

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

KOFU.

One of the four centres of our work in Japan is Kofu—a city of about 30,000 inhabitants, distant some 90 miles from Tokyo. It is the capital of the Province of Yamanashi, which is very mountainous. But there are several plateaux and valleys amongst the mountains, and the province is populous, having a population of some 450,000 people. Just at the foot of a hill facing the south, on the edge of a large plain is Kofu. It is surrounded by mountains on every side, many of them, in winter, often covered with snow and over and above them all towers cone-shaped Fuji, the peerless mountain of Japan, gleaming snowy white in the rays of the sun.

The culture of silk-worms, spinning and weaving silk are the chief industries of Yamanashi and consequently much of the land is laid out in mulberry bushes. These shoot out into leaf in the spring, the young new shoots are cut off and the leaves are fed to the silk-worm. New shoots again grow and these are cut and fed in the fall, thus introducing a second silk season. Many of the women and girls in the homes are busy between seasons in weaving silk on hand looms. Some of the colors are beautiful—delicate or bright shades of pink, blue, green, etc. Certain villages are noted for the production of certain colors. Many women and girls are employed in spinning and weaving factories, which are kept open most of the year.

Then, too, Yamanashi is renowned for its fine grapes. You would be surprised to see its vineyards. The grape vines are not trained on upright trellis frames, as at home, but over a roofing of frame work, so that the vines form a beautiful canopy of green in summer. It is a pretty sight when the sun shines on the great reddish-green bunches of ripened grapes as they hang from the vines.

But many of the boys and girls of Canada would enjoy going to the crystal mines, from which are cut beautiful crystals. There are many crystal stores in Kofu, where the crystals may be found in their natural six-sided shape, in the rough or polished, or worked into beautiful balls, seals, or other articles.

There are some foreign buildings in Kofu, as the Post office, Provincial buildings, schools, silk factories, a bank, etc.; and right near our school is the prison, with a great plaster wall all around it, and on each corner a watch-tower.

There are just three foreigners living in Yamanashi, a French Roman Catholic priest, my associate, and and myself.

Our home is in Kofu, where we have a girls' school. A Christian school for boys has been recently started, and it is meeting with great success. Our school is built partly in foreign and partly in Japan style. We

have between thirty and forty students, while the boys' school has even more. Many of our girls are daughters of some of the wealthiest families in the province, while still others are the daughters of Christians, some among them being supported by the kind people at home, who are working as earnestly to help teach the boys and girls of Japan about Christ.

The girls eat Japanese food, consisting chiefly of rice, soup, fish, and tea. They do not use knives and forks, but a pair of sticks called chopsticks. They are very deft in the use of these. They sleep on the straw-carpeted floor, on large thick quilts, which they put down at night and take up in the morning.

I think at least half of the girls are Christians. A short time ago seven or eight of them were very anxious to be baptized, but their parents would not allow them, the great reason being the fear that it would interfere with the girls getting good husbands.

We have seven Sunday schools here and there and there through the city; but further details about our work among the boys and girls I must leave until another time.

E. A. P.

EXTRACTS FROM A PRIVATE LETTER.

KOFU, JAPAN, 1895.

You will want to hear a little about the work.

Our school is doing nicely. We have over thirty pupils, with the promise of a good increase at the beginning of the school year. One student graduates in English as well as Japanese, and she expects to remain in the school a little while longer, continuing her English and her music. She is a good Christian girl and one of our class leaders. The girls learn to cook, embroidery, (Japanese) and foreign fancy work, the "boto," (those who wish), and they have the privilege of acquiring the elaborate etiquette of their tea ceremonies here. The "boto" will probably be familiar to you as it is one of the best Japanese instruments of music.

A good work is done in the schools training and educating girls. It is doubtless true that many who are impressed with Christianity in the school, go out from its warmth to the coldness of heathen surroundings, and perchance lose all outward semblance of faith; but there is an education of opinion and an indefinable impress on character and life that is not easily lost—really a leavening influence that only eternity can measure and we have some cheering indications of permanent work done.

Perhaps no feature of our work is more encouraging than our Sunday school work. Our Sunday schools are well attended and several of the Christian students of our girls' schools are helping to carry them on. More of this in the future.

The effect of the war will be to do a great deal of good in advancing the cause of Christ through the east and in breaking down existing barriers to the free course of the truth. A very great step was gained in the permission given to the Christians to send Christian teachers to the Japanese army abroad and preach to them as well as teach them Christianity.

Yours in the work,

P.