India as explorers or adventurers. Although many of the writers featured here are European or American white women, this volume also includes texts by Indian women of colour, writing on female life in India, that inform, and at times, subvert, our images of the effects of colonialism on the subcontinent. Writers such as Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati, who championed Indian orphans, or political leader and poet Sarojini Naidu not only published widely but broke caste barriers as well. These and other women of colour, writing within and beyond the subcontinent, shape our understanding of an India seen through non-Western eyes (Sarasvati 1901; Naidu 1912).

To illustrate the diversity of female perspectives from the 1830s through to the early decades of the twentieth century, I have divided this volume into six thematic parts:

1. Travel, adventure, and social life
2. Philanthropic and missionary life
3. The zenana and women of colour
4. Military experiences
5. Professional lives in medicine
6. Literary accounts of India.

Despite my best efforts to place articles, extracts, travel sketches, and other memorabilia into rigid categories, the thematic sections I have created remain slippery in their resistance to artificial topical boundaries. For instance, Western women in mission writing about Indian women in the zenana (seclusion) often moved beyond the exotic to discuss professional opportunities for women. Writers such as Mary Carpenter wrote enthusiastically about travel in India and passionately about her mission to educate women and children in India. As my own publications and others have argued, many female missionary texts from the subcontinent not only discussed evangelical pursuits, but also provided volumes of information on schools, hospitals, and itinerant travel throughout the subcontinent (Hill 1985; Lewis 1996; Robert 1996; Cassidy 2001, 2002).

In significant ways, the voices in this book provide us with a greater understanding of the intercultural as well as intra-cultural perspectives lodged in women's writing. The extracts indicate how intimately connected the professional, evangelical, and social worlds of women in India were, and how women often moved between those worlds without abandoning the gender

ideology of the time. Apart from texts describing professional endeavours, writing which includes women's recollections of the Sepoy Mutiny (1857) or extracts which offer vivid accounts of illness, death, and despair as well as descriptions of Indian, American, and British social conduct give readers distinctly feminine perspectives of lives (and deaths) in India during the nineteenth century. Important to investigating meaning in texts, then, is an understanding of how authors construct their ideas. In this volume, the histories of British, American, and Indian women's lives intersect with kinds and processes of imperial and colonial governance, and cultural formations, often in dramatic and unforeseen ways. While the women writing in this volume were not explicitly writing about questions of power, gender, class, and race, their reflections on their lives and the events they encountered as travellers, missionaries, doctors, wives, and mothers necessarily had an impact on these issues both within and beyond India's boundaries.

Part 1 Travel, adventure, and social life

British and American travel to India became more formalized in the eighteenth century with the establishment of the British East India Company. By the early nineteenth century, British and American women were travelling to India as missionaries, as military or civil servant wives, as medical or educational professionals, and many journeyed as adventurers. Of these female travellers, most followed husbands, as did Harriot Georgina Blackwood, Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, and Mrs Robert Moss King, the wife of a British civil servant. Others, such as the Hon. Nora Beatrice Blyth Gardner and Mrs Guthrie, journeyed with husbands for sport and adventure (see item nos. 2, 3, 4, and 6). However, a few women travelled alone, seeking perhaps adventure or an enlargement of their sphere. Christina Sinclair Bremner, although a 'bluestocking' and an editor of the *Woman's Herald* (formerly the *Woman's Penny Paper*), levelled a pragmatic gaze at the landscape and inhabitants of India (see item no. 1). Mrs Pearl Mary Craigie, who published under the pseudonym of John Oliver Hobbes (see item no. 5), left an unhappy marriage (she referred to married life as 'living with a boa constrictor' p. 4) and related her travel adventures ('our party brought between us forty-seven tons of dresses and uniforms for the Durbar festivities'), offering pithy commentary on social life in Delhi.

Travel in any circumstance in the nineteenth century was fraught with dangers; yet despite floods, earthquakes, tigers, and other difficulties, women actively engaged in recording their experiences. However, women's writing did more than merely document events. At times, their writing defined and invented roles for themselves, offering no perpetuation of neat categories. Unlike men whose business or military affairs brought them to India, women often accompanied husbands, recording in their perceptions of the Orient the rigours of travel in a colonial setting. Their travel journals, published to

great enjoyment in the reading public, attempted to acquaint the public with exotic events, places, or peoples encountered in India. Inevitably, their perceptions helped refine and extend traditional gender ideology; after all, riding elephants and shooting tigers or living in military camps was the stuff of both romance and adventure. In her *Life in Western India* (1881), Mrs Guthrie (Katharine Blanche Guthrie) details the aftermath of a tiger shoot in excruciating detail with descriptions of the disposal of a tiger's carcass (see item no. 4). In another extract, despite bitterly cold weather in Northern India, the Hon. Nora Beatrice Gardner documents an exciting hunt for a bear (see item no. 3).

Writing at the end of the long century of British and American travel to India, Mrs. Pearl Mary Craigie noted that

> The great success, either in diplomatic, or military, or political, or aristocratic circles abroad, is seldom popular at home. He or she has gained a larger vision, a flexibility in thought, an impatience under arbitrary local pettiness in every disguise. The return of the native means too often the return of the utterly estranged. (1903: 3–4)

Certainly, travel enlarged women's lives and dramatically changed how they interacted at home and abroad (Melman 1992; Schriber 1995). Craigie's 'larger vision' gained through travelling is evident in Christina Sinclair Bremner's account of her travels from the 'hot plains of the Punjab, leaving behind all my friends and Indian acquaintances', to the cool hills of Kasauli near the Himalayas (see item no. 1). Rather than begin with an effusive account of her travels, Bremner recounts how 'unlucky' she is to miss her boat in Egypt, to sleep through her rail stop at Lahore, and to suffer the noise and confusion of an Anglo-Indian lady's unruly children in her rail carriage. Central to her travel narrative are the unremitting heat and discomfort of India. Clean, unspoiled food is as scarce as water. Luggage goes missing:

> Had I been privileged to know that my bearer had only put one box into the luggage van . . . I should have rushed down that platform as madly as the most excited Oriental of them all, for it was my box of dresses that was amissing!

Bremner presents a colourful account of her travels in India often using a satiric voice, moving the reader from well-established images to an alternative reality. She draws a contrast between the entrenched representation of the Anglo-Indian child in the public consciousness who is 'a miserable creature, destitute of spirit and energy; his white face, weary look, and melancholy eye tell the tale of an unsuitable climate' and her encounter with two undisciplined, uncontrollable Anglo-Indian girls in her railway carriage who are not remotely frail. The oppositional framework Bremner creates

between the reality of the two girl 'specimens' who are 'strong, active, talkative, aggressive', and her discussion of entrenched fictionalized images of the frail Anglo-Indian child in the reader's consciousness, create a disconnection between what is known and what is presented as reality. She asks the reader why the Anglo-Indian mother would take the unruly girls from the hot plains to the cooler hills: if the 'fierce heat' of the plains could not 'tame' them, surely the cooler hills would only intensify their 'stock of energy' (p. 2). Like her journey through the Punjab, Bremner's oppositional framework travels throughout her text, progressively layering alternative images of India that enlarge the reader's understanding of the subcontinent.

Travel narratives often glossed over the difficulties and hardships of journeying abroad, giving readers at home a romanticized account of dangers and poor living conditions. Accompanying her civil servant husband, 'the new Collector Sahib' (administrative official of a district), Mrs Robert Moss King (E. Augusta King) kept a diary that catalogued her five years in Northern India (1877–82), focusing on the pleasures and vicissitudes of life on an administrator's circuit. After arriving in India and establishing a household in Meerut, Mrs King and her family moved to a series of camps a mere two months later. Cold weather and mud, noisy and smelly camels, and generally uncomfortable conditions are related in a detached manner. However, when reports of a possible uprising are heard, Mrs King responds: 'there is no doubt we live on a volcano in India, with the elements of an eruption always seething below the surface' (see item no. 6, p. 72). Yet, Mrs King moves rapidly from relating fears of a native uprising to an amusing story about a tiger in a station yard. Her children are mentioned only in passing, and dangers from tigers are quickly dismissed, though she does mention that she 'should like to hear a tiger roar' but that it appears unlikely that she will do so since she is such a 'sound sleeper' (p. 73).

