

with a population of four hundred thousand. A tidal wave swept over the district in 1495 A.D., and destroyed the whole city so that there is only a small town at the present time. The Monastery was put up by the Emperor Shomu in 737 A.D., and the colossal bronze image was cast in 1252 A.D., by order of the Shogun Munetaka. The image reminds us at once of the great images spoken of in the Old Testament writings. To get a fair idea of the size of the Dai-butsu let us try to realize the following measurements given to me along with a photo of the image. The height is fifty feet, and the circumference ninety eight. The face is eight and a half feet long; the eye four feet; the ear six and a half and the nose three feet eight inches. The length from knee to knee is thirty six feet, and the circumference of the thumb is three feet. But it is when one goes inside, and finds himself in a spacious apartment where a good congregation might worship that the dimensions are realized. There are altars and other paraphernalia of worship inside, and I suppose it matters little whether the devotees repeat their prayers inside or outside the image. There is something very dreary in the endless repetition of a few syllables to the infinite Buddha. It is entirely due to the influence of Christian missions that the Japanese now ascribe to Buddha almost all the attributes of God and Christ. He is infinite. Men are totally depraved and cannot be saved by the works of the law. They must be saved by the grace of Buddha. The main interest of Buddhism centers round the questions of sin and suffering beyond doubt, but the ascription of the Christian method of deliverance from both to Buddha is manifestly borrowing from Christianity. Within the precincts of the Monastery there is another temple which contains a colossal image of the goddess of mercy. If one wishes to see the goddess, he pays the attending priest a small fee, and thereupon a door is opened into a dark apartment. The priest lights a lamp and the goddess becomes visible shining from head to foot in pure gold. Her head is away up among the rafters, so that the lamp has to be hoisted up to the roof in order to get a view of the features. This is a very inferior piece of work as compared with the Dai-butsu, and the interest lies in the fact that here we have a goddess of mercy. Such are found in almost every monastery in China and Japan, and it is, therefore, a gross error to say that the heathen know nothing about a deity of mercy. It were strange indeed, if the impulse which led them to frame other gods according to their felt wants, were to forsake them when their hearts craved for mercy, so that there would be no deity embodying the conception of mercy in their pantheon. Of course it is perfectly true that wrath, malice and revenge are far more prominent as characteristics of their gods, and in their worship than the heavenly attributes of mercy, and love which are the very core of Christianity. No place was ever better suited for holy thought and heavenly meditation than this ancient fane, and we can only hope that something of that is present though there is scant evidence of it. Nothing disturbs the quietness of the sequestered place except the dull roaring of the Pacific waves breaking on the beach below, and that almost seems to increase the silence, and to lend the place an air of solitude and loneliness which would be oppressive if one had to remain very long. The monks, and priests, and the prior himself were all very courteous and obliging which is not always the case at oriental temples. Of course it pays them well to be obliging at Kamakura as they derive a great revenue from the foreigners who visit the place. Apart from that I have never known the priests or attendants in Japanese temples to be other than decent in their treatment of visitors. Possibly some of the missionaries at work there may have a different story, and they alone are competent to tell us what manner of spirit these priests are of. We leave the place and walk back over the site of what was once a populous city. Here men lived, and toiled much as we do now. In one night they were almost all taken to another world and all here is as quiet as if they had never been. Within a few miles of us arms are being forged and ships constructed to carry more into the eternity, but in a few hundred years that too shall be a thing of the past,—and all the fuss and fret shall be over forever. So the generations live and die,

come and go from age to age and we ask—"Is it not all vanity and vexation of spirit?" Is there nothing better than Nirvana, or than absorption into the stream of being? Jesus says—Yes,—“In my father's house are many mansions,”—and we dare trust Him.

"Beyond the scenes of time
And sin and fate's control
Serene in changeless prime
Of body and of soul—
This creed I fain would keep
This hope I'll not forego
Eternal be my sleep
Unless to waken so."

Religious Instruction in the Schools.

REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE SYNOD OF MONTREAL AND OTTAWA.

(SUMMARIZED.)

The report presented to the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa on religious instruction in the schools was of great interest. Regarding religious instruction in Ontario schools the Committee expressed the opinion that the best solution would be that adopted by the Protestant Committee of Quebec, that of having the Old and New Testament history taught by the teachers as part of the regular curriculum of every school. This was a field in which all the Christian denominations were practically agreed. It involved no doctrines, but supplied the basis of knowledge on which all the Churches formed their doctrine and the best preparation for definite religious instruction in the home, Church and Sunday school. The report referred in congratulatory terms to the changes made in the Quebec law which would improve the condition of elementary education. Among these changes were the granting of teachers' diplomas by one central board, the fixing of the minimum salary at \$100 per annum, under penalty of losing the Government grant, and the increase of the Government appropriation for educational purposes by \$50,000, which has made it possible to increase the special grants to poorer municipalities and encourage the better teachers by bonuses for more successful work. The Protestant Committee had also taken a step forward in requiring that all teachers should have a Normal School training in order to obtain diplomas at all. The policy of the Quebec Government in following the example of Ontario by introducing a bill to place the Education Department under the control of a responsible Minister was warmly commended, and it was prophesied that the bill thrown out by influence in the council would go through next Session.

The report gave rise to considerable discussion. and Revs. Dr. Moore, Dr. Crombie, Dr. Armstrong and A. Henry and Messrs. Moodie and Taye were appointed a Committee to draft a resolution bearing on the question of religious instruction in the school.

Home Mission.—The Western Field.

BY REV. J. ROBERTSON, D.D.

Addressing the Conference of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, Rev. Dr. Robertson uttered many truths worth pondering. The question, said he, which some years ago had been raised whether the great West would ever be of any use to Canada had been satisfactorily settled, he said, and it was now recognized that it was a good thing for Canada that there was a West. It was a new country opened to occupation by the sons and daughters of the people of eastern Canada. It had great stretches of fertile prairie land, from which last year fifteen million dollars of wheat and cattle had been exported; it was immensely rich in minerals, and on the Pacific coast were fisheries equal to those on the Atlantic. In a few years the output would not be fifteen, but fifty or one hundred millions of dollars. He desired to see the Canadians go in and occupy this great country more than they were doing. He thought that the young Canadians in the East instead of studying law and medicine, and even theology, ought to study mineralogy and geology,