

About China.

If all the boys and girls who will read this LINK could be in China for two hours this morning they would see living realities instead of the word-pictures we try to show you each month.

To-day we will visit, in our thoughts, a very rich home in China. We want to find out all we can about the foolish custom of binding feet.

We ask for the lady of the house, and are shown into a beautiful room with marble floors. As the lady is expecting us she has asked some of her friends in to see us. Each lady has come riding on the back of a large-footed female slave. As their feet are only about two inches long they are no use for walking more than a few steps at a time. Only the very rich can afford to be so helpless as such little feet make their owners.

We tell them that we are from America, and very anxious to learn all we can about the way little girls have their feet bound. The lady whose guests we are offers to show us something about it. We follow her very slowly into another room. Her feet are so tiny that she is obliged to sit down and rest after walking a few steps on her marble floor. Listen! Hear these cries of pain! "What is the matter? Is anybody sick?" we ask; but the answer comes that the little girls of the house are crying with the pain in their feet. Come into this richly furnished room. Here a little ten-year-old girl is walking about in such a queer way. She has two high stools and rests one knee on each. Then with her hands she moves one stool a step and then the other, thus walking on her knees, without letting her sore feet touch the floor. Her feet have been bound about two years, and are fast becoming dead and painless. Her little sister is lying crosswise on the bed with her feet dangling over the side, so that the edge of the bedstead presses on the nerves behind the knees in such a way as to dull the pain a little. There she lies, day and night, swinging her feet and moaning. Even in the coldest night she cannot wrap herself in a quilt or blanket, for the least return of warmth to her limbs makes them feel as if every joint was being pierced with fine needles. Here, in our homes, these little girls would be running about from morning until night, skipping their ropes, playing tag, or driving their dollies about in the pretty little carriages made for them nowadays. My eldest little daughter has one that will hold her four dollies nicely, and she delights to take them out for long drives. As she is nearly four years old, if I were a Chinese mother I would call her in,—"Come, Fanny, your feet are growing too large by playing so much; they must be bound up now." So the people that do this cruel work would come in with their bandages. Taking off her dainty little stockings and buttoned boots, they would begin their work of destroying the foot God has made for use.

The bandages are made of firm, flexible cloth, about two inches wide and ten feet long. They would lay one end on the inside of the instep, then carry it over her four small toes, drawing them down upon the sole. Now, the bandage passes under the foot, over the instep and around the heel, drawing the heel and great toe nearer together, making a big lump on the instep and a hollow place in the sole underneath. Over and over again the bandage is put on in this way until it is all used up, and the end sewn firmly down on the cloth below. After one month of pain has been endured, the bandaged feet are soaked in hot water. Then the cloths are taken off, the dead skin rubbed away, the little foot pressed still tighter into the desired shape, pulverized alum laid on, and clean

bandages quickly used instead of the old ones. If the blood is once more allowed to circulate through the foot the rebinding can hardly be endured. The child suffers least when her feet are so firmly bound as to be quite numb—by the bandages tightly pressing on them. "How can those mothers be so cruel?" some little bright-eyed girl is asking me. The only reason given by them to this question is, that women would be laughed at and despised if their feet were like those of the men. A Chinese man when asked this question replied, "it is necessary that our wives have their feet bound or they would be as strong as we are, and we could not beat them when they disobeyed us." Next month I will tell you some of the sad results to the little girls in their after lives from following this useless custom. Remember that nine-tenths of all the little girls in China are suffering in this way to-day, and then thank God that you live in a Christian land. Will you not pray for the missionaries in China who are trying to teach these mothers better?

SISTER BELLE.

480 LEWIS STREET, OTTAWA.

"The loveliest time in all the year,
When the laborer gains the reward of toil,
And the glad-some song of the reapers we hear,
As they joyfully gather the spoil.
(1) Lord of the harvest! permit me to be,
In the harvest of souls, a toiler for Thee."

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