

in favor of the formation of the Association, said: "Here is a new era which India is now entering into. The Hindus hitherto took their women as a part and parcel of their property, as goods and chattels. They showed their pity in building hospitals, in Bombay and Calcutta, for mosquitoes, and for snakes and scorpions; but if their mothers who bore them, and who nursed them when they were helpless babies, are unfortunately attacked with some disease, they are allowed to die a dog's death rather than expose them to a doctor's gaze or touch. Now, here comes a lady from other shores of the sea, full of sympathy and compassion for our women, our revered mothers and darling daughters. The noble lady, the noblest of the noble (Lady Dufferin), shows that women have souls, that they are sentient beings, that they also deserve to be looked after. What a noble thought! What a heavenly idea! When I mentioned this to my dear sister, the first question she asked me was simply this, 'How can I worship this lady, with flowers and sandal-wood?' With some difficulty, I explained to her that Her Excellency Lady Dufferin would not like, though she may well deserve, to be included among our mythology." (Report of organization of the National Association for India, etc.)

Other native princes and rulers of native states in India spoke words of like import, both as to the need of medical and surgical treatment for the women of that land, and the wonderful blessing it would be to those suffering multitudes.

(Conclusion next Month.)

PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BENGAL.

BESIDES the government schools, which are of a high grade, there are many little private schools called *Patshallas* (lesson houses), where children are taught the rudiments. Sometimes they are held inside four walls, but usually on a wide veranda, the mud floor of which is kept smooth and clean by a daily washing with a thick mixture of cow dung, earth, and water. The teacher sometimes has a low wooden stool to sit on, but oftener a bit of matting. He has a stick but seldom uses it, as the heathen children are *dvāle*, and go to school to learn and not to be troublesome.

The day when a little boy first takes his hard gray chalk pencil in hand and goes to school is an eventful one, and there is usually feasting at home. But before this the astrologers must be interviewed: and after an incredible amount of figuring and consulting the stars, they fix on the auspicious day. Sometimes these calculations take several weeks. The day fixed, the little boy, clad in his new cloth (perhaps the first one he ever kept on so long at a time) takes his seat on the floor, and the teacher makes a large copy of the first four letters of the alphabet on the floor, and tells him to write it and then name the letters. This the little fellow does with intervals of play and looking about, until the copy is a blur of chalk-marks. Then the teacher writes it over, and the boy goes on again until he can write the letters below the copy.

When he has in this way got through the alphabet of forty-eight letters, his father buys him a primer, and he sits with the older boys on the matting against

the wall, and there he sways back and forth, committing each page to memory at the top of his voice.

Meanwhile he has learned to count and repeat the tables, as the closing exercise of the school consists of the boys standing in a row, while one of them says the tables, line by line, the rest repeating in unison after him. This is done with such emphasis that the sound is heard at some distance.

Our little boy has long, narrow palm-leaves to write on now instead of the floor, and every day he takes them home covered with figures and sentences from his lesson-books, and every morning brings them back washed clean. These smooth leaves serve as his slate and he has a coarse stub pen made from a reed with which to write, and a little flat earthen ink-bottle, with a string tied around the neck.

At the end of four or five years our little boy is ready to graduate from the *Patshallas*, having gone through the First, Second, and Third Primers, *Æsop's Fables*, *Rudiments of Knowledge*, the little *Arithmetic* containing numerous tables, and having learned the multiplication-table thoroughly up to twenty times twenty.

This is something the way in which heathen primary schools are conducted in our part of India. They are almost exclusively for boys. It was the missionaries' privilege to inaugurate the education of the pretty, bright little girls. But the astrologers are not consulted, no auspicious day is chosen when a little girl first goes to school. The boy, after graduating from the *Patshallas*, can go to college, but the girls are often taken from school before they have finished the first three primers, and sent away to their husbands' homes, to commence lives of work, and care, and abject dependence. It was a great step in the civilization of India when heathen parents opened schools here and there exclusively for girls, and paid the teachers good wages to teach them until they went to their husbands' homes. Since then, little by little, parents and daughters became interested and ambitious, and the marriage day would be delayed a little, that the daughters might have the advantages of school a little longer. A Hindu lady of high caste once remarked, "Formerly when a man wanted a wife, he asked if her complexion was fair; now he asks if she is educated." Another lady, a disciple of Keshub Chundra Sen, said to us one day, "I took my oldest daughter from school too soon (she was married at about eleven), the next one shall stay in school and get a good education in both Bengali and English, and we won't marry her until she is thirteen or fourteen." Thus gradually, but surely, is the gospel leaven working.—*Missionary Help*.

IN a Chinese village during a time of drought a missionary saw a row of idols put out in the hottest and dustiest part of the road. He inquired the reason, and the natives answered, "We prayed our gods to send us rain, and they won't; so we have put them out to see how they like the heat and dryness." How is it possible for really intelligent men and women to believe in gods who themselves must be treated as wilful children or senseless things, is one of the constantly recurring questions of heathenism.