

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

A Letter to the Readers of Palm Branch.

Dear Friends,—I call you such because, although this is my first letter to your paper, I feel we must all be friends in Christ Jesus, when we are all interested in missions, and I feel quite at home with you. Having been requested to tell you what I know about mission work at Norway House, I think perhaps it would be well first of all to say whereabouts that particular place is, as all may not know. It is a mission station situated on Lake Winnipeg, where Indians have been under the care of the Methodist Church for over 50 years, and distant from the city of Winnipeg about 400 miles. Supposing we wanted to go there, we could not make this journey of 400 miles in a railway train. As the country in that part of the world is covered with a beautiful mantle of snow for seven months of the year, we could go in the way the missionary does most of his travelling, that is by dog-train, and for a hotel in which to stay over night, we would probably have to do as this same missionary frequently does—pick out a thick clump of trees, shovel away the snow from the ground about the centre, lay down some boughs there, put up a few for protection at our backs and then, having made a fire in front, draw our robes and wraps as closely about our persons as possible and lie down to sleep. If this same missionary intends returning by the same road he will probably dig a hole under his camp-fire, put some provisions in it for himself and dogs, cover it over with snow (which soon turns into ice) and by this means save his food from being eaten up by wild animals.

Supposing that we had arrived at Norway House, we would find that six or seven hundred Indians belong there and about a dozen white and half-breed families. It is the central point for the whole Indian work of our church on Lake Winnipeg district, which takes in about 3,000 Indians. Our Missionary Society sustains here one missionary and two teachers. These Indians are Crees, and when brought under the influence of the Gospel are industrious and willing to do what they can to improve the circumstances of their families. Sometimes the men make long, laborious voyages for the Hudson Bay Company, hiring themselves for a year, perhaps, and they are found to faithfully fulfil their engagements.

Another thing said about them is, that when far away from home and the mission house, they strictly observe the Sabbath, something about which some white people, calling themselves Christians, might well take a lesson from them. Last winter a grand evangelistic service was held at this point, and when the invitation was given for those who felt their need of a Saviour to bow at the altar, many of these stolid Indians (as we styled them) were so influenced by God's spirit that they yielded, crying "What must I do to be saved." The missionary describes it as being a genuine old-time Methodist revival. The missionaries, who have been stationed here from time to time, have no doubt done their very best for these people, but accounts are often given us here in Winnipeg of the great

suffering endured by both the missionaries and their people, which could in many cases be at least greatly relieved if there was more money in the missionary treasury. At the last board meeting of the W. M. S. it was decided to send to Norway House, as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, a trained medical nurse. There is a good deal of sickness among these people, partly because their medicine man never says anything about dirt or want of ventilation, and in many, many cases the poor sick ones have just to suffer and suffer on until death frees them. But with a trained nurse there many of their ailments could be relieved and cured, and much good accomplished, as by this means their hearts would be reached and touched, and so ready access would be obtained for the story of "Jesus and His love." It is from Norway House and vicinity that most, if not all, the Indian boys and girls come who are now in our Indian Industrial School at Brandon, Man., where a grand work is being done for them, in many ways, that will benefit them both for this world and for that which is to come.

I fear the editor will think my letter already too long, so I will close, only adding that I trust you will all feel greater interest than ever in our Indian work at Norway House, and aid it in any way possible to you.

Yours sincerely,

C. E. DOISEN,

Recording-Secretary Man. and N. W.
Con. Branch of W. M. S.

CHINESE GIRLS AT HOME.

A GREAT many little girls in China, while very young, are able to add their mite to the family income by learning one of the trades which employ the busy fingers of poor Chinese women.

A large number of children are taught to make soles which are used for Chinese shoes. They paste pieces of old rag on a board or shutter till a thickness of about half an inch is obtained. The substance is then dried in the sun, and after being stripped from the board is ready for the shoemaker's use. Others, for a short season, are employed in the manufacture of the beautiful lanterns, of all shapes and sizes, which are in such universal request during the festivities of the first month of the year.

Other girls are skilful in making small paper boxes, used in jewellers' shops, and many are employed in the pleating of silk to lengthen queues.

The art of embroidering also supplies work to a large number of women and girls, and many little girls are kept so closely to their frames that their eyes are permanently injured.

But the industry which employs probably the largest number of girls is that of making paper money to be used in the worship of the gods.

Girls in China seldom receive any education. Sometimes a wealthy man will allow his daughter to share in her brother's studies for a short time, but generally it is considered unwise to allow girls to become as clever as their future husbands.