

# THE CANADIAN CHURCH MAGAZINE

• • AND MISSION NEWS • •

Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada.

Vol. V.

TORONTO, JUNE, 1891.

No. 60.

## HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

### No. 60.—JAPAN AND ITS PEOPLE.

BY REV. J. COOPER ROBINSON, JAPAN.

**G**EOLOGISTS tell us that the people of Japan originally belonged to two distinct and separate races. One of these races probably came from Siberia across a strait only five miles wide, which is frozen over in winter and in summer, after certain winds, is sometimes dry. The other race, probably, came from the Malayan Archipelago, whence many a boat has been drifted by the Black Stream, an equatorial current which touches the southern coast of Japan; or else crossed over from Corea, which is only a day's sail in a junk from the western coast. This theory seems to be borne out by the fact that three distinct types of countenance are to be found at the present time. One of these types has been described as "the fine, long, oval face, with prominent, well chiselled features, deep sunken eye sockets, oblique eyes, long drooping eyelids, elevated and arched eyebrows, high and narrow forehead, rounded nose, budlike mouth, pointed chin, small hands and feet," which is said to prevail among the upper classes; while the other type, described as "the round flattened face, less oblique eyes almost level with the face, straight nose expanded and upturned at the roots," belongs to the agricultural and labouring classes.

In the northernmost island, Yezo, there is,

however, a people about 15,000 in number called Ainus, or Ainos, who are quite different from the Japanese, and are supposed, by some, to be a remnant of the tribe who came in from Siberia, who have been able by some means to preserve their purity of race. They resemble the latter type of countenance described rather than the former, but differ widely from either. Their language, religion, dress and manner of life are of the most primitive character. They have no alphabet, writing, or numbers above a

thousand. Their drunkenness and filth are beastly, and they seem to be a dying race. Marriages with Japanese produce few children and those few seldom become parents or reach old age. Their language is said by the best authorities to be entirely different from Japanese or any other at present known. Ainu traditions says, "they are the offspring of a breed between man and beast, their remote ancestor, on one side, being a large white dog or wolf."

It is thought by some that the Japanese and Ainus are the true progenitors of North American Indians and Eskimos. Photographs of Colorado and Nebraska Indians have been taken by Japanese

for their own countrymen, and the Ainus are said to resemble the Eskimos in many points. Remarkable linguistic resemblances have also been reported, and it is to be hoped that a subject possessing so much interest will be thoroughly investigated. The same Black Stream, which brought one of the original tribes to Japan, would, no doubt, be quite willing to carry passengers to America, on whose western coast, as a matter of fact, about fifty Japanese junks,



REV. JOHN COOPER ROBINSON,  
CANADIAN MISSIONARY IN JAPAN.