

LETTER FROM HONAN, CHINA.

BY OUR MISSIONARY REV. J. GOFORTH.

A most interesting letter, for young and old, is the following, sent to the CHILDREN'S RECORD, by Rev. R. Douglas Fraser, Bowmanville:

CHANG-TE-FU, HONAN, CHINA,

December, 1895,

DEAR MR. FRASER,—

Mrs. Goforth and children arrived in due time from Canada, and we moved to this city Oct. 28th.

When we drove up to the gate, scores of our neighbors, men, women, and children, came rushing pell mell to see the foreigners, that is, the female and child portion of them, for no foreign women or children had ever been here before.

They were well behaved, though noisy. It was so nice to see an old woman come forward to help my wife out of the cart. It struck us as a marked contrast to the hooting and mud throwing which greeted us on our first arrival into Honan a few years ago.

We have seen busy days since our arrival.

Mrs. Goforth has had about two thousand five hundred women and girls in to see her. Some days she has scarce had time to eat, having had to receive more than two hundred visitors between breakfast time and sun-down. Her aim was always to tell some of the Gospel story and play and sing a hymn or two.

She has had to get her house set in order partly in the evening. Besides, we had the converts in two and three nights a week learning to sing.

I had an extra lot of work on account of putting up some Chinese houses together with a brick wall around part of the mission property.

I got one of our converts, a reformed opium smoker, to help me. Before conversion he made a living by gambling and story telling. He now tells the Gospel story in a very attractive manner.

A fifteen days' fair was held at a sacred mount some fifteen miles to the west of this city. The pilgrims passing on their way to and from the mount greatly increased the

number of our visitors. Some days two or three hundred men would hear the Gospel in our guest room between sunrise and sunset.

We had not to get up new discourses day by day, but spoke as led of the Spirit, still the mere effort of speaking so continuously taxed the strength of both of us.

The second Sunday after we came here the crowd grew so great as to be unmanageable. The immediate cause of such a turn out in the section where we live, was that it was the anniversary of a great religious festival.

On that occasion the multitudes wearing chains and wooden collars formed in a monster procession and brought the guardian deity of the city "*chéng-huang*" to the North suburb, to "*fang kuei*" literally, to let the devils loose.

The Chinese believe that these evil spirits are the cause of diseases, plagues of every kind, and as disease is more prevalent in the summer months, this same deity must come out in the spring time to "*shou kuei*" *i.e.* to collect the devils.

The processionists after doing penance, came to see what new diversion they could find with the foreigners. They soon broke down the mat and corn-stock defences at one of the gates of the new compound, and came in, but with some persuasion I got them out and around to the front of the compound where we live.

I took our two children, Paul and Florence, out to the front gate as a counter attraction, to ease the pressure. It had the desired effect, and kept the crowd away from breaking into the new compound.

For more than two hours the little folks were on exhibition, but they enjoyed it because the people supplied them with candy and peanuts, and varied the entertainment by volleys of fire crackers.

When the crowd dwindled down to manageable proportions I had a most effective time preaching until dusk.

These days have been days of blessing. Many have been interested. Some have come again and again to enquire more fully. God is favoring us in the opening of Chang-te fu.