

HOME & SCHOOL

Saturday Night.

Placing the little hats all in a row,
Ready for church on the morrow, you know;
Washing wee faces and little black flats,
Putting them ready and fit to be kissed;
Putting them into clean garments and white—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Springing out holes in the little worn hose;
Leaving by shoes that are worn through the
toes;

Looking o'er garments so faded and thin—
Who but a mother knows where to begin?
Changing a button to make it look right—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Calling the little ones all round her chair,
Hearing them lip forth their evening prayer,
Telling them stories of Jesus of old,
Who loved to gather the lambs to His fold;
Watching, they listen with weary delight—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Creeping so softly to take a last peep
After the little ones all are asleep;
Anxious to know if the children are warm,
Tucking the blanket round each little form;
Kissing each little face rosy and bright—
That is what mothers are doing to-night.

Kneeling down gently beside the white bed,
Lowly and meekly she bows down her head,
Praying as only a mother can pray,
God guide and keep them from going astray.

Japan.

The Country, the Dress, Manners, and Customs of the People.

BY MRS. W. J. HUNTER.*

JAPAN is situated near the north-east coast of Asia. It consists of nearly four thousand islands of different sizes. The word Japan is a corruption of the Chinese word Nippon, or "Land of the Sunrise." The surface of these islands is generally rugged, but is everywhere well cultivated. The chief products are rice, barley, wheat, potatoes, tobacco, tea, cotton, silk, paper, Japanese wares, and all the fruits and vegetables of Southern Europe.

Japan covers an area of about 150,000 square miles, and has a population of thirty-four millions. Japan can boast of a complete naval establishment and a magnificent dry-dock. Light-houses, light-ships, bouys, beacons, &c., are multiplying rapidly. An efficient police preserves order. The country has been surveyed and mapped with precision. One hundred and six miles of railway are now in working order, with a prospect of more to follow.

The development of the postal and telegraphic system has been little short of marvelous. There are now some 4,000 post offices, besides receiving agencies, street letter boxes and money

* A paper read at a meeting of the Women's Missionary Society, held in the Metropolitan Church, Toronto.

order offices and postal savings banks. The Post Master General issues his annual report the same as in other countries, and when we read of some 23,000,000 letters, and over 7,000,000 post cards having passed through the post office in one year, we may safely infer that the Japanese are fond of letter-writing, while from the fact that during the same period nearly 8,000,000 newspapers were posted, it is evident that the native press is already a power in the state. The Japanese are a very intelligent people. Japanese students attend European schools of medicine and law; and, in fact, not one European art or science is now neglected by them.

In stature they are about equal to ordinary Europeans; their complexion is yellowish, with a little brown; the eyes are small; the nose thick, but well formed; the hair coarse, black, and straight. Their dress is peculiar. The men wear robes of different lengths, one being worn on top of another, and girt around the waist with a broad sash. The sleeves are very large and handy, too, for, being partly closed at the ends, are used as pockets. In these sleeves they carry squares of white paper, which serve as handkerchiefs, and are always thrown away when used. A Japanese guest also

finds these sleeves very convenient receptacles to carry off the remains of a feast to which he has been invited, this being the custom in Japan.

The dress of the women is almost exactly like that of the men, except that the material is finer and the sash broader; the women take great pride in adorning their hair. Hair pins are very fashionable, not so much for the purpose of confining the locks in their place, as of a mere adornment. The pins are of enormous size, seven or eight inches in length and half an inch wide. They are made of tortoise shell, carved wood, and ivory. Sometimes a woman will wear a dozen or more of these pins in her hair, so that at a little distance her head looks as if a bundle of firewood had been stuck loosely into it. The Japanese women have pleasing features, but by a peculiar custom, manage to make themselves hideous. In Japan it is considered a mark of beauty to have no eyebrows, and to have black teeth, so the ladies blacken



A JAPANESE LADY.

their teeth and pull out their eyebrows. Their houses are never built of any great height. Instead of having the partitions of their rooms made to last permanently, as we have, they prefer folding screens of wood and paper, as they can alter the size and shape of

any room at pleasure. The floors are covered with mats beautifully made of straw and rushes. The furniture is very scanty, consisting of a few shelves to hold cups and saucers, a small wooden pillow, with padding at the top, one or two stoves, a few metal pans and some brooms are all that is considered necessary to make them comfortable and happy.

There is an institution in Japan called the "Tea House." These tea houses are situated in picturesque spots and furnished with every luxury. The attendants are young women, who are sold to the proprietors for a term of years to a life of vice. No sort of infamy attaches to these, and men of high rank take their wives and families to the tea houses, so that they may profit by the many accomplishments of these attendants. When their term of service is over, these girls may re-enter their families without losing the regard of their relations. Many enter a Buddhist order of mendicant nuns, but the greater number find husbands. When they marry they are supposed to begin life afresh, and no matter what may have been their previous lives, no wives are more faithful than those of the Japanese.

But the religion of Japan is that which specially interests us. The Japanese claim to be the offspring of the gods. There are two principal systems of religions in the country—the native religion, called Sintoism, and a religion imported from China, which is simply Buddhism with some modifications. Like other Buddhists they believe in the transmigration of souls, and for this reason they seldom eat animal food; indeed, animals are not found in great abundance in the country.

The Japanese are specially attached to sacred festivals, of which they have five great annual ones, besides three inferior ones which are celebrated every month with the greatest hilarity, and no country abounds to a greater extent in places dedicated to religious worship, or objects set apart for religious adoration. Religious pilgrimage forms a prominent feature of the religion of Japan. Pilgrims may be seen along the roads, who are on their way to visit some temple, in hope of obtaining deliverance from some affliction or calamity. The worship of ancestors, so prevalent in China, is not altogether unknown in Japan. At stated seasons, lanterns suspended from long bamboos are lighted before each grave, and refreshments are placed there. A few days afterwards these