

## Educated Girls.

SOME OF THE HINDERANCES OUR EDUCATED GIRLS MEET IN AFTER-LIFE, AND SOME OF THE INFLUENCES FOR GOOD THEY EXERT.

(Letter from Mr. McLaughlin to Mrs. E. J. Rose, Cor. Soc.)

\* \* \* \* I am not going to attempt to portray the life of an educated *upper ten* girl, but only Paria life—the life of one of our people.

If you were to slip into one of our boarding schools at almost any hour of the day you would probably find a row of girls standing upright, with arms folded across the chest and toes on the mark. They would range from ten to fifteen years of age, are nicely dressed in some plain calico, with faces washed, hair combed and maybe dripping with coconut oil. Each girl has a book in her hand; that is the badge of her profession—a boarding girl. Some are dull, others are bright;—some are really goodlooking, with pleasant, intelligent faces, while others are—well—not goodlooking. Some months ago many of these girls were unwashed, uncombed, unclothed, hideous-looking sprites of darkness out among the villages. It is difficult to imagine anything in the human form more repulsive than the little girls of a Paria hamlet. Thus far the change seems eminently satisfactory. Ask one of them to read—she obeys readily, and reads more or less fluently. If it is a station boarding school she will have a pretty good idea of what she reads; if not, she will probably know but little. She knows a little of the world she lives in; knows about sin and salvation; about God the Father, Jesus the Saviour, heaven, hell, etc. She, with the help of her companions, will sing nicely (native fashion), and will also show you some of her sewing, which, to say the least, is far in advance of what her grandmother could do. She has learned to keep the room occupied by herself and others clean, to cook rice, make curry, and do other household duties. If she has been in school five or six years, she will likely graduate a bright, healthy, clean, well-educated Christian girl. Thus far all is bright and fair sailing.

Now comes the critical time in her history. Some young man, or some young man's mother or father has had her in mind for months. Leave is asked of the missionary to speak with her or her friends. If he thinks well of it, leave is granted, and a few weeks at most bring on the eventful day. She looks well, dressed in white muslin and wreathed in real orange blossoms. Congratulations are over and she goes home—*ah, home* (?) She may live alone with her husband in a separate house; then their home will be much what she will make it; but she may be taken to her mother-in-law's house, and then it is not likely to be as she would make it. In either case the temptations to indolence and slovenliness will be very great. No incentives to order or regularity, no clanging bell to arouse her at stated hours, no missionary's eye to see whether the face is washed or the hair combed or not, whether the clothes are clean or the floor swept. Maybe the mother-in-law will resent any attempt at change as an affront. Then there will be a quarrel in which the husband will likely take his mother's part. This will deeply insult the wife, and her business then will be to sulk—to sit on the floor for days with dishevelled hair and unwashed face. During this time she will neither cook, eat, drink, nor dress herself. Very probably the hungry husband will make some uncompromising remarks and use vigorous language, to which she will likely reply with spirit, born in the school

at the station and then—well, what then? Well then, it is time to draw the curtain,—they do it in England and America after more than a thousand years of training, and need we wonder if a few of them do it here.

If she is in a station, or teaches a village school, or rules her own house and is exceptionally studious, she keeps up her reading and other studies. But here too the temptations to neglect are many and great. The salary of her husband is small, and oil is dear, and the light poor, and she has so much to do. Then there are babies in quick succession; three or four in so many years. Can all these be cared for and kept clean as well as the house? Can her husband's clothes be mended, and his food cooked, and her books read beside? Oh, dear, no—that cannot be. Once a week perhaps she takes one of the urchins, sits down on a low stool, gathers her clothes about her, stretches out her neither limbs side by side, lays the squalling nudity on them and proceeds to scrub vigorously; the accompaniment is sometimes discordant, often irregular, but is generally vigorous. Why should she clothe her little ones? No others in the village are clothed. It costs something too; and even if she did, would not the whole lot of them be rolling in the dust or wallowing in the mire the next minute. If she did comb their hair, it would not stay combed. If she oiled it, it would soon be filled with dust, and if not, the dry wind would blow it well about. The filthy nose and the sore eyes would be open to the same objection; they would not stay clean. How can she keep her door yard clean when it is so small, only a few yards square? Besides, is it not pig-stye, dog-kennel, fowl-house, stable and sink for half a dozen houses besides her own? How could you expect her to keep her house clean when there is but one room in it, and that has to serve for parlor, dining-room, sitting-room and bed-room for the whole family, except when they sleep out of doors, which they do for a good part of the year.

Is this an extreme case I am painting? It is not a case at all; I am only setting before you some of the temptations to which almost all our girls are more or less exposed. Then I have only referred to those, to *indolence and slovenliness*.

I have said nothing of the band of village viragos who gird her on every side—of the foul-mouthed "Billingsgate" which falls on her ear each hour of the day—of the unspeakable epithets applied to her, or the vile insinuations thrown out if she dare resent them. But surely there can be no temptation to indulge in such language as this? Not to you, gentle reader—not to you, but to her. Remember, that probably she was hushed to sleep as an infant with the refrain of such words as her mother's lull-a-bye song. Her early childhood had learned each villainous phrase but too well. Now as the hot blood rushes to her face, and these cankerous words leaps unbidden to her lips, and the unruly tongue is ready to hiss them forth—Oh, thank God if His grace has sealed those lips and shut up the conflict in her own soul. Thank God if she can turn back into the house, and there, by the aid of the Spirit, put to flight the tempting fiend within. It is a temptation you and I may never feel, but to her it is awfully real.

Then again, the temptations to neglect her spiritual welfare are great. She has no closet to which she can go for communion with her God. How can she read the book in that one room with all her children hanging about her, and those rude boys peeping in at the door? At the little prayer-meetings held by her husband or the teacher everything is commonplace; no one knows more than she does—no new idea—no one can sing correctly,