

Woman's Work.

Conducted by Mrs. S. M. Brown and Miss Jessie R. Agnew, 372 Shaw Street, Toronto. Everything intended for this column should be sent to Mrs. S. M. Brown, Winton, Ont.

O. C. W. R. M.

President, Mrs. W. B. Malcolm, 89 Church St., Toronto; Cor. Sec., Miss Bella Sinclair, Blenheim; Treasurer, Miss Jennie Fleming, Kilsyth.

New Year's Day in Japan.

Of all the holidays of this holiday-loving people, New Year's day stands pre eminent. It is the day of days. It is everybody's birthday. A child born on Dec. 31 is a year old the next day; one born Jan. 2 is not a year old until next New Year's day, and so on. Everybody calls on everybody, taking the first three days of the new year for it. Good wishes and compliments abound. What bustle all over the city for a month before! Carloads of pine and bamboo are everywhere to be seen. Stalls are stationed at almost every corner for the sale of ornaments made of rice straw as ropes and rosettes. In a few days the work of decorating begins. Fringes of straw are draped on the outside of the houses, whole pine and bamboo trees are set up along the sides of the streets. Those who cannot afford whole trees have branches of the evergreen tacked to their houses. Every gateway is decorated with one or more of the national flags (these are white with a large red spot in the center). Flags of all nations and pretty colored lanterns are strung across the streets, giving the city a very holiday appearance. When at night a host of petty dealers arrange their wares on mats or low tables in front of the stores, leaving a very narrow passage for pedestrians, these stalls and stores ablaze with innumerable candles present a sight which makes one who is drawn along the streets by a little being in blue—in other words a jinriksha man—forget they are not in the land of fairies so often read and dreamed of in the happy days of childhood. Take the same or a different route in daytime, only walk this time, so as to be able to take in all the novelty of the ever pretty scene. Everybody is out of doors in a new and pretty gown, the children in all the colors of the rainbow. Men, women and girls all playing the national game of shuttle-cock and battle dore, while every boy without exception has his kite flapping joyously in the air.

We notice that every pine and bamboo has a piece of white paper tied to it, and that the straw rope rosettes over every door are ornamented with an orange, a crab or a lobster, a piece of charcoal and white paper. We industriously inquire from our teachers and native acquaintances the meaning of the combination, as we have not lived in Japan for two months without learning that in all their customs there is some meaning.

We shall only give you the significance of each article as it was given us, and let you work out the story for your self.

The bamboo and pine trees being evergreens denote strength and patience at all times. The bamboo is bent with the wind till it seems that it must break, but it comes back to its upright position again as strong and pliant as ever. The pine heeds neither wind nor storm. The rice-straw and charcoal with the occupants plenty to eat and to keep warm during the year. Red lobster—red means happy. The lobster being bent almost double signifies old age. And here let me say that old age is considered very honorable in Japan; great respect is shown by all to any old person, be he rich or poor. Orange signifies from generation to generation. And last, but not least, the white paper is a defence against the devil.

He is supposed to be frightened at it and so keeps away. Can you now make from these a joyous wish for the new year? **MARY M. RIOCH.**
Tokyo, Japan.

The following is taken from a letter from Miss Rioch: "Walking along the street one day I startled my companion by the questions, 'What is that?' 'What does it mean?' A boy, carrying a horrid looking head supposed to be that of a lion with a cloth attached which covered the boy's body, went into every house, while the head opened and shut its mouth by means of a spring. Accompanying the boy were three others, one with a flute, the other two with drums, on which they pounded and blew, making noise enough to alarm the whole neighborhood. This was done to frighten the devil away, while the head was supposed to devour all diseases in the different houses. This sight was not seen in the native part of Tokyo, but in the foreign part, not a minute's walk from more than half a dozen Christian churches and institutions. Yet we hear at home that Japan may be Christianized in ten years, that the missionaries may be recalled and the work left entirely with the natives. I for one am fully convinced that the author of such a statement either never saw Japan or was looking through rather peculiarly-colored glasses. When I look around and see so many, many heathen temples, some of which are magnificent specimens of architecture, and so few, so lamentably few Christian churches, it seems to me the needs of Japan are great and many."

God only knows how often our lips are dumb when we might witness for Him. Even when conscience cries out to us, "Speak, speak!" and words would gush forth, we force them back, and our opportunity is gone. Why? Because, perhaps, we are ashamed. Paul, who gave up all the world holds valuable, says: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." We are afraid to speak foolishly, and so do harm. "If any man of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." So you see, even should we make a mistake He "upbraideth not." The more wisdom we ask and use the more He teaches us by our own experience.