Whereas Mrs King followed her administrator husband from camp to camp in northern India, Harriot Blackwood, Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava accompanied her husband when he became Viceroy of India (1884). Her accounts of formal dinners, parades, afternoon teas, and social obligations depict a very different experience with India and its inhabitants. Detached and formal, her memoirs of her four years in India reflect the official life of an aristocratic government official. Even her accounts of her husband's illnesses reveal the constraints on public behaviour: 'D . . . was quite ill in the night, when his temperature rose to 102.' Yet, the following day, Blackwood remarks blandly that though still ill, her husband 'prepared for his entry into Calcutta', accompanied by a huge military parade (see item no. 2, p. 12). In page after page of her journal, Blackwood recounts social affairs and descriptions of rooms, furnishings, clothing, and landscapes. Yet native Indians are rarely mentioned and when 'native gentlemen' do appear, they disappear quickly. Indian women are even scarcer. As Indira Ghose (1988: 3) suggests, opportunities for Western women to meet Indian

women were proscribed since most Indian wives lived in seclusion, though Ghose notes that some interaction did take place. Despite the formality of her situation, Blackwood's account of life in India is both riveting and revealing, especially in her descriptions of formal visits of Rajahs. Her depictions of their sartorial splendour provide an exotic frame for the uniformity of public life.

Part 2 Philanthropy and missionary life

Part 2 includes extracts from evangelical missionaries from America: samples from the *Congregational Life and Light for Woman* missionary magazine and a chapter from Black evangelical Amanda Smith's *Autobiography*. From England, I have included an early tract from Sara Tucker's *South India Sketches* (1843) which when joined with a later sample from Mary Carpenter (1868) gives a British view of philanthropic efforts in India. Although letters from missionaries overseas to auxiliaries at home were important in the recruitment and funding process of missionary work, missionary letters were also instrumental in enlarging traditional gender ideology and in providing alternatives to established domestic opportunities (Cassidy 2001). Whether American or British, as Anna Johnston notes, 'missionaries were prolific writers. Diaries, reports, letters, memoirs, histories, ethnographies, novels, children's books, translations, grammars, and many more kinds of texts spilled from their pens' (2003: 3). Their writing not only informed readers about details of life overseas, but their texts provided a 'particular insight into the details of domestic arrangements and gender practices denied to their male partners', especially in those areas where only women might enter (Johnston 2003: 7).

Women had traditionally accompanied their husbands to missionary posts in the first part of the nineteenth century. Although married missionary women continued to work in India throughout the nineteenth century, by mid-century, overwhelmed with domestic duties and perceiving the need for additional women to evangelize heathen women in seclusion, married missionary women pressured missionary societies to send single women abroad. In America, by the late 1860s, a large population of educated women had few opportunities for employment to use the expertise in managerial and war relief work gained during the Civil War (Hill 1985: 3; Robert 1996: 130–1). Beginning in 1869, American women in Protestant evangelical denominations formed their own foreign missionary societies, designed to be separate from traditional patriarchal church societies, and each missionary society published its own monthly magazine.[1] Seeking professional lives not available to them at home, girls eagerly attended local and regional auxiliary societies connected to each Protestant female missionary board. While some American girls were informally trained through teaching or nursing experience, as the nineteenth century ended most missionary girls in America were

trained either through missionary schools like the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago or through colleges like Mount Holyoke College or Wellesley College. Beginning in the late 1860s and continuing throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, Protestant evangelical missionary societies sent young, single women supported by missionary societies and trained as doctors, teachers, and administrators alone to India. In America, by 1915, over three million American women were members of at least one missionary society (Hill 1985: 3; Robert 1996: 129).

Although Protestant ideology sanctified the home and glorified the essentialist nature of women, Protestant evangelical gender ideology also encouraged women to evangelize as part of a missiology of 'woman's work for woman'. In offering heathen women (some in seclusion) and children opportunities for Christian salvation and education in Christian morality and cleanliness, Western women could elevate heathen women and children (and ultimately their cultures) to Western standards. The flexibility of evangelical Christianity produced what Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall (1987) suggest was a 'negotiability' between domestic spheres and public agency. In significant ways, the elasticity of missionary work encouraged extended roles for women, allowing women to define themselves as agents within and beyond the domestic sphere.

Each American female missionary society had similar monthly magazines filled with letters from missionary women overseas, inspirational stories, informative articles, and study guides for auxiliaries at home, and each issue linked those abroad with their supporters at home, formulating a distinctively feminine voice of missionary principles (Hill 1985: 88–9). Often exuberant, with an enthusiasm for adventure, letters offered a combination of the autobiographical, evangelical, and narrative for readers at home. Letters from missionary girls were treasured, printed, and reprinted for local and regional missionary societies. In Miss Abbott's extract from the *Congregational Life and Light for Heathen Woman* (see item no. 7), she recounts her journey to Bombay and then gives her impressions of Bombay's 'heat, filth, nakedness, and wickednesses' (p. 81). Lamenting on the poor conditions of the school buildings where she is to live, Abbott remarks lightheartedly: 'I have seen, besides one lizard, two thousand mosquitoes, and two spiders. I will say one thing for the mosquitoes, and that is, they are a very tame lot compared with the Nebraska ones' (p. 82). Like Miss Abbott's letters which suggest an intimacy and confidentiality with readers, Miss Eva M. Swift's long conversational letter from Madura (see item no. 12) attempts to explain to young readers that missionary girls are 'much like many of you at home', with the exception that missionary girls work closely educating heathen girls to Western standards (pp. 180–4).

Where missionary magazines featured letters like those of Abbott and Swift which gave details about their living conditions in India, letters reporting on heathen convert deaths validated the missionary purpose and

encouraged additional funding. In an extended narrative of a young Indian convert, Mrs Hume's letter explained how limited funding for a school was responsible for a child's death (see item no. 10). Other letters, like that of Mrs Bissell's (see item no. 8), offered information on the success of girls' schools through the use of Bible women in India, who as converts were assistants to the missionaries.

Not all missionary women were white. Although born a slave in Maryland and uneducated, Amanda Smith became a well-known itinerant preacher for the Methodist Episcopal Church. From 1878 to 1890, Smith travelled to Europe and Africa, stopping in India to evangelize. Her account of her travel in India combined evangelical, autobiographical, and literary genres to produce a 'carpet bag' of discourses that reflected the salvific effects of missionary work among the heathens, some of which included prophesising (Schriber 1995: xxiii). Central to Smith's autobiography are the elements of the slave narrative: flight from oppression – whether that of sin or bondage – to freedom and salvation. In item no. 11, Smith's evangelizes a British child who embraces Christianity and who subsequently converts an old heathen man. Later in the excerpt, Smith is given two bottles of wine whose presence in her luggage creates a quandary for her. How can she preach temperance when she has alcohol in her lunch basket? In her book on African American itinerant female evangelists, Elizabeth Grammer (2003: 95–7) suggests that Smith's constant wrestling with temptation or with the spiritual exigencies of life as an itinerant preacher is a literary strategy that helps situate Smith in nineteenth-century African American autobiography. Yet, Smith's narrative structure departs from, indeed fractures, the literary genre, creating a series of loosely connected events without a coherent internal narrative. Unlike traditional narratives, Smith's autobiography becomes a set of implied actions where the narrator recedes and the underpinnings of narrative structure are illusive and fragmentary (Grammer 2003: 113–14). Smith's images of India, then, become part of a sustained evangelical fancy where landscapes and people, whether heathen or British or American, become secondary to the internal religious experience.

Arranged as letters to 'a Young Friend', Sarah Tucker's *South India Sketches* (1843) serves as a travelogue to Madras and cities of southern India. Written in an intimate conversational voice, Tucker describes strange conveyances (barks, catamarans, a 'Missouli boat') as well as various local people (see item no. 13). Tucker directly addresses the reader, positioning the reader in the role of the observer: 'At first you will be startled, at finding yourself among men almost as strange in their appearance and as scantily clad as the Catamoran men, from whom just before you had shrunk almost in terror' (p. 7). Unlike traditional narratives, Tucker's informal language creates a connection between the reader's prior knowledge and the unknown Indian landscape of Tucker's letters, situating the reader within the exotic landscape.

