

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

JO GAKKO, KOFU,
YAMANASHI, JAPAN,
January 11th, 1898.

Dear readers of the PALM BRANCH:

For some time I have been desirous of writing a letter to you, but the busy days and hours, freighted with so many opportunities of service, seem to leave little time for general letter writing. I think perhaps you will be interested in hearing about our work among children.

We quite often have children's meetings, when many little boys and girls will listen attentively to what we have to say to them. We also have several Sunday Schools in private houses, here and there through the city. In these there gather, every Sunday, nearly 200 children.

Most of these come from very poor homes. Even in this cold weather, when warm clothing is needed, many of these children are barefooted and their little hands and feet are red with cold. Their clothing is chiefly cotton and when very poor, they may have on only one old cotton garment to keep them warm. This is often because their fathers love 'Sake' (an intoxicating liquor made from rice), more than they do their children.

These little boys wear their hair cut short—but the little girls have their hair done up. They do not let it hang down their backs as do girls at home.

The little boys as well as the little girls in these Sunday Schools often have their little baby brothers and sisters fastened to their backs and when the little ones begin to cry and disturb the Sunday School they often have to go outside until they are pacified.

They all sit on the floor, for there are no seats in Japanese houses, and the little wooden shoes which are held on by a strap through which the big toe passes, are left outside when they go into the Sunday School.

In most of the Sunday Schools, the children are very good, but in some of them, especially where there are bad boys, they are somewhat noisy and it is not easy to keep them quiet. Some of the children go to school and know how to read. At the Sunday Schools, they learn to recite Scripture verses and many things about Christ who loves little children and wishes them all to love and serve Him. Some of the little ones have improved very much in their conduct since they began to attend Sunday School.

At Christmas time we had a gathering of all these schools in the church, and such a good time as we had. Most of the little ones had tried to come clean and tidy, and yet so many of them looked so poorly clothed for such cold weather that we could not but feel sorry for them. They were all well behaved and quiet. I

wonder if so many poor little children gathered together at home would behave as well.

The children went through a program of dialogues, recitations and the like, very nicely, but you would have thought the singing strange. You would recognise the music to be the same as that sung by the boys and girls of the Sunday Schools at home, though the children here cannot sing so well yet as they can, but the words sung you would not understand at all. "Jesu ware wo aisū," a hymn sung very often in Japan, means "Jesus loves me," so, though the words are different the meaning is the same.

One little eight year old boy comes to Sunday School regularly. Three years ago his father died, and his mother, little brother and himself live together. For a living they make the very smallest wooden combs that are used by the Japanese. The mother prepares the wood, while this little boy makes them, and that very skilfully, I believe. He is able to make forty in a day and thus is of great help to his mother. He cannot go to school, but he is always present at Sunday School.

There is another little boy in the same school who is quite blind. He takes care of his little sister, carrying her around on his back and trying to amuse her. Small-pox is a very common disease in Japan, and this little boy became blind through an attack of this dread disease. His teacher says he is the best in the school for remembering what he is taught.

I hope you will remember these poor little children in your prayers, and ask "Our Father" to bless them and help them to grow up good Christian men and women.

Yours sincerely,
E. A. PRESTON.

KEEPING ACCOUNTS.

There is a story told of a little boy who began keeping accounts when he was seven years old. A little blank book was given him. On one page he wrote, "What is mine:" on the opposite, "What is God's." Then he kept a careful account. He gave one-fifth to God. He did not do it for a little while only, but kept it up faithfully. That little boy will grow into a Christian giver, without doubt. He did this because he thought it was right, not because he was told to do it, and so he found it a pleasure. We always find those things pleasant in the end which we do to please God.

A young girl began many years ago to keep an account much in the same way. She had no home. She was obliged to earn all the money she had. But she gave one-tenth of it all to the Lord. She, too, had a little book, and kept her accounts faithfully. Said she: "I would not dare use the Lord's money for myself; no, not if I were starving." This young girl was greatly prospered in her life.