

"Yes." "Well that is what is the matter with your baby. You are slowly killing it." Then comes the invariable reply. "But how would I get my work done if I did not give it opium to keep it quiet?" Then there are the blind babies. It is a sad sight to see them creeping around and have them turn their sightless eyes upon you on hearing your strange voice. If you inquire into the cause, you will be told they were born blind, which means carelessness on the part of the midwife, or perhaps along with the sightless eyes are great poek marks, and you do not need to ask, you know smallpox is responsible. We have an epidemic of smallpox about every two years, but I do not close the school, as one year I found that there was only one pupil who had not already had the disease.

Let us now look at the educational problem. Out of 38,000,000 children of school age only 8 million are receiving any kind of education. Think of it! 30 million children—more than three times the population of Canada, growing up absolutely illiterate. The latest figures obtained from the 1922 India year book are total in all institutions 8,206,225, this includes college students. When you realize that 4,956,988 boys and girls and 1,176,553 girls are in Primary Schools and 90 per cent. of them are in lower Primary classes, and according to Fleming's calculations 39 per cent. of these leave school so early that they relapse into illiteracy, you will see that India is just beginning to tackle her educational problem.

Now let me refer to my own touch with the children, for Hat Piplia is one of the newer stations, which has not been under direct Western influence as long as the others and contains all the drawbacks to progress that one is likely to find anywhere.

When we were invited to go to Hat Piplia we were given a site in the town for a girl's school. The State authorities who provide schools for boys in the larger towns, recognize the need of education

for girls, but the people have still to be brought to feel that need. Not only do they not realize the advantages of education but, in the majority of cases, they are too poor to spare their children.

When I first started the school, the Baniyas, who are always ready to take advantage of anything they do not have to pay for, although they themselves squeeze the poor to the last cowrie, sent their girls, but as soon as they learned that I was teaching them Christian hymns they withdrew them. I acted as calling woman at first, and as the children of India have no more regard for the value of time than their elders it became necessary to have a regular calling woman to look them up. The excuses I met with on all hands showed the hostility of the mothers to such innovations as educating their girls. The absence of the demand for education of girls among these village folks, who comprise nine tenths of India's people is a real thing. The mothers say to me, "What is the use of educating the girls, we only have them for a short time and we must teach them house work or what will their mothers-in-law say?"

The mothers have to work and they need their girls to look after their younger brothers and sisters. They must take the family cow or ox out to join the herd going to pasture; they must gather gober, and help make up the cakes of fuel and bring the water pots from the wells. In the rainy season they must help weed in the fields, and when the grain is ripening station themselves on the elevations in the field and keep the birds off the grain. When the cotton is ready to pick, there is the opportunity to earn a few pice to help the family, or they go with the family to wheat areas to cut the grain.

Then there are innumerable weddings, and feasts for the dead, and each year a succession of melas or fairs in the surrounding villages, with their side shows and attractive booths; with all these

(Continued on page 26)