

## THE LIFE BEAUTIFUL

BY JULIA MASTERS.

**H**ANDSOME old Hookum Dai, a proud and bigoted Brahmin widow, had lived a pure and self-denying life of hard toil and service to others.

Hearing that an English lady doctor had opened a hospital for her country women in her beloved town, she decided to take service there as a pupil nurse. She desired to see how the patients would be treated. Her hands were rough with toil but the desires of her soul were noble.

To this hospital also came a girl of the domiciled community for training. She had English ideals of nobility of character and these two became friends, the common ground they trod being sympathy and service for the sick.

Cholera visited the city and took a very heavy toll. Hookum Dai went about her work sadly. During her off hours she visited her neighbours, comforting the bereaved, and encouraging the relatives of those attacked to seek Western remedies.

One morning at the hospital she herself developed Cholera. She lay afar off in the grounds stoically preparing for death, knowing that her fellow-workers would be too scared to succour her. The English doctor missed her and enquired "where is Hookum Dai?". Told of the illness she immediately hastened to see her. Hookum Dai's girl friend followed her. The doctor turned and smiled encouragingly at the girl and said, come along it is our duty. So Hookum Dai was put to bed and many and varied acts of illusion were practised by the doctor and the nurse to induce the orthodox old lady to take her medicine and nourishment.

Weakness and her love for her alien friend, and now an almost adoring admiration for the doctor helped to overcome her lifelong prejudices and old customs. She lived to encourage hundreds of her country women to come to that particular hospital with confidence, where they benefited by their stay and in their turn sent others.

She also helped to save the life of the girl friend whom she loved, for the girl lay ill with an attack of diphtheria and Hookum Dai indefatigably nursed her through it in spite of being told that it was an infectious complaint.

The old time pride and bigotry were now things of the past to Hookum Dai. She realised that in spite of race and religion, spirits that are akin find each other. She felt that the life that is lived in purity and self-discipline is the life beautiful, ever brightening, ever youthful, ever helping and spreading an aura of usefulness, imperceptibly breaking down superstition and distrust, and reaching out truth and courage and trust to all who come into contact with the life beautiful.

Truly all who pour themselves out in service for humanity win through to the nobility that undoubtedly lies in each soul. Dormant it may be, still there it is, awaiting the special call to enable it to blossom forth.