

to have money enough to build a house two-stories high perhaps; but the one we call our Orphanage now, has only one story, in which are the three rooms where our children live with the Japanese Matron who takes care of them. One of these rooms is the kitchen and washroom—the other two, you would think looked very empty if you should look in in the day time, for there is no furniture except two little tables about a foot high, around which the children sit to eat or study. The floors are covered with soft straw mats, and at night large quilts are brought out from the closets and comfortable beds very quickly made by spreading one quilt to sleep on, and another one over the children to keep them warm. In the morning, these quilts are hung out of doors for a while, and then rolled away in the closet, out of the way, till night again; and so our ten little boys and girls can live very comfortably in these three rooms, though if we had to put in beds, tables and chairs, as we would have to do for Canadian children, there would be no room left for the children themselves to get in.

When dinner time comes, they gather around the tables sitting with their feet under them, and each child has a little tray on which is a bowl of rice, with fish and vegetables of some kind, and two little straight chop sticks with which to eat.

If I had seen such a home as this when I first came to Japan, I should have thought it was a very poor little place, and would have wondered to see the children enjoying such plain food and looking so happy as they do. Now however, since I know more of the way in which so many of the poor people here live, and especially since I know what kind of houses these children have been taken from, I know that this clean house in which they now live, together with the nourishing food, and comfortable, though not always new, clothes, which we are all able to give them at so little cost, makes almost a Paradise for them as compared with the life from which most of them have been taken.

If a Japanese house is too poor to have straw mats on the floor, it is very, very, poor indeed, for then the people have to sleep on the hard boards with not even a quilt to put under them; but some of these children have come from homes as poor as that. One of the little girls was living with the mother, brother and sister in one room scarcely large enough for them all to lie down in comfortably, and with no mats on the floor. Her clothing was ragged and patched, and she was a very forlorn-looking little child when I first saw her at our poor school making match boxes at which she could earn about one and a half cents a day.

She came also to the night school and then brought her mother with her to the meeting on Wednesday evenings. When the mother heard that we had a home where we took children like that to care for and teach them, she asked us to take her little girl, whose name is Masaki San, so after we had made an agreement with the mother, we had some clean clothes made, and after sending the child to a bath-house to have her hair washed and made clean, and her old rags left behind, she was dressed in her fresh clothes and brought to the Orphanage, looking like a different child altogether. She is very quick to learn, both in her lessons and embroidery work. We do not send the children to school at first, but give them work to do for a while, and they have lessons in the evenings; but there is a good Christian school near the Home, and if they continue to be diligent and obedient, we send them to school after a little while.

You would like to see them as they come into church or Sunday school, looking so happy and well cared for, even though their dresses are made out of some of our old ones, and their sashes are red cotton or woollen instead of silk. And best of all they are learning every day about God, and are trying to be obedient and good because they have learned that it is pleasing to Him. We hope that after a few years some of these girls will be able to help us in teaching and caring for other poor children of whom there are always plenty around us, whom we can help if we have money and teachers. There are now several other little girls whom we could take if we had room for them, and if we do not take them in soon they will be sold to become dancing girls and grow up in a wicked life; so you can see how much good the money can do that you are saving and earning in your Mission Bands at home. I could tell you stories like this about each one of the ten children whom we have, but my letter has grown too long already so I must stop for this time.

“There’s always work in plenty
 For little ones to do,
 Something waiting every day
 That none may try but you.
 Little burdens you may lift,
 Happy steps that you can take,
 Happy hearts that you may comfort
 For the blessed Saviour’s sake.
 There’s room for children’s service
 In this busy world of ours;
 We need them as we need the birds
 And need the summer flowers.”