

## FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

CHENTU, CHINA.

PERHAPS it would interest some of the boys and girls of Canada to hear a little concerning the schools of China, and the contrast may help them more fully to appreciate their privileges.

In China there is no school system, and in the rural districts no schools. In the cities the Emperor, or some wealthy person, may pay the expenses of a few teachers, while all the other schools are private enterprises, the pupils paying a few hundred cash, (a cash equals about 12th of a cent) per month to the teacher.

Do not let that word "school" bring up before your minds the comfortable buildings you have at home; but imagine, if you can, a small room with a mud floor, paper instead of glass in the windows, no pictures, etc. to brighten the walls. Instead of fine desks and comfortable seats, small tables and benches without backs, and not a fire at any season of the year, and you have a fair picture of a Chinese school-room. That luxury of a fine play ground they also know nothing about.

And yet the children—boys principally because there are only a couple of girls' schools in this city of about 500,000 inhabitants—arrive there shortly after daylight and remain until dark, with an interval of a couple of hours for dinner. While passing along the street one will hear them studying, and there is no mistaking the sound, as all the pupils, of whom there are generally from 16 to 30, repeat the characters in the loudest tone possible, each one appearing to try who can shout the loudest. It is not necessary they should know the meaning of the character. To repeat it parrot-like is all that is required, and thus the memory is cultivated at the expense of the thinking and reasoning powers. Those branches which cultivate these powers are almost totally neglected. When the lesson is learned the pupils come up, one by one, to the teacher, turn their backs to him and repeat it as fast as possible, then make their bow and return to their seats.

Then, too, the dress of these children would seem very strange to a foreign child, particularly the mode of dressing the hair. As the head is shaved when the children are very young, while the hair is growing out you will see any number of queues on one head, while a round spot is kept shaved on the centre of the head. As they approach the age of 12 years the front of the boy's head is shaved and the hair is all gathered in one queue at the back, while girls' hair in front is allowed to grow and is all coiled at the back.

But the most pitiable sight is to see these little girls limping around on their poor bound feet, not able to run and play, and paining them so, at times, they can scarcely sit still. You little girls at home who are free to raise your feet at will, can scarcely conceive of the suffering some endure here.

Another thing the children of Canada know nothing about is what it would mean to be sold by their parents. A short time ago, on going in one of the school rooms, the face of a strange little girl was

noticed, and on making enquiries I was told she had been bought the evening before by one of the pupil's mother for 1000 cash, as the father was dead and the mother had nothing to give her to eat or wear. Hence she was sold as a little slave girl.

What can we, each and every one, do to make life somewhat brighter for these poor heathen children? They appreciate what is done for them. The mothers of some of the little girls asked that the mission schools be kept open during the summer, as the rooms were cooler and pleasanter than their homes. Would any little Canadian boy or girl like to be deprived of their vacation for this reason?

They readily learn our Christian books and thus the truths of the gospel are carried into the homes. And who can tell what the harvest may be? It is only ours to sow the seed and look to God for the increase. Do you not all want a share in the sowing of this seed?

S. BRACKBILL.

EXTRACTS OF A LETTER FROM  
MRS. SPENCER.

Like my new home very much indeed, it is much more pleasant than living on the Coast. We have not the sudden rain here and "spongy" ground, but a clear, lovely climate, and walks over the hills in all directions. We had a long wait on the Coast before the water was low enough for travelling, but we did get started after a while.

The trip up was all I expected. I should not like to take it very often in a canoe, but I dare say it could be worse than we had, for on the whole, we had very fair weather, but I was glad enough when we reached this place. I find the people somewhat different from the Coast people, but I like them. The language is quite different, but I can find out words here and there that are familiar, and hope soon to be able to make myself understood. Indeed when alone with an Indian, I can make myself understood after a fashion now, but use a good many signs. The people are very anxious to learn. How earnestly they do study the Bible, but their minds are very, very dark yet. Their first real turning from heathenism was only last winter. That blessed work is still going on, souls are coming to Christ. In almost every service some souls decide. We hope the time is not far distant when the village, as a whole, shall turn from works of darkness to the Light of the world.

We have organized an Epworth League here—the people have taken hold of the idea, and it seems to work well.

To-day Mr. Spencer, with about twenty-five Indians, left for Kish-ca-gaas, a two days journey, walking—the only way to reach the place. That village is still in the darkest darkness, I trust this will be the turning point.

So I am all alone, the nearest white person ten miles from here—the nearest white lady thirty miles distant—but I do not fear—of course I feel lonely! \*

My life is a busy one, almost too busy even to miss the mails \* \* \* \* \*