Where Sarah Tucker presumed a shared experience with her readership, Mary Carpenter's accounts of her philanthropic travels to India to encourage the education of women and children provided a more formal, yet realistic view of Indian schools. An educational reformer in England, especially for impoverished children, Carpenter made four trips to India between 1866 and 1876. Item no. 9 is from her first volume (1868) and begins with guidelines for female prisoners and then discusses her impressions of various Indian schools. Leaving her examination of schools in Ahmedabad, Carpenter travelled to Serampore to visit a girls' school where she recorded that 'the girls looked intelligent, but it was sad to observe the significant red spot on the foreheads of the little creatures six or seven years old, and to know that the poor children were considered as married, and would shortly be removed from their homes, and placed in the zenana of their husbands' family!' (p. 235). Later, while in Konnegur, Carpenter visited the home of an Indian gentleman where she was impressed with the educational accomplishments of the mother and daughters of the zenana, though she writes that 'the advanced state of the ladies of the family' (p. 239) was due to the gentleman's conversion to Christianity.

Part 3 The zenana and women of colour

Evangelical Protestant Christianity advocated a missiology of 'woman's work for woman' wherein all women were linked globally and only through conversion might degraded women achieve salvation and cultural elevation. To ameliorate the conditions of secluded women was the driving force behind much of the missionary rhetoric of the nineteenth century. As Jennie Fowler Willing exclaimed in the American missionary magazine the *Heathen Woman's Friend*,

> If all men are brothers, all women are sisters. Yes, the wretched widow, looking her last upon this beautiful world through the smoke of her suttee pyre, driven by public opinion to the suicide's plunge into the darkness of the future, and the one throwing her babe to the crocodiles . . . these women are our sisters . . . When we look at the domestic, civil, and religious systems of Pagandom, we sicken at their rottenness. We feel greatly moved to give them the blessings of Christian civilization. (1869: 20)

The narrative of the zenana in missionary and travel writing was ubiquitous throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As an extended symbol of the degradation and isolation of women, the zenana, or purdah, which translates as curtain, became emblematic of the evils of non-Christian lands. A place of seclusion for women with entry permitted only to male family members, the zenana became, according to Joan Jacobs Brumberg

(1984: 115), 'a symbol of enforced female isolation from the world' where indolence and monotony created an intellectual torpor for women. British and American evangelicals as well as travel writers to India stirred readers' imaginations with stories of the lives of heathen women in the zenana. Yet, as Brumberg (1984: 118) suggests, the image of the zenana and the extended discussion of heathen women in seclusion in Western texts might also have been as much about the Western cult of female domesticity as it was about Eastern female degradation. As missionary boards encouraged auxiliaries and members to ameliorate the isolation of women in seclusion and as work by Indian activists, like Pandita Ramabai, for widows and orphans became part of collective knowledge in the West, the notion of the 'flexibility' of separate spheres of influence became more obvious in the gender ideology of the time. However, Antoinette Burton suggests that although Indian women worked to ameliorate conditions for widows, wives, and orphans, 'many British feminists insisted on creating them as passive colonial subjects partly in order to imagine and to realize their own feminist objectives within the context of the imperial nation into which they sought admission' (1992: 151).

Throughout the long public conversation about female heathen degradation, three concerns emerged that drove the action taken to ameliorate the condition of heathen women, especially those in the zenana: intellectual improvement through education, laws to protect women within and beyond the zenana, and freedom from sexual degradation. In this section, the extracts focus first on 'zenana visiting', a common narrative used to relate images of the zenana to readers. In her article from the American missionary magazine *Life and Light for Heathen Woman* (see item no. 16), Mrs Joseph Cook takes readers inside the zenana, examining both the 'idolatrous practices' as well as the 'gleams of that upspringing Aurora which is yet to flood all Asia with light' (p. 60). Cook's penetration into the zenana to visit Hindu and converted widows draws a distinction between the filth of the heathen women's practices and the cleanliness of the converted widows. Cook ends her article with the declaration that the 'The education of women in Asia is a foregone conclusion' because Hindu gentlemen 'are becoming ashamed to have their wives remain in ignorance' (p. 63).

While Mrs Cook's summation about the education of Asian women appeared designed to reassure Western readers that progress was being made in India to elevate women, the extract from Millie Cattell's book *Behind the Purdah*, published in 1916 (see item no. 14), focuses more on the exotic, traditional nature of the zenana, describing its features with a patronizing, imperialist tone. Representing herself as a former governess who worked in the zenana, Cattell draws the reader's attention to how British rule has ensured an end to the tradition of secluding women and that 'jealously guarding the fair no longer exists', though she does opine that a certain amount of 'froth and bubble' must occur before India becomes civilized (p. 3). Cattell reminds visitors of how isolated Hindu women are in the zenana, with

religion their only solace and boredom their only option. Interestingly, Cattell argues that the responsibility for maintaining the zenana lies with Hindu women for 'women keep it [zenana] living and imperious and themselves imprisoned within the veil of the Zenana' (p. 6). Cattell attributes a peculiar amount of power to women in Indian society. Drawing connections rather than oppositions between Hindu women and Western women, Cattell writes of Hindu women as 'our little sisters' whose ignorance and helplessness might be ameliorated into 'one perfect whole' (p. 11). Yet, howsoever missionary or travel writers might attempt to connect Western women and their Indian 'sisters', especially to promote 'woman's work for woman', the portrayal of Indian women as 'other' and degraded remained an integral component of mission and travel literature (Flemming 1989: 137–57).

Where representations of the zenana inspired Western women to mission and travel writers to investigate India, Hindu customs surrounding marriage, widows, and orphans galvanized European, American, and Indian women. Through British and American efforts, early in the nineteenth century (1829), the custom of burning or burying alive Hindu widows (suttee) was abolished, though the practice continued well into the later decades of the century. Shortly before the 1857 Sepoy Rebellion, Hindu widows who had been banned from remarriage, many of whom were children, were allowed by law to remarry, and, in 1891, the age of consent for marriage was raised to protect young girls from early marriage and motherhood (Sarkar 2001). Yet, these changes did not arrive easily, bound as Indian women were by cultural and religious traditions, and many Indian and European women worked tirelessly with widows and orphans to improve their conditions (Midgley 2000).

Joan Jacobs Brumberg (1984: 122) suggests that the public debate about child marriage was an oblique way of discussing sexual exploitation of women, especially the loss of virginity through child marriage. Rallying their readership against 'legalized lust', missionary magazines and philanthropic workers argued forcefully against early marriage, describing how the consequences of early marriage created 'girlless villages' and early ageing (Brumberg 1984: 123–4). Writing in 1869, Congregational missionary Olive Parmelee echoed the concerns of many missionary workers: 'The women marry so very young that they are deprived of all those pretty girlish years from twelve to twenty.'[2] Brumberg (1984: 124) acknowledges that Parmelee's suggestion to 'shelter [girls] very carefully in the home circle for many years' reflected late nineteenth-century American middle-class mores which increasingly encouraged young girls to pursue higher education and to seek more professional roles in society.

British writer Priscilla Chapman, in her 1839 book *Hindoo Female Education*, argued vigorously against Hindu traditions regarding widows. In the extract included in this volume (see item no. 15), Chapman argues that treatment of widows has led 'to the total demoralization of society' in India and that thousands of female children after being forced into early marriages

and then into widowhood, face 'perpetual celibacy' (p. 35). Chapman notes that the reforming principle of Christianity creates a 'slow progress of improvement, by reason, by education, and by enlarged observation' in Hindu men who use this 'immense advantage' to allow Indian women to have the same choices in marriage or remarriage as Western women do (p. 36). Chapman also describes the pathetic state of wives under Indian law, abused by husbands and forced into poverty in old age. Of course, as Barbara Welter (1978) suggests, few European or American women discerned that the differences between themselves and Indian women might be in their 'degrees of bondage', and that any elevating done to heathen women had reciprocal value for the Christian woman. Nor, as Leslie Flemming (1992: 195) observes, did Western women note similarities to their own lives when they criticized the restrictions on Indian women, writing extensively on female physical seclusion and economic dependence on male relatives. Chapman's detailed account of Indian women and children in early nineteenth-century India focused, as so many of the philanthropic and missionary accounts did, on the necessity to educate women and children, especially in the gospels, and thus improve their spiritual and physical lives.

