

Canadian Missionary Link

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THE FOREIGN MAIL BOX

SCHOOL-DAYS.

Dear LINK:

Years have gone by since last you had a letter from me. I wanted to write you upon my arrival in India a year ago, but time has been filled to overflowing, and the sad part of it is that, with all one's activity, very little ever seems to be accomplished. If I had not actually lived it myself, I could not have understood how incessantly busy one can be, especially when in charge of a boarding school, where the children have access to one all hours of the day and night. The past year has been one of the busiest of my life, and correspondence has been almost eliminated. When I went to the hills for May and June, I thought every letter in my possession would be answered; but, alas for comfortable speculations and good intentions! What time was spent in writing was put mainly upon school work. I wrote to the supporters of every individual child in the school, as well as to the inspectors, the secretaries and treasurers of Boards, etc.

Would you like to know some of the things I do in a day? At half-past five I rise and dress. About six I go out, and from the big storehouse behind the bungalow give the supplies for the day to the boys appointed for that work. These supplies include paddy (unhusked rice, which the boys must pound at noon until all the husks and bran come off, and hand back to me in the evening as white rice), pounded white rice (so much per boy per meal), vegetables,

salt, curry powder, onions, tamarind, gingelly oil, dried fish or pulse, or other curry stuffs, and coal oil for their little tin kitchen-lamps. Then the day's supply of wood must be given, weighed on scales in the wood storehouse. In addition, I have to keep an eye on all the utensils used in the cooking and rice-cleaning operations, and know when and why new ones must be given. These include earthen pots, brass cooking dishes, baskets of various sizes, tin cups, brooms, large water tins, rope and bucket for the well, axe, large knife set upright in wooden stand, rice pestles (huge heavy wooden sticks, each with an iron ring around the lower end), half-a-dozen grinding-stones (the "mill" meant in the sentence, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill") and other things too numerous to mention, several of them with no name in English, because the thing itself is unknown to English-speaking people.

To continue my story, my round of the dormitories is made sometimes in the early morning and sometimes after school in the evening. Breakfast comes as soon as possible after 6.30. This is known everywhere in India as "chota haziri," meaning "little breakfast." At 7.15 the warning bell for school rings, followed at 7.25 by the second bell, when all gather in the central classroom for opening exercises. These consist of a hymn, Bible reading, and prayer. We read the daily readings in connection with the international Sunday School Lessons, which lessons we