

SCHOOLS IN MAINPURI, INDIA.

BY M. E. POLLOCK.

When you think of schools in far-away India, do not picture in your minds a large airy school-room with rows of neat desks, and at each desk a clean, neatly-dressed girl. No, indeed! The little dusky Indian girls would be completely lost in such surroundings, and would not know what it all meant. They are not accustomed to benches and chairs, but prefer to sit on the ground. Come with me and I will take you to a typical Indian school. We pass through narrow, filthy lanes until we come to a low mud house—that is, the walls are mud—having a thatched roof. As we enter, we find ourselves in a little room about ten feet long and six or eight wide. The walls are plastered with mud, and the floor is mud and lime beaten so hard that it seems almost like stone. In this room there are no windows, and all the light and air we get must come from the door. On a square of matting sits the teacher, surrounded by twelve or fifteen girls, each with a book before her from which she studies aloud. You can imagine what a clatter they make: but it is their way, and according to their ideas, the louder they study the more they will learn.

Low cane stools are brought for us, and we sit down to examine the scholars and see what progress has been made since last we visited the school. The books, all containing Christian instruction, are numbered one, two, three and four, and are published by the Christian Vernacular Tract Society. When these have been mastered a Scripture History will be taken up, and after that the Bible itself.

They learn a simple catechism corresponding to one that possibly very many of you study, beginning, "Who made you?" We must be very careful to see that they have studied this, for as it contains the doctrines of our Christian faith, the heathen teachers do not like to teach it, and must be watched very closely that they do not neglect it. You know how hard it is for any one to teach what he does not believe

and does not want others to believe, and so it is with them. If the teacher refuses to teach the catechism or the girls to learn it, the school is at once closed.

Well, after this is recited and explained, we hear the multiplication table and have simple exercises in arithmetic. Then comes the writing class. The slates are boards painted black, the pens are large and made of wood and the ink is a mixture of lime and water. After that comes what they enjoy most of all, the singing of hymns set to native music. They are eager to learn to sing, too, and many of the older girls sing very nicely. The sun is getting high and we must hasten back to the shelter of the thick walls of our bungalow, for you know Europeans must be very careful of the fierce rays of the Indian sun.

All of these poor girls are taught from their very infancy, by their mothers, to worship idols, and a very common excuse for tardiness is, "I have been to worship some goddess." When you think of these poor heathen children and then of your own great blessings in having kind parents, comfortable homes and so many advantages in the way of education, are you not glad that you do not live in a heathen land, and does it not make you more eager to send the gospel to the children far away over the seas?

In Mainpuri we have eleven such schools, and in them one hundred and sixty-five girls are being taught. We hope that you will not forget to work and pray for these ignorant little children that they may forsake their idols and worship the one true God.—*Children's Work for Children.*

EVENING SONG.

FROM THE GERMAN.

BY E. A. S.

When the children go to sleep,
Still the stars are waking,
And from far the angels are
Swift their earth-flight taking,
All the night to watch and keep
Little children while they sleep.