Writing in the female American Methodist magazine the *Woman's Missionary Friend*, Mrs Ada Lee described the cultural constraints on Hindu women to marry off their pre-adolescent daughters (see item no. 18). Lee interviews one young Indian wife who had been unhappily married at 9, but who had subsequently married off her own daughter at the age of 10. When queried by Lee as to why she would subject her own child to an early marriage, the Indian woman explained that 'if we keep our girls until they are twelve, our people refuse to associate with us', often refusing to buy or sell goods to those who did not follow Hindu traditions (p. 116).

Yet, child marriage had more than one evil attached to it. Apart from sexual degradation and seclusion, child marriage often produced child widows, many of whom were under 20 years of age. In her *Western Women in Eastern Lands*, published in 1910, Helen Barrett Montgomery (1910: 60) estimates that there were at that time approximately 400,000 Indian widows under 15 and another 667,000 under 19. Antoinette Burton (1992: 146–8) notes that British women's periodicals were suffused with information about child widows and contained articles on a variety of Indian laws, social practices, and achievements, all pertaining to Indian women, throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Often, papers such as the *Englishwoman's Review* or the *Women's Suffrage Journal* reprinted articles from Indian papers, though few articles contained the voices of Indian women.

Of the many Indian women featured in British and American periodicals, perhaps none was quite as well known as Pandita Ramabai, a social reformer for Hindu widows and children. Born into an intellectual family and educated at Cheltenham Ladies College, Ramabai was the first Indian woman to be called 'Sarasvati' because of her extensive scholarship. She was an active

contributor to British and American missionary magazines and a tireless orator throughout England and America on the plight of Hindu women, and as such her career and activities were covered extensively in the *English Women's Penny Paper* (later the *Women's Herald*, edited for a short time by Christina Bremner) and in the *Englishwoman's Review*. Included here as item no. 17 is an article entitled 'Ramabai', published in the *Woman's Missionary Friend* and written by Lucy Guinness (1865–1906), a British Christian worker in London's East End and founder of the Sudan United Mission. As this article indicates, many readers believed Ramabai's influence transcended cultural differences and linked women globally. Although the article retains elements of the exotic – bare feet, a tiger roaring, jungle sounds – Guinness writes of Ramabai and her school at Poona as a cultural laboratory where heathens progress to Western standards through Christian evangelical intervention. Directly addressing the reader ('you'), Guinness guides the reader through layers of description, narrating Ramabai's progression from the heathen jungle to the Western woman familiar to readers. Illustrations of Ramabai, her daughter Manorama, and a before and after picture of a young heathen widow frame the article's contents.

Pandita Ramabai wrote two books (though a number were written about her): *Stridharma Niti* (1882) and *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (1901). In her chapter on childhood and in the excerpt on married life from *The High Caste Hindu Woman* (item no. 19), Ramabai clarifies for readers the position of girls in high-caste Hindu families. Relating her own as well as others' experiences as daughters and wives, Ramabai creates a portrait of Hindu girl children as particularly unfortunate: they are 'ill-luck' or 'wretched' because of birth order, and all are prey to the vicissitudes of male property rights (pp. 44, 46) (see also Kosambi 1998). Ramabai's discussion of the effects of Hindu traditions on girls focuses on their despised role in society, their 'sullen, morbid and dull' demeanours, and the general malaise throughout Hindu society engendered by these traditional practices (pp. 48–9). Cataloguing appalling examples of the treatment of female children, Ramabai rarely departs from a mild tone. At one point while relating facts about female infanticide, Ramabai notes that the census of 1870 revealed the curious fact that three hundred children were stolen in one year by wolves from within the city of Umritzar, all the children being girls, and this under the very nose of the English government (pp. 53–4).

Yet rather than commenting on this 'curious fact', Ramabai leaves the reader to decide the implications of Hindu practices, ending the chapter by remarking that a later census revealed (not surprisingly) that there are markedly fewer women in India than men (p. 55).

Part 4 Military experiences

Bursting into the public realm, grisly reports of the Sepoy or India Mutiny captivated the British reading public and launched a variety of legends and myths about the perils of life in India. Historical accounts vary as to the causes and progress of the mutiny, yet all agree that a combination of economic, social, religious, and military practices led to the uprising. Tensions between the British East India Company's imperialist objectives and native rulers who resisted territorial encroachments, combined with pressure applied from missionaries and colonial administrators to westernize the population, certainly added to the incendiary environment. The spark that ignited the mutiny appears to have been a real or imagined belief on the part of the Sepoy militias that the grease used in the newly introduced Lee-Enfield rifles was derived from cow or pig fat. Because the cartridge membrane needed to be cut by the teeth before inserting into the rifle, the Sepoys, mainly Hindu or Muslim, considered this procedure offensive. Meerut exploded when Sepoys refused to use the new cartridges. The recollection of the Sepoy Mutiny by Mrs Muter, wife of an army colonel stationed at Meerut, begins on Sunday 10 May 1857 in Meerut when 'a dull sound, very different from that I expected, came over the stillness of Nature around' (see item no. 22, p. 17). Muter establishes an easy rapport with the reader, relating events calmly yet with increasing dismay: 'I faced in the direction of the Native lines, and now in terror and amazement beheld the horizon on fire as if the whole cantonment were in flames' (p. 19). Recalling the activities of the Sepoy mutineers, Muter does not question why they are rebelling, but instead catalogues the slaughter of Anglo-Indians. She disputes reports that focus only on the British retribution on natives, and explains that the provocation for the British retaliation was justified. Her recollections provide blood-thirsty examples of Sepoy mutineers – 'the yelling fiend with dripping sword and hands red with blood, mutilating the bodies of those who had never injured him', a mutilated pile of bodies lies in a burned bungalow, and various bodies remain on road sides (pp. 33–40). Although published more than a half-century after the event, Muter's account serves to reinforce images of the barbarism and savagery of Indian heathens and provides justification for British imperialistic efforts.

Whereas Mrs Muter's account of the Sepoy uprising in Meerut often reflected the rather diffident prose of a military wife (with the exception of her descriptions of British bodies), Mrs Ethel St Clair Grimwood's recollections of the 1891 uprising in Manipur (see item no. 20) communicate the terror and despair of a civilian wife caught up in events beyond her control. Occurring more than thirty years after the Sepoy Mutiny, the 1891 uprising in the district of Manipur followed a palace revolt. The British Chief Commissioner sent troops to restore order, an act which led to a series of blunders, ending with Mrs Grimwood's husband, the Political Agent, and

his companions murdered by a mob. Mrs Grimwood fled for her life not knowing her husband's fate. The excerpt included here begins in the midst of the uprising and reflects the confusion as Mrs Grimwood and her companions realize their peril. Mrs Grimwood's account is a strikingly personal document, providing readers with an intimate perspective of both the danger and the despair she faced. Beginning with 'the sudden advent of a bullet through the office window', Mrs Grimwood admits that 'my heart went to my mouth with fright' (p. 198). Yet, she maintains her composure, later stating that 'from time to time stray bullets came over our heads where we sat down at the telegraph office. I thought it was very exciting then' (p. 200). However, as the danger increased, and as plans were begun to organize a ceasefire, Grimwood's husband sent her to Cachar before he went to his death. Her final sentence in this excerpt reflects her despair: 'I never saw him again' (p. 214). Mrs Grimwood returned to England where she was awarded a Royal Red Cross insignia for her bravery, and was received by the Queen.

Unlike Mrs Muter and Mrs Grimwood, whose books were solely devoted to the 1857 and 1891 mutinies, Mrs Mary Weitbrecht's *Missionary Sketches in North India with References to Recent Events* (see item no. 24), published in 1858, allocated a mere chapter to the events of the mutiny, relying less on personal experience and more on published (often erroneous) reports (see Johnston 2003: 85). Primarily a volume of missionary work in India, Weitbrecht's account of the Sepoy Mutiny offers only oblique references to the uprising, focusing instead on the plight of missionaries in the affected areas of Calcutta. Casting the missionaries in opposition to the dark, heathen forces of the Hindu population, Weitbrecht validates Protestant evangelical ideology imperatives through a catalogue of Christian interventions before and after the uprising.

