

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 tunes. 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.*

Two Kinds of Work.

This is the way we go to school,
With our heads bent low
And with footsteps slow,
For we've sums to do,
And "two times two,"
Hard words to spell,
Hard reading as well;
Oh, it's serious work to go to school!

This is the way we go to our band;
How quickly we run
When lessons are done!
For we've stories to tell,
And to hear as well,
About little children in foreign lands,
And of all the work done by little hands
To send them the news of our Jesus dear,
Till every child in the world shall hear.
Oh, it's joyful work to go to our band!

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