



Warminster Athenaeum

## **An Hour on India Lecture**

Miss Mary Carpenter, of Bristol, a lady well known as the originator of the Reformatory School system in England, and for her philanthropic efforts on behalf of the children of the poor, delivered a lecture at the above institution, on Tuesday evening last, the subject being "An Hour on India," Mr. H. D. Seymour presided. The audience was large and thoughtful. The chairman said had a great pleasure in introducing Miss Carpenter, who was as well known as the philanthropic originator of Reformatory establishments for the rescue of both sexes who had fallen into crime. After her laudable efforts with regard to English youths, she turned her attention to natives of India, and in three visits which she paid to that country, she endeavoured to obtain a knowledge of the social condition and peculiarities of the natives, directing her attention particularly to the question of female education, and she would now give them the results of her experience.

Miss Carpenter, who was most enthusiastically received, then discoursed in a pleasing and graphic style for nearly two hours, on the general condition, past and present, of our Indian Empire, directing attention more particularly to the question of female life and female education, but so treating the subject as to give a vivid picture of the general social condition of the country. She described the various presidencies, and said the race both in language and manner were more varied than were the native of Europe, and the languages of Europe more assimilated to each other than did the languages of the different provinces of India. The consequences was that the natives of one presidency were unable to understand the language of another; but among the educated classes of India, throughout the British rule, the English language was commonly spoken, and was the medium of communication between the educated natives of the different presidencies. An Englishman, therefore, found little difficulty in making himself understood in India, and Miss Carpenter pointed out what was likely to be the result of the general adoption of the English language by the teeming millions of India.

She then alluded to the country itself, and enabled the audience to realize her description by many original sketches made in India. She also had a number of portraits of celebrated Indian natives, and a variety of articles of manufacture of exquisite workmanship. She gave a most graphic account of female life and education in India, and of the efforts which had led to the abolition of the heathen practice of burning widows; of betrothment (or virtual marriage) of infant females; of the seclusion of females from all society, and the existing prejudices against their acquiring even the rudiments of an education, etc. She cited numerous instances in which natives of importance had given the countenance to the new order of things, and particularly re-marriages of widows, to which latter she attached very great importance as being a step which would prove most beneficial to the progress of the national life, and the amelioration of the condition of women. She described at length the educational efforts that had been put forth, and their encouraging results, and in illustrating the character of the people, she impressed upon her hearers the great value that

the natives attached to the sympathy of the English Parliament and people, and pointed out how they were pained when they found that Indian matters of really vital importance were sometimes treated with an entire want of interest and sympathy by Parliament and the country. She also described the efforts that were being made by "The National Indian Association," in aid of social progress in India, and made an earnest appeal on its behalf.

The lecture throughout was listened to with marked attention, and was deeply interesting, and must have had the effect which Miss Carpenter desired, of giving her audience a real sympathy with the natives of India. The chairman spoke in the highest terms of the lecture, and corroborated many of Miss Carpenter's statements from his experience, gained by a lengthened visit to India whilst he held the office of Under Secretary of State for India.

**Salisbury and Winchester Journal and General Advertiser, 21 December 1872**