The British and American public were avid readers of travel narratives, especially those devoted to military endeavours that included exotic landscapes. Mrs Leopold Paget (Georgiana Theodosia Fitzmoor-Halsey) and Mrs Colin Mackenzie (Helen Douglas), British officers' wives, accompanied their husbands from camp to camp, experiencing the dangers and deprivations of army life. Mrs Paget's excerpt (item no. 23) contains short pieces from her journal (1857–9) and documents her daily life amid the many dangers the military faced from local inhabitants. In an excerpt from her three-volume journal (item no. 21), Mrs Mackenzie writes of camp life with the constant movement from one site to another as a backdrop to encounters with tigers and surly villagers. Written in a brusque, rather curt tone, Mackenzie does not elaborate on events, but instead offers a rather clipped, informative narrative of life in the camp. At one point, she finds a tiger near her tent, and exclaims: 'A large tiger stood still within twenty yards of my palki, and all the shouts of the bearers could not at first make him move.' Rather than remark on her frightening experience, Mackenzie continues, 'Went to the kind Payes, and greatly enjoyed a few days' rest in their

company' (p. 388). Whether the 'rest' was a response to her fright or merely a social call, Mackenzie does not say.

Part 5 Professional lives in medicine

The degraded condition of Indian women and their plight in the zenana encouraged Western women not only to engage in salvific efforts on their behalf, but also to offer medical care. In England, there was an increasing need for female doctors to attend those women and children in the zenana as well as provide medical care for the general population. Yet educational opportunities, especially for women seeking medical licences, remained unattainable. By the early 1880s, Russell Gurney's Enabling Act had ensured that medical examining boards could license women, and as an increasing number of young women trained and then worked in India, the need for female medical help was recognized and supported. Antoinette Burton (1996) discusses the rise of female medical professionals in England and notes the importance of the Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava's (Harriot Blackwood) Fund (the National Association for Supplying Female Medical Aid to the Women of India), which was established in 1885 and provided support for women's medical training and placement. Predating the Dufferin Fund by a decade, the London School of Medicine for Women (LSMW) was created in response to British women's desire for medical training when established institutions would not admit or license women. Fanny Butler, a member of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, was one of the early graduates of the LSMW, and the first female British medical doctor to practice in India (1880) (Burton 1996: 377–8).

By 1910, when Winifred Heston's book was published in England and America, a number of lady doctors and nurses practised in India. Heston was a self-styled 'bluestocking', and her narrative of medical work in India, like many of the other accounts of work in India, was framed as a series of letters to a particular friend (see item no. 25). Heston begins her narrative by drawing an opposition between herself – 'a pretty specimen for a missionary, with my fondness for dainty dresses and things of the world generally' – and the archetypal female doctor: 'wearing short skirts, short hair, a budding moustaches and talking in a deep basso profundo voice' (p. 11). Throughout the extracts included here, Heston casts herself in a rather imperious role, offering vivid descriptions of the filth and social conditions of her patients. In her lengthy description of a Hindu child bride, Heston's role is that of both physician and rescuer, though she does give some credit to a male fellow doctor who intercedes on the child's behalf.

Leslie Flemming (1992: 197–8) argues that Christian women working in India from the 1870s through the 1930s, while expressing disgust at the extreme poverty and filth of local people, had little cognizance of the cultural or religious beliefs tied to social or economic behaviours. Missionary physicians

such as Winifred Heston were schooled in Western health traditions and seemingly unaware or dismissive of traditional medicine. This attitude is apparent later in Heston's extract where she discusses traditional cataract removal conducted by native doctors and contrasts it with the surgery she conducts on the patient, all the while dismissing traditional medicine. Missing in Heston's narrative is a sense of wonder or excitement at the exotic; instead, her prose is rather supercilious and a sense of arrogance permeates her narrative.

If Winifred Heston's account of medical work in India was imperious, Catharine Grace Loch's nursing journal was unremittingly sympathetic and graphic. Raised as a gentleman's daughter, Loch was a popular, active young woman whose father refused to send her to nursing school until she was 25, perhaps believing her nursing ambition would wane by then. After graduating from the Royal County Hospital at Winchester (1879), Loch worked in various hospitals, and then was sent as a Lady Superintendent to the Indian Nursing Service at Banglalore in 1888. She became the Senior Lady Superintendent in Queen Alexandra's Military Nursing Service for India, eventually returning home to England, her health broken, where she died in 1904. The extracts included here (item no. 26) document in journal form the relentless heat, dirt, and insects she and other nurses encountered as well as the exhausting work of nursing in an understaffed station. Drunken soldiers, poor living quarters, fever, and death march through Loch's wards. Appeals for more money, more staff, and more medicines are met with resistance from the authorities. Yet, throughout her journal, Loch's intelligent, sensitive voice catalogues the vicissitudes and challenges of nursing work in India, offering no criticisms of natives and no second thoughts on her choice of career.

Education, medical work, and evangelization were integral components in 'woman's work for woman'. In America, Sarah Josepha Hale, the editor of the *Godey's Lady's Book*, was part of a large female assemblage attempting to combine evangelical ideology with professional roles. Hale used her magazine to promote female education and married women's property rights, and Hale was instrumental in sending the first female missionary doctor overseas. Despite Sarah Hale's work in medical mission, it was not until 1869 that the American Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal sent Dr Clara Swain to India (Hill 1985: 44). Swain, who arrived in Bareilly, India in 1870, published her journal and letters home in 1909, though she wrote frequently to Methodist (the *Heathen Woman's Friend*) and to Congregational (*Life and Light for Heathen Women*) missionary magazines. Her book, *A Glimpse of India*, is filled with examples of her patients, most of whom are native women and children whose illnesses are grave and incurable. As a missionary doctor, Swain's approach to medicine was both evangelical and scientific. However, her descriptions, while graphic in their diagnosis, do not presume any judgement on her native patients, many of whom refuse her medicines because of religious views. In one lengthy

extract (see item no. 27), Swain describes a high-caste Hindu woman who has 'been fasting for eight months because of the death of the head of the family'. Ill, but refusing to take medicine, the Hindu woman begs Swain to assure her that there is no wine or beef in the medicines. Swain is able to reassure the woman, and administers to her, exclaiming, 'this woman seems to have led a very pure and holy life, according to her religion' (p. 133). Throughout her memoirs of medical work in India, Swain writes of native patients with respect and tolerance. Although she does hope for their Christian salvation, Swain appears to acknowledge that cultural differences are merely superficial characteristics and that illness and despair link all people.

Part 6 Literary accounts of India

Travel narratives, letters, and other memorabilia fixed images of India and the Orient in the minds of reading public. The informality of women's writing, as it crossed genres and combined aspects of the literary, the autobiographical, and the evangelical, not only reflected a flexibility of perspectives in the writers, but evoked in literary theorist Julia Kristeva's terms 'a collection of associated images and ideas' (1986: 72). In significant ways, women's writing about India, far from promoting a unitary reality, attempted to move readers beyond the known to immerse them in the exotic. Novels, poetry, and other fictional works were instrumental in situating ideas of the Orient in the print culture of the nineteenth century. Beginning with Letitia Landon's (L.E.L.) poetry from the early years of the nineteenth century, Part 6 focuses on fictional representations of the Orient that enhanced images already in the public consciousness, connecting the known to the unknown with greater clarity and resolution.

Letitia Landon (1802–38) was one of the most widely read poets of the early nineteenth century. Published in the *Literary Gazette*, Landon wrote hundreds of poems during her short life, and was one of the few women in the nineteenth century to attain financial independence through her writing. 'The Zenana' (item no. 28), originally published in Fisher's *Drawing Room Scrap Book* (1834), tells the tale of Nadira enclosed in the zenana, dreaming of 'mountain airs and mountain streams', and her husband, Murad, whose life is bound by sword and battle. Jean Fernandez explains in her essay on Landon that the poet is lodged in the poetess tradition and her poetry offers readers the 'complexity of the aesthetic' (2005: 35). Certainly Landon's poetry is deeply entrenched in Romanticism with an idealized view of life and love within the zenana.

