

Story of Little Sita.

INDORE, *August 13, 1890.*

MISS RODGER.—The boarding school has been opened at Neemuch, as you will no doubt have heard ere this reaches you. We do not want to lose the native Christian girls, and there is danger of this being the case if they are sent to other mission boarding schools. No suitable place could be found in Indore, although it is now six years since the building was first spoken about. As there is one heathen girl at present in the school it may be interesting to you to know what brought her there. Her first appearance amongst us was about a month ago now, when the woman who calls the children brought her to school. She is about eight or nine years of age, and has evidently been accustomed to harsh treatment all her life. She was described as an orphan, whom no one could claim, so I had her brought to our house until more could be found out about her. She would have been given up to any one having any legal claim upon her. The following day a woman came into school—she had evidently been sent to take the girl away. She said that Sita's uncle had been looking for the girl since yesterday. She was told that if her uncle could establish his claim to the child he could have her. The woman went away and the man calling himself uncle appeared in a few hours. On making enquiries we found out that he was not a relative, nor could he establish any claim to her beyond the fact that she had been about a month in his house. We gathered also that it was no place in which the girl ought to remain if she could be kept from returning to it. In the meantime the girl had become satisfied to remain with Dinah and Mary—two orphan Christian girls, who were at Nusserabad, and are now at Neemuch at school—and positively refused to go back to the place where she had been. When the said uncle found all his efforts were useless, a man calling himself Sita's husband appeared to claim her. This was several days after the girl had been with us, and the first intimation that she had a husband. After coming a few times, he also gave up in despair, and the girl remained with us for a week, when she accompanied the other girls to Neemuch. For a day or two she ate nothing that was cooked for the other girls, and took only what was brought from the bazaar.