

Suggested Programme for March.

1. Opening Hymn—"The morning light is breaking."
2. Short sentence prayers by leader and children.
3. A few verses from the Bible, read in turn.
4. Roll call.
5. Business—Reports &c.
6. Verse of some bright hymn.
7. Dialogue or recitation.
8. Field study questions, with map or blackboard.
9. Distribute Palm Branch.
10. A few words of prayer by visitor or leader and march out to the tune of "Onward Christian Soldiers."

FIELD STUDY FOR MARCH.**CHINA.**

During the last three months we have been considering our missions in Japan. Before turning westward to study the fields in our own land, let us look at the work and its workers in old Cathay. This great and ancient empire, so vast in territory, with its swarming cities, and thronging plains; with its mighty waterways and lofty mountains, and everywhere the crowding humans, holds, in a far west province, one city that has for us growing interest. In establishing our mission in China it was necessary to choose between the two stations of the General Society, Kiating and Chentu. Chentu, the capital of Sz-chuen, was decided upon, and in the spring of 1892 work was opened up in that large and interesting city.

Sz-chuen is the largest of China's eighteen provinces, and is situated in the central west, close lying on Tibet. Great rivers traverse it (hence its name, meaning "four streams"); mountains wall it from its western neighbour, and raise their red sand-stone peaks and great ranges throughout the whole province, while roads cross and re-cross, forming highways for its trade and travel. For the districts of Sz-chuen are so rich in tea, tobacco, salt, rice, opium, drugs and wax, as to supply not only each other's needs, but also to export these products to other provinces, and sometimes to the wide world beyond.

The population of Sz-chuen is rather greater than that of Japan, and seven or eight times that of Canada! Vast tracts are occupied by native tribes. The larger part of the people is engaged in gardening and farming, all kinds of small fruits thriving marvelously, while grains are readily cultivated, and in some districts sugar and cotton are grown. To carry on the growing trade of this busy province many millions of its people are occupied in commerce and manufacture.

The journey from Victoria, B. C., to our mission station, Chentu, is a long one, taking three and a half months. This journey may be divided into three stages. First, Victoria to Shanghai; second, Shanghai to Ichang; third, Ichang to Chentu. Leaving Victoria and crossing the Pacific the steamer reaches Japan, stopping at Yokohama. Then it runs through the beautiful Inland Sea, remaining a day at Kope, the seaport of the fascinating old city of Kioto—"the heart of Japan;" thence out again into stormier waters, and across the China Sea to Shanghai. So in the short

time of twenty-four days nearly 5,000 miles have been made, and the first stage of the journey is done. From Shanghai up, up the mighty river of Yang-tse a thousand miles by steamer to Ichang, a pretty town of 10,000 inhabitants, not counting its boat population. This bit of the way is covered in ten days.

The last stage of the journey is very tedious. The cumbersome house-boat toils slowly up the rapid-flowing river through the remaining thousand miles that separate Ichang from Chentu. These two and a half months of life in a house-boat hold much of excitement and somewhat of danger, for here the mighty Yangtse rushes madly through the stupendous gorges, and the opposing winds, for which at times the canons form a great tunnel, are foes not easily overcome. Yet one day the long, long journey is ended, and the city of Chentu, nearly 7,000 miles from the home-land, is reached.

Looking closer into the life of China, we find that mighty evils lie, like ugly ulcers, poisoning the life of this great people—among them being the almost universal practice of foot-binding, opium smoking, infanticide. Woman's life in China is very sad and limited, often a hopeless drudgery. Many thousands of girl babies are killed every year, or sold to baby-merchants, who re-sell them for domestic service, or for other and more hideous purposes. What great healing has China for these sores? "Is there no balm in Gilead" for such? Long, long ago, five centuries before our Lord's coming two great Chinese sages lived and learned and taught—Confucius and Laou-tze—and down through the centuries their teachings have been followed, especially that of Confucius, whose precepts have become great moral laws to the Chinese people. Then from India at the beginning of the Christian era Buddhism came. But we know that these poor, faulty religions have failed to greatly help China. Her many millions cry to us—unknowingly it may be—for the story of the Christ. And it is being told them by great and good ones of many creeds. And almost, if we listen, we may hear from the distant city of Chentu the faint echo of His name, as it is being taught there by three or four of His servants, who look to us across continents and waters for love's aid and cheer.

St. John.

A. S.

QUESTIONS FOR MARCH.

1. In what province is the China Mission of our church situated?
2. Where is Sz-chuen, and what does the name mean?
3. Tell all you know about the province?
4. What cities were selected for Mission Stations by our General Missionary Society?
5. In which of these is our W. M. S. work?
6. Tell something of the journey that must be taken to reach—1st, Shanghai; 2nd, Ichang; 3rd, Chentu?
7. How many miles from Shanghai to Chentu, and how long does the journey take?
8. Tell what you can of religion in China, and the condition of women in that land?

Use Map of China, and before beginning questions let children tell all they can about the Yang-tse River.