

About China.

Those who read in the October LINK about the foolish custom of foot binding in China will want to know the results that follow. After the long years of pain and wretchedness, are the crippled girls and women any happier for their little feet? Only in knowing that they have followed the fashion, and in being as useless, helpless and uncomfortable as their neighbors. They are unable, if wives and mothers, to take proper care of their homes or children, so both are left very dirty and uncomfortable. The feet cannot be restored to their natural shape, and can never be used for standing upon even, unless tightly bandaged. They are frightful to look at, and we are told no bound-footed woman ever willingly lets her bare feet be seen. Even in bed white cotton shoes cover the deformed feet as embroidered silk or satin ones do in the day. The woman can never take long walks, and unless rich enough to ride seldom get far away from their untidy house. We can hardly imagine these homes of the poorer classes. Often a large family lives, sleeps and eats in a single room, and their pigs and chickens share this with them! We do not wonder at hearing that cholera, smallpox and various kinds of vermin are constant visitors. We would consider these houses mere huts or hovels. No floor but the hard earth; no windows except sometimes a small one in the roof. When the door is closed there is little opportunity for breathing pure air. As these huts are crowded closely together, even built on to each other, often the very yards are full of filth of every description, while the scent on every side would be something horrible for us to feel. These homes descend from father to son, and frail as they seem have lasted for several generations without one real house-cleaning. Another terrible custom is that of keeping dead bodies for months and in some cases for years in these homes.

The peace and happiness of a family is supposed to depend on the graves of dead parents being made in a place they would like. A fortune teller is called in and asked to choose such a grave for the dead man or woman. But the exact place thought satisfactory is hard to find and the children chose to keep the coffin in there home to prevent the curses of their dead ancestors, thereby inflicting more misery on the living members of their family. We wonder as we read and hear of these things how human beings can live in such dirty and unclean habits. I recently heard a lecturer describing "China Town" in a city in the United States, and from his stories we learned that their bad habits are not all left in China.

The use of opium is another great evil in these Chinese homes. It is even worse if possible than the drinks that make people drunk in our land in its effects on the person and home of the user. When we remember that our missionaries go down into the depths of heathenism, both in India and in China, and visit dirty, bad-smelling huts, sitting down in them to tell the women and children of Jesus, we can realize a little of the hardships of their work. A missionary once said to me "Nothing but the love of Jesus would make us able to endure the sights and smells of many a heathen village." But they feel the great need of these people. Millions of men and women and children dying without God. Dark, dreary, uncomfortable lives on earth and no knowledge of anything better when death comes, and each soul is precious to the Saviour. Can we ever thank God enough for our homes in a Christian land? Let us show our thankful hearts for all His blessing to us by trying to help the poor heathen in every way we can.

The Chinese women who have heard of God do all they can to tell others about Him. I remember hearing of two of these women who slept in a stable during the hottest month in summer because no home had room for them in the village where they were trying to preach Jesus. Two others were beaten with rods until their backs were bleeding and sore, then were driven away from the village by the angry heathen. Do you think you hear the n saying "Well, we will never go near that place again if every body in it should perish"? Ah, no, before their wounds were healed they went back to the very same place to tell of Jesus and His love 'because' they felt how very much the people who had beaten them needed a Saviour. Do you wonder that God blessed such workers as these? Let us ask Jesus to help us to be as faithful in our work for Him as these Chinese workers are in their land.

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SISTER BELLE.

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