

says she does not want the gods to know that he is a boy, for fear they will take him from her.

The girls have very dirty faces and rings in their ears, which from the top to the lobe are pierced with holes as large as nail holes. Some of them have rings as large around as a twenty-five cent piece in their noses, one nostril being pierced to receive it. They have thin *chuddas* wrapped around their bodies, through which the skin can be distinctly seen this cool morning in November. No wonder that some of them have bad colds. One little girl has a particularly dirty face; her mother has just died, and she must not be washed for three days. They are all bright children, and they say their lessons well; but it is time for *tiffin*, or luncheon, and we must hasten home. Perhaps I will call for you to drive another day.

Your friend,

MARY B. MUTCHEMORE.

SOME CHINESE CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

BY MRS. C. F. PECK, OF PANG CHUANG, CHINA.

A few days ago I learned of a custom, constantly observed here, but which I never before chanced to hear about. My little son and I were out walking, and we noticed almost all of the threshing-floors had large rings drawn on them, with a brick in the center of each circle, so I asked what it meant. The evening before a certain feast-day each farmer draws on his threshing-floor circles as large and as many as he hopes to have stacks of grain in the fall. In the center of each he draws the character for ten, 十, which marks it as surely his, and puts a brick on it to prevent the grain being blown away. If that day is pleasant there will surely be a good harvest; at least, that is what they believe. Naturally each threshing-floor that was marked at all had as many large circles as it could accommodate.

A day or two ago I heard another

absurd thing that is commonly believed. A woman, who is more intelligent than the great majority, asked me if we had crows in America. I answered that we did in some localities, but I had never seen any, "Do you have hail?" she asked. "Oh, yes." "Well, of course, then you have crows." I failed to see any connection between hail and crows, so I asked her how she knew. With an expression of surprise, as though she rather pitied my ignorance, she proceeded to explain that the ice was on or near the sky, and as the crows flew along they knocked pieces down, which we call hail. She believed this so firmly that, having had experience before in trying to correct some of her mistaken ideas, I contented myself, since this notion involved no moral wrong, by saying I did not believe that was the cause of hail.

I often am made to realize how much we gain from our religion that no false religion can give, and wish we could have all the time a true sense of its worth. It certainly would make us more anxious to give it, and the blessings it brings, to others. In talking once to a room full of women who belonged to the best sect I have ever heard of among the Chinese, who worship no idols, burn no paper for the dead, and have customs very similar to some of ours, especially one nearly the same as prayer, and communing with Lao Tien Yeh—"Venerable One in Heaven"—whom alone they worship, I asked one of these women in what they trusted when they prayed for forgiveness for sin. "To the grace and love of Lao Tien Yeh." "And where do you believe the soul goes after death?" The one who was answering me looked very sad as she said, "We do not know; we know nothing about it." The same day another woman, whom I asked if heathen never expected to see again those whom they had loved and who had died, said in reply, "Only in dreams, that is the only hope." Then I thought of our certain knowledge of a beautiful home waiting us, each and all, if we but serve the Lord here. How I wished all these women would but