

"Going to School in India"

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We learned last week that little Hindu girls do not go to school, unless sometimes to an English or missionary school. So what we say about going to Indian schools will all be about the boys. **[Nowadays girls go to school]**

When the little boy is about five years old, he is sent to the infant school. "Hindu boys are just as excited as English ones about going to school for the first time."

"When the day comes, the little boy has a bath, and puts on his new clothes, very likely the first clothes he has ever worn, except when he was six months old, and was dressed in silk to be shown to his friends." Then he pays a visit to a temple, and offers some rice and fruits to the god or goddess of learning, after which his father takes him to school.

His first lesson is the alphabet. He learns the letters by writing them over and over, not on paper as you do, but in the sand on the ground, with a piece of soft stone!

When he knows all his letters, he is allowed to write on dried palm-leaves with a real pen or a metal style; next he is allowed to write on a wooden slate, and last of all on paper.

Beside reading and writing he must learn the multiplication table very thoroughly. Some of the Hindu boys learn to be good arithmeticians, and to keep accounts well. Instead of learning the multiplication table out of a book, the boy who knows it best says it aloud, and the others repeat it after him in a loud monotonous chant until they know it.

The school-house is generally a rude building with three mud walls on three sides, but quite open on the fourth, and a thatched roof supported by bamboos. No benches or desks are needed as the boys generally sit on the ground when writing.



In order to get the boys to come in time the master has a strange rule. The boy that comes first gets one stroke of the cane, the second boy gets two, the third three, and so on to the one who comes last. If the last boy comes very late indeed the master sometimes makes him stand on one leg for an hour. If he plays truant he may be made not only to stand on one leg, but at the same time to hold a brick in his right hand, or to stand with both his arms stretched out at full length until he feels quite ill.

One punishment for a bad boy is for him to stand in a very stooping posture, with his two feet and one hand resting on a stone, whilst he has to hold a stone in the other hand. How this must make his back ache, when it is continued for hours! But if he should straighten up one moment he would be punished still more, for an assistant stands behind him with a cane in his hand. Sometimes a boy must stand on one leg with his other foot drawn up to his knee, while his hands are

joined over his head, or in a stooping posture with his hands passed under his body so as to touch the tips of his ears. "Another very dreadful punishment is to put stinging leaves on to the boy's naked back, where he cannot get at them to take them off, or even to rub the sore place."

"Oh pity those poor children
In far-off heathen lands,
Who're taught to worship Dagon
And suffer at his hands.

"I'm told they have no Bible—
No holy Sabbath day;
No teacher, friend, disciple,
To teach them how to pray.

"I'm told that they are ready
To hear the Gospel sound,
Will you not give your penny,
To help send it around?"