Irish-born Sydney Owenson's (Lady Morgan) early nineteenth-century tale *The Missionary* (item no. 30) takes readers to a romanticized India of the seventeenth century. There, amid the exotic landscapes of her text, Owenson unfolds a love story between a Western missionary, Hilarion, and Luxima, a beautiful (and alluring) Indian prophetess. Bound by cultural

and religious mores, Hilarion and Luxima's tale becomes a critical examination of the effects of Western imperialism and hegemonic imperatives. Embracing romanticism (and a stiff dose of bodice-ripping, Gothic narrative), Owenson combines the sensual with the exotic, providing readers with a story of both redemption and arousal. When the Portuguese missionary Hilarion views the priestess Luxima not only does he see 'a rapturous vision' but 'he had seen nothing to which he could assimilate, or by which compare her'. Owenson decribes Luxima with flowers entwining her 'arms and bosom'. Her entire figure combines softness with bashfulness, though suffused with blood, and mystery and grace. Seeing her, the missionary 'stood rapt in silent contemplation of her person, and wondering that one so fit for heaven should yet remain on earth' (pp. 208, 210–11). The vision of Luxima does not, however, prevent the missionary from attempting to convert her; indeed, Luxima's attractions appear to encourage Hilarion's evangelizing.

Of all the fictional works that captured the Victorians' imaginations, perhaps none were as widely read and embraced as novels purporting to be first-hand accounts of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Like many of the fictional works surrounding the Mutiny, Florence Wagentreiber's *Reminiscences of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857* was published long after the events took place, and its 1911 publication indicates a sustained interest in the Mutiny, especially as British colonial efforts became more strained in India and in other parts of the Empire. Wagentreiber's account is problematic not only because it was published fifty years after the Mutiny, but also because it appears to be a fictionalized account of Wagentreiber's mother's escape from Delhi with her family. Although purported to be a true account, the detailed dialogue, the particulars of atrocities, and the narrative structure of the account all indicate a fictionalized construct of the Mutiny. Wagentreiber's mother, Elizabeth, was the Anglo-Indian daughter of James Skinner, a military adventurer, himself half Indian, who had numerous Indian wives (sixteen are suggested) and mistresses. To escape from Delhi, Elizabeth Skinner frequently invoked her father's name and her part-Indian lineage as she shepherded her family out of rebel-held Delhi. The excerpt included here (item no. 31) gives a stirring account of the adventures and near disasters the family experiences as they flee to safety. Wagentreiber's mother is portrayed as a hardy, intrepid woman whose 'keen insight and better judgment' as well as her lineage was invaluable in their escape (p. 14).

As the nineteenth century ended, Westernized Indians, schooled in missionary or government schools, acquired professional roles. Sarojini Naidu, 'The Nightingale of India', was known in Britain more for her poetry than for her political accomplishments, though her political activism was legendary. Naidu's professional life intersected many of the significant names of British and Indian politics. A fierce proponent of Gandhi, Naidu was a leader of the Indian nationalist movement, and was instrumental through

her oratory and through her work in the Indian National Congress (president in 1925) in securing Indian independence. She was one of the founders of the Women's India Association, and was a colleague of Margaret Cousins and Annie Besant. In 1947, two years before her death, she became the first governor of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Publishing three books of poetry between 1905 and 1917, Naidu was influenced by Tennyson, Shelley, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and her poetry contains a lyric musicality, filled with images both real and idealized. In the three poems included as item no. 29 – 'The Bird of Time', 'A Love Song from the North', and 'Song of Radha the Milkmaid' – Naidu appears to lament an idealized past that remains beneath the images woven into the text. In 'The Bird of Time' Naidu asks the 'bird', perhaps a metaphor for India's past, if the songs it sings are those of 'poignant sorrow and passionate strife', or are from the vagaries of human experience. Central to the poem is the natural world presented by the bird, forests, and tides, and the manifestations of life and death. In 'A Love Song from the North' and 'Song of Radha the Milkmaid' Naidu frames the poems with Hindu words to accentuate the exotic quality of the poems and to situate the poems in an Indian context. Where 'A Love Song' is a lament to a lost love, the 'Song of Radha the Milkmaid' evokes the joyous worship of Govinda or Krishna.

* * *

Although the writing included in this volume deals with historical events, it is not intended to be a historical accounting of the years from 1830 to 1930 in India. Rather than gathering unitary accounts of life and death in India, my attempt here has been to collect a multiplicity of perspectives that reflect the varied social, evangelical, and professional lives women led on the subcontinent. Much of the research presented here was funded through two sources, for which I am supremely grateful. The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University awarded me a generous stipend to conduct research on this book. The University of Michigan Graduate Library provided research about and facilities for texts included here, many of which were in fragile condition and were only available in environmentally secure settings. I also received assistance from the University of Michigan's Knowledge Navigation Center for scanning texts electronically. The Department of English Language and Literature at Eastern Michigan University generously supported my research in the form of secretarial help, and Eastern Michigan's College of Arts and Sciences awarded me a sabbatical to conduct research during the academic year 2004–5. Finally, I owe my family immense gratitude for their patience, support, and good nature during this entire process.

Notes

1 *Life and Light for Christian Woman* (Congregational missionary magazine) founded in Boston in March 1869, *Woman's Work for Woman* (Presbyterian) founded in Philadelphia in 1871, and the Baptist *The Helping Hand* founded in 1871.
2 *Life and Light for Heathen Woman*, 1, Sept. 1869, p. 87.

References and further reading

Abbott, Miss (1889) "Miss Abbott in India." *Life and Light for Woman*, February: 80–2.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Bissell, Mrs. M. E. (1893) "India. Evangelistic Efforts for the Women of India." *Life and Light for Women* (Apri)l: 156–61.

Bremner, Christina Sinclair (1891) *A Month in a Dandi*, London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co.

Brumberg, Joan Jacobs (1984) 'The ethnological mirror: American evangelical women and their heathen sisters, 1870–1910', in Barbara J. Harris and JoAnn K. McNamara (eds) *Women and the Structure of Society: Selected Research from the Fifth Berkshire Conference on the History of Women*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, pp. 108–28.

Burton, Antoinette M. (1992) 'The white woman's burden: British feminists and "The Indian Woman," 1865–1915', in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds) *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 137–57.

Burton, Antoinette (1996) 'Contesting the zenana: the mission to make "Lady Doctors for India," 1874–1885', *Journal of British Studies* 35 (July): 368–97.

Carpenter, Mary (1868) *Six Months in India*, London: Longmans, Green.

Cassidy, Cheryl M. (2001) ' "To My Dear Ones at Home": letters from nineteenth-century American missionary women', *Nineteenth-Century Feminisms* 4: 96–118.

Cassidy, Cheryl M. (2002) 'Dying in the light: the rhetoric of nineteenth-century female missionary obituaries', *Victorian Periodicals Review* 35 (3): 206–13.

Cattell, Milly (1916) *Behind the Purdah or, the Lives and Legends of our Hindu Sisters*, Calcutta & Simla: Thacker, Spink & Co.

Chakravarty, Gautam (2005) *The Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapman, Priscilla (1839) *Hindoo Female Education*, London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside.

Chaudhuri, Nupur and Margaret Strobel (eds) (1992) *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Cook, Mrs. Joseph (1893) "Gleams of Light in Benares." *Life and Light for Heathen Woman*, February: 60.

Davidoff, Lenore and Hall, Catherine (1987) *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*, London: Hutchinson.

Dufferin and Ava, Harriot Georgina Blackwood, Marchioness of (1884) *Our Viceregal Life*, London: J. Murray.

Fernandez, Jean (2005) 'Graven images: the woman writer, the Indian poetess, and imperial aesthetics in L.E.L.'s "Hindu temples and palaces at Madura" ', *Victorian Poetry* 43 (1): 35–52.

Flemming, Leslie (ed.) (1989) *Women's Work for Women: Missionaries and Social Change in Asia*, Boulder, Col.: Westview.

Flemming, Leslie A. (1992) 'A new humanity: American missionaries' ideals for women in North India, 1870–1930', in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel (eds) *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 191–206.