We are timid about trying to pluck out a mote from our brother's eye, when a beam is in our own. That depends upon kindness of heart and purpose, lack of harsh judgment.

Sometimes texts are merely the garb of Satan who wishes to tempt us by appearing as an angel of light.

We are self-conscious, we cannot argue logically, we are naturally of poor speech, we might suffer sneers and laughter, and so on, we could enumerate one hundred and one reasons why we should not speak of, and for, Christ to neighbor or workfellow; thus the personal work and influence of one soul upon another is left undone. We are all willing to do "some great thing," but ask the small service of a word, and we are dumb.

So few of us can do much, and a word is so little really. If we cannot preach nor sing we ought to speak. If every Christian made it a rule to speak to one sinner or inconsistent Christian every week, how long would it be before the world would be evangelized? They may be waiting and longing for a hopeful, helpful word, and it never comes; we are dumb.

Perhaps this may be of the "kind that goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." **J. R. A.**

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Children's Work.

Mrs. Jas. Lediard, Supt., Owen Sound, Ont. to whom communications for this department should be addressed.

DEAR CHILDREN:—Those of you who read Dr. Macklin's letter in the last EVANGELIST were glad, I am sure, to learn that our boy is well, and that the money I sent for his support has reached its destination. The Doctor says that Wang Wau Hai is about thirteen years old; I had an idea from his photograph that he could not be nearly that age. He is not a Christian yet, and the same thing may be said about a number of our mission band children, who are older than that. Will you not think seriously about this matter and set him a good example by confessing the Saviour and obeying Him? I learn that Miss Rose Eckler has opened a school for girls in Hankin, or is about to do so. I think if you all try a little harder, and we succeed in raising \$200 this year, that we might adopt a little girl in China and support both boy and girl. I want you to think seriously about this matter, and let every Band make some extra effort during the next three months to increase your funds, so that we may have the money to do it, if it seems best.

DEAR MRS. LEDIARD:—I suppose you are beginning to think our land is dead, or at least has forgotten to report to you. Well, it is very hard to keep up the interest among children or at least I find it so, but still for all we are sticking together, and a few of us are working away, trusting to God for a

glorious harvest of souls for our dear Master some day.

We have organized a junior society of C. E. in connection with the Band, but our money will go for the same purpose as before. We think that the J. E. is just one step higher, and the next step will be into the church as Christians, and then the next the Y. P. S. C. E. I believe children trained in those societies will be fit subjects for heaven.

I hope the other Bands are reporting more regularly than we, or your position will be rather a discouraging one.

I hope to meet you next year at the convention and get some advice from you, for I know there are better ways than mine for entertaining children.

I will forward to Miss Fleming \$2.10 for this quarter.

Wishing you many happy returns of the season, I remain your sister,
HANNAH E. McDOUGALL.
No. 36 Durham street, Guelph.

WILLING WORKERS, CECIL ST. TORONTO.
Toronto, Feb. 8th 1893.

DEAR MRS. LEDIARD:

As the third quarter of our missionary year has gone, we know you will be looking for our quarterly report. We hold our meetings on the first Wednesday of the month, which have been very well attended. We study the lessons given in "Little Builders at Work." At our December meeting the band wished to send our boy, "Little Wang" a Xmas Card, which they did in the form of a nice picture book. It was placed on the Xmas tree, and sent to him, explaining whom it was from. As we have got over all the letters of the alphabet in scripture texts, we are beginning over again, have taken as our motto for this year: "Tis more Blessed to Give than to Receive." We have on hand \$3.04 as our dues, and hope to continue faithful.

Yours in the Master's Work,
ROSIE HALL.
FANNIE FORRESTER.

Blenheim, Feb. 16, 1893.

DEAR MRS. LEDIARD:

The "Little Gleaners" maintain their wonted interest in missions and in the meetings of the Band. At last meeting, a card containing the beatitudes was given to each child.

Since last report our president sent \$1 to the treasurer; the amount being small on account of many of the mite-boxes not being yet opened. The money in the remaining mite-boxes will be sent in to swell the next quarter's contributions. Yours truly,
LIZZIE CAMPBELL.

The report from Guelph was mislaid, for which I am sorry, and should have been published in January. There are still some of our bands which have not reported this year. Let me beg of the leaders of these bands to let me know how they are doing. If they are doing nothing, I would say try once more and you will succeed. **J. E. L.**

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Feb. 17 1893.

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The Dumb Devil.

There has always been more or less discussion upon demoniacal possession. Personally, as to my belief or disbelief in such a thing, I am not committing myself by the rather extraordinary title I have chosen for this short article.