Gardner, Nora Beatrice Blyth, Hon. Mrs. (1895) *Rifle and Spear with the Rajpoots: being the narrative of a winter's travel and sport in Northern India*, London: Chatto and Windus.

Ghose, Indira (ed.) (1998) *Memsahibs Abroad: Writings by Women Travellers in Nineteenth century India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Grammer, Elizabeth (2003) *Some Wild Visions: Autobiographies by Female Itinerant Evangelists in Nineteenth-Century America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grimwood, Ethel St. Clair (1891) *My Three Years in Manipur and Escape from the Recent Mutiny*, London: Richard Bentley and Son.

Guinness, Lucy (1898) "Ramabai" *Woman's Missionary Friend* (August): 39–43.

Guthrie, Katherine Blanche (1881) *Life in Western India*, London: Hurst and Blackett.

Heathen Woman's Friend of the Methodist Episcopol Church. Founded Boston, 1869.

Heilbrun, Carolyn G. (1988) *Writing a Woman's Life*, New York: Norton.

Heston, Winifred, M. D. (1910) *A Bluestocking in India, Her Medical Wards and Messages Home*, London, New York: Fleming H. Revell Company.

Hill, Patricia (1985) *The World Their Household: The American Woman's Foreign Mission Movement and Cultural Transformation, 1870–1920*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Hobbes, John Oliver (Mrs. Pearl Mary Craigie) (1903) *Imperial India: Letters from the East*, London: T. Fisher Unwin.

Hume, Mrs. Edward S. (1891) "India. Self-Offering." *Life and Light For Woman*, (August): 394–98.

Johnston, Anna (2003) *Missionary Writing and Empire, 1800–1860*, London: Cambridge University Press.

King, Mrs. Robert Moss (1884) *The Diary of A Civilian's Wife in India, 1877–1882*, London: Richard Bentley and Son.

Kosambi, Meera (1998) 'Multiple contestations: Pandita Ramabai's educational and missionary activities in late nineteenth-century India and abroad', *Women's History Review* 7 (2): 193–208.

Kristeva, Julia (1986) 'From symbol to sign', in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, New York: Columbia University Press.

Landon, Letitia Elizabeth (1839) *The Zenana and Minor Poems with a Memoir by Emma Roberts*, London: Fisher.

Lee, Mrs. Ada (1898) "A Day in the Zenana." *Woman's Missionary Friend* (October): 116–117.

Lewis, Reina (1996) *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity and Representation*, London and New York: Routledge.

Life and Light for Heathen Woman (Congregational missionary magazine) founded in Boston in March 1869.

Loch, Catharine Grace (1905) *Catharine Grace Loch, Royal Red Cross*, London: W. Frowde.

MacKenzie, Helen (Douglas) (1853) *Life in the Mission, the Camp and the Zenana, or Six Years in India, vol. II*, London: Bentley.

McClintock, Anne (1995) *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, New York: Routledge.

Maison, Margaret (1976) *John Oliver Hobbes: Her Life and Work*, London: The 1890's Society.

Melman, Billie (1992) *Women's Orients – English Women and the Middle East, 1718–1918: Sexuality, Religion and Work*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Midgley, Clare (2000) 'Female emancipation in an imperial frame: English women and the campaign against sati (widow-burning) in India, 1813–30', *Women's History Review* 9 (1): 95–120.

Mills, Sara (1991) *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Montgomery, Helen Barrett (1910) *Western Women in Eastern Lands*, New York: Macmillan and Company.

Muter, Mrs. (Elizabeth) Dunbar Douglas (1911) *My Recollections of the Sepoy Revolt (1857–58)*, London: John Long Limited.

Naidu, Sarojini (1912) *The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death and the Spring*, NY: J. Lane Company; London: W. Heinemann.

Owenson, Miss (Lady Morgan) *The Missionary: An Indian Tale*. Vol. 1. (London: J.J. Stockdale, 1811).

Paget, Georgiana Theodosia Fitzmoor-Halsey (1865) *Camp and Cantonment: A Journal of Life in India in 1857–1859 with some account of the way thither*, London: Longman Green, Roberts and Green.

Robert, Dana (1996) *American Women in Mission: A Social History of their Thought and Practice*, Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press.

Sarkar, Tanika (2001) 'Enfranchised selves: women, culture and rights in nineteenth-century Bengal', *Gender and History* 13 (3) (November): 546–65.

Sarasvati, Pundita Ramabai (1901) *The High-Caste Hindu Woman*, New York: Fleming H. Revell Company.

Schriber, Mary Suzanne (1995) *Telling Travels: Selected Writing by Nineteenth-Century Women Abroad*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press.

Swain, M.D., Clara (1909) A Glimpse of India. Being a Collection of Extracts from the Letters of Dr. Clara A. Swain, First Medical Missionary to India of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, New York: James Pott & Company.

Swift, Eva M. (1889) "To the Girls at Home, From One of the Girls." *Life and Light for Woman* (April): 180–84.

Tucker, Sarah (1858) *South India Sketches*, London: J. Nisbet.

Wagentreiber, Florence (1911) *Reminiscences of the Sepoy Rebellion of 1857*, Lahore: Printed in the 'Civil and Military Gazette' Press, by S.T. Weton.

Weitbrecht, Mary (1858) *Missionary Sketches in North India with References to Recent Events*, London: James Nisbet and Co.

Welter, Barbara. (1978) "She Hath Done What She Could: Protestant Women's Missionary Careers in Nineteenth-Century America," *American Quarterly* 30 (Winter): 630–31.

Welter, Barbara (1978) 'She hath done what she could: Protestant women's missionary careers in nineteenth-century America', *American Quarterly* 30 (Winter): 630–1.

Willing, Jennie Fowler (1869) 'Under bonds to help heathen women', *Heathen Woman's Friend* (August): 20.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

A MONTH IN A DANDI

A Woman's Wanderings in Northern India

BY

CHRISTINA S. BREMNER

LONDON
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT, & CO., LTD.
HULL: WILLIAM ANDREWS & CO.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

A MONTH IN A DANDI.

CHAPTER I.

I WAS certainly born to be unlucky, else why should the ship in which I sailed to India get ashore in the Suez Canal, and for three mortal days leave her unhappy crew and passengers to grill under the Egyptian sky, in a bleak desert of burning sand? No motion to dispel the heated air of the cabins, not a breath of wind to revive our drooping souls under the deck awning. If not unlucky, why did I remain slumbering on the seat of the railway carriage at Lahore, and permit the Mooltan train to travel to that ancient city without me? Intuition, for you hardly ever see, and certainly never hear a guard of an Indian railway, had warned the other passengers to get out unless they meant to travel to Peshawur, why did it therefore neglect to warn me? And if not unlucky, why should an Anglo-Indian lady enter the compartment of an East Indian railway carriage, accompanied by two children, where Jedgey Stone's daughter and I had comfortably established ourselves? It was not that we begrudged the labour necessary to bestow our too voluminous luggage into smaller space and make room for the new comers; it was not that there would not be enough sleeping-berths for all of us, for the Indian railway companies are merciful to the Saheb when he travels by night, and make every arrangement for a comfortable sleep, even forbidding ticket collectors to disturb it unseasonably; it was not that the lady was a mere female. No, it was the two little girls that made us take a sorrowful look into each others' eyes, filled with deep sympathy. For little girls of eight and ten are emphatically Anglo-Indians, not children, but masters of ayahs and other native servants, unused even to that slight amount of discipline which the laxest of parents usually think necessary in England. Too often the poor little

DOI: 10.4324/9781003101888-1

Anglo-Indian child is a miserable creature, destitute of spirit and energy; his white face, weary look, and melancholy eye tell the tale of an unsuitable climate withering his life's blood, and demand unceasing care from anxious parents. But the specimens before our eyes, were of an entirely different sort; strong, active, talkative, aggressive, our languid eyes followed their vivacious movements with wonder streaked with fear. If the fierce heat of an Indian summer day within the walled city of Dehlie would not tame their spirits, then what would? Why take such beings to the hills at all? Surely their poor fatigued mother could not desire a redoubling of their stock of energy to torment her, or the bracing of appetites which struck us as peculiarly healthy, and abnormally large for one of the hottest days that we had had.

The first bell has gone, and the excitement is fast rising to fever heat. The true Oriental is usually calm, composed, placid, resigned; often you may read "Kismet," "It is Allah's will" on his face. But not at a railway station. He has mastered the fact that if the train is intended to start at six o'clock, it will certainly do so; and for once he is filled with the idea of the importance of time. He has bought a ticket, and is now rushing wildly back to the ancient family ekka, drawn by a noble milk-white bullock, for his bundle. Depositing it on the seat, where he will presently sit with his knees drawn up to his chin, he rushes back for his rezai and drinking pot. When he returns, surely some one must have taken his seat, else why these shouts, screams, execrations, growls, snarls angry rejoinders, yells? Here is one rushing for water, another buying cakes and a queer spicy-looking compound, which the vendor digs out of a pot with his fingers, and smears over the cakes. Now follows a great box on the head of a tall coolie, who majestically stalks along in his waist-cloth as if it were an ermine robe, and the box a feather. "Brahmani Pani," shouts a man with a zinc bucket of water, and instantly half a dozen brown hands stretch forth lotas to receive the precious fluid. For it is the duty of the railway company to supply all travellers with water at the stations. Should you be a Brahman, your water

must be in a metal vessel, a mussack will do for a Muhammadan. Yes, it is intensely exciting, and not till the train has slowly steamed out on to the handsome bridge that spans the Jumna, close to the Fort, the Palace of the Great Moghul and Selimgurh, does the awful din subside, and the passenger resign himself to the inevitable. I laughed with as much fervour as the heat would admit of, at the wild excitement depicted on the faces of my Aryan brothers, but had I been privileged to know that my bearer had only put one box into the luggage van, that the luggage bulletin I had carefully placed in my purse only registered one box, I should have rushed down that platform as madly as the most excited Oriental of them all, for it was my box of dresses that was amissing! But Heaven tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, and, though I knew it not, I was to spend the next few days in bed.

Thank Heaven the sun has set. In six hours it may be moderately cool, eight at most, and then one may sleep a refreshing sleep. Four more hours and the fiend will rise again, to wither the brown grass, blast the thirsty trees, take the little remaining spirit out of the hard-worked bullock, strike with heat apoplexy the sick and the careless, putrefy flesh only killed four hours, dry up rivers and canals, blind with his awful glare, drive indoors for eleven hours all that can move into shelter. Oh, that some Joshua at the Antipodes would bid thee stand still, thou fierce relentless fury, and then this hot and panting land might grow cool once more! Or at least, may the gods fulfil the prayer of the Vedic poet, who asks for a hundred winters. Or, if none of these things are worth the asking in these infidel days, the traveller may still pray that the halts at railway stations may be short, and the runs between them swift, for great is the heat of an Indian railway station.

At the very first station we stop at, we make the pleasing discovery, that an aërated water and ice compartment is only a short distance from us, and here we pay many visits, and would have paid more but for the fact that there was no ice to be got, only luke-warm lemonade and soda water, which the polite attendant assured us would

soon be cool. The glance we both bestowed on him was most withering, but the callousness with which he turned to serve other customers exhausted with heat, showed that our unbelief was of no consequence when trade was brisk.

Rushing through the hot black night, over rivers, crossed by noisy iron bridges, which shrieked in horrid chorus at our passage, past great, bare fields, the very air shouts out no green thing is on them, past distant twinkling villages, past railway lights, quiet is falling on the weary land. Our minds are filled with calculations, but not mathematical nor metaphysical. Shall we get strawberries at Meerut, the next station? It is thought highly likely, so with hot parched mouths, we sit with our annas in hand ready to do business when the time comes. So overjoyed are we when the strawberry man appears, that we could almost embrace him for his condescension; only when he was gone far up the station, do we fall to soundly abusing the rogue, for his strawberries, bought in the dark, are all bad.

Why won't the train move on and create the much wished for draught, without which we swelter and gasp for air? At length a gentleman comes to tell us an accident has occurred on our line, and we must stay here a couple of hours till it is cleared. Oh ye Anglo-Indian imps! Could parents who, through weakness or weariness are tempted to forego all discipline, and cultivate habits of insubordination, could they but spend the time with ye in that confined space and irritating climate, what food for reflection would it not afford them for a long time to come?

Umballa at last! Two hours late, but time is of no value to an Indian driver. He waits there with the utmost patience and good humour till his passenger has washed and breakfasted. When I reappear, all my bedding is neatly spread out in a hideous coach which reminds me of a prison van. About six individuals hold out an umber paw for buckshish for this service which no one wanted them to perform. The space between the seats is filled up with planks, so that I lie extended, windows and shutters all closed, as much as their rickety fastenings will permit, eating

the morning air. Umballa is an immense military station; the cracks in my shutters allow me to see that I am passing close to great barracks. Soldiers are stirring to prepare for parade, officers are already on horseback taking preliminary exercise, the dull, aimless routine of a soldier's day has begun. Thirty-eight miles to Kalka, each one growing longer as the sun grows hotter. Kalka lies at the foot of the Himalayas, on whose outer crest I hope to sleep to-night; for there, up at Kasauli, nights are cool, and days not unendurably hot; there, one can still enjoy something like the lovely winter of the plains, the only part of the Indian climate that the globe-trotter usually knows or consents to believe in. "Lucky dogs, those Anglo-Indians" quoth he. "They live in a climate like paradise, all ride and drive, play tennis and dance from five to eight, dine like princes, every week a cinderella at the club, a gymkhana on the cricket ground, polo in the morning, novels in the afternoon." Yet it has a melancholy side too this life of pleasure, when the heat becomes too great to continue it. When the bungalow must be closed at eight in the morning and only opened at sunset; when the kus-kus tatties must be fitted into doors on the windy side of the house, if any such there be, and be constantly wetted by the water carrier to lower the temperature; when the thermantidote must be brought forth from its winter resting place, and its fans set revolving to the same end; when life must be reduced to little short of sickly vegetation under the punkah, body and brain alike too fatigued for exercise of any kind.

Describing a month of this awful existence to an Anglo-Indian lady, the interminable day whose only break was a drive before dinner, when the burning loo cracks the lips and dries the skin as cold does in northern climes, she broke forth into a joyful noise: "I am glad you have felt it. You won't go home and tell them what bloated aristocrats we are out here, living a life of enjoyment from morning to night. You will tell the truth?" And I promised, though

surely none can pretend that Anglo-Indians do not get their share of good things, or that they do not know how to alleviate their unhappy circumstances.

The chief alleviation is certainly leaving them behind, and journeying with as few of your lares and penates, as you can beguile yourself into regarding as indispensable. Knowing ones pack them up before the season begins, to await the owner's arrival at a hill station. Griffins leave them at Umballa, to be forwarded per government bullock train, continuing their own journey by dâk gharri. Anxiously they await the day of their appearance, unaware of the awful congestion of the traffic at this season. When hope has fled, the slow patient bullocks drag your "things" up the hill side, and the mild Baboo ventures to suggest that, compared with X., you have been quickly served.

The sun mounts higher and higher, needless to say, the Kalka road grows hotter and hotter. Surely bullocks must have been harnessed at the last stage, else why this jolting? No they are horses, but the road is not all it might be, and Jetoo has to urge them on with many a strange shout, which may possibly appear encouraging to equine ears. Every five or six miles, there is a shift, sometimes horses, sometimes bullocks, and to the credit of the latter, I am bound to state that I never could distinguish the one from the other by their motion.

Kalka and breakfast, a very bad one by the way, at the foot of the glorious hills! Ever since Saharunpore they have been visible, could one venture to push one's head out of Jetoo's coach without danger of sunstroke. The mutton (e)cutlet and tough chicken curry disposed of, in the company of an arrogant, overbearing Englishman, of a type too, too common in India, arrangements have to be made for the traveller to be borne the nine miles uphill that separate Kalka from Kasauli. Before another season begins, the Dehlie-Umballa-Kalka Railway line will be open, and the thirty-eight miles dividing Umballa from Kalka will be travelled in a couple of hours, in the comfortable carriages of the East Indian Railway. Long live our virtuous government, who are not afraid to tie a load of debt round their own necks and those of posterity, in order to open up the gorgeous East.