

# Northern Messenger

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Wm. Brown & Co. S.O.

## To Sunday-Schools Taking the 'Messenger.'

IMPORTANT.

It has just come to our knowledge that some Sunday-schools, particularly those in Montreal and suburbs, are giving out the 'Messengers' as soon as received, quite in advance of the date on the paper. This is a pity, for in case of special numbers, the point is lost when given out so long ahead. Moreover, in such cases the S.S. Lesson is apt to be disregarded, as it is not for the next Sunday.

The paper is intended for distribution on the Sunday following the date it bears. The S.S. Lesson then becomes of special importance, as the next one to be studied. We print ahead of the date so as to allow plenty of time for the 'Messengers' to reach schools in country districts, and on the other side of the Dominion.

It would be a good time just now to omit one Sunday's distribution, and hold the papers over, so as to follow the plan intended. The Special Christmas Number, which will be dated Dec. 23, will then be given out in all the schools on Christmas Day, and the subsequent numbers will naturally fall into line. Will school secretaries kindly take note of this?

## Little Mothers of Japan.

It is quite common in these days to read what outsiders have to say of Japanese women, but it is not often that we see an article along such lines from the pen of a Japanese writer. The 'Tribune Magazine' gives an article under the above title by a Japanese lady, Annie Kiyokichi Sano, in which we have a rosy picture of the social and home life of her countrywomen. We give in condensed form that part of the article which bears on the training of the boys:

The admiration of the whole world lately has been won by the sailors of Japan. The loyalty, the devotion, the fearlessness of death shown by the thousands of volunteers for Admiral Togo's fire-ships have surprised all other nations. As a woman, and a Japanese woman, I feel that the world ought to know, as the Emperor himself well knows, that the credit for the training of such soldiers is due mainly to the little mothers of Japan.

The Japanese home life, the peculiar ideals which animate the people, are little understood by other nations, and perhaps an idea of them can be conveyed best by a simple review of the early years, and their influences upon the Japanese boy. In all homes they are the same. Their result in the making of the Japanese man will be understood clearly.

In the early training of his children—until in fact the boy is thirteen—the husband and father takes no part whatever. This duty is left entirely and without interference to the wife and mother. The dominant idea of the Japanese nation, an idea penetrating to the minutest ordinances of the life in every home, is that every man is a soldier of the Emperor.

Just as soon as the little 'akan-bo' (baby)

begins to talk, the first lesson which is impressed upon his mind is his duty and his obligation to the Emperor. He is taught that the Emperor is the one great ruler of all Japan and the ruling head of every Japanese

stood that this is the first idea impressed upon the Japanese baby boy, and the primary idea in all his subsequent training, the characteristic quality of the Japanese soldier may be understood.

Along with the mental comes the physical training. Her little boy must be taught early to endure cold, hardship and hunger. Winter in Japan is severe, as cold as in New England. During the daytime the windows of paper offer little protection from the cold, though at night when the thick, wooden screens of the 'jensaki' (porch) are drawn, and the 'hibachis' (charcoal stoves) are burning, it is somewhat better. The little boy is allowed no stockings, wearing only a pair of wooden sandals. The little mother tells him that when he grows up and goes to war he will have to manage without comfort and warmth, and that the sooner he gets used to it the better. He readily assents—he already understands—but the way in which he runs about the house and rubs his little fingers together and tries to keep his shivering little body warm would move a foreign mother's heart beyond bounds.

So, too, with his food. He is allowed little. On his tiny, lacquered tray, at dinner, is a small bowl of rice. When he and his mother kneel down to eat she tells him: 'When you go to war you will have little rice to eat, and little time to eat anything at all; so, as you are a little Samurai soldier and a brave boy, you must be strong, and get used to this hard life early. Then you will be ready when the time comes,' and she adds decisively: 'You must be very strong if you wish to be a soldier.' Thus urged, he gobbles up his little dish of rice quickly, with two long, slender chopsticks, and his mother says: 'Very well.' With this praise he is content. Whatever his wistful little eyes may say as he looks at the empty dish, his lips say nothing. He is too proud to admit his hunger, and pride forms the basis of the Japanese home training.

Even as a baby he is taught to be methodical, an essential part of a soldier's training. His clothes when taken off, are always folded in a certain way, and laid in a certain place. He can find them in the dark if necessary. This, in a country scourged by flood, by earthquake and by fire, is a natural domestic precaution; but outside of this it inculcates order and system.

Somewhat strange to foreign minds appears the way in which the duty of revenge is taught. This feeling that to harbor a desire for revenge is just, that vengeance is a duty, that the injured man who does not claim it stains his honor, is a vital and active principle in the national nature. The present Japanese attitude toward Russia, the feeling which prevails from the Emperor down to the vegetable-seller, thus may be understood. The boy is taught from his earliest years to avenge injury. If he hurts his finger on a nail the little mother will pound the nail hard and say: 'There! I have avenged you,' and the little man is appeased. And when, in the present terrible war, our nation is victorious, let the world know that our devoted soldiers received their first training from the lips of the little mothers of Japan.



home and family. In the kindergarten the teacher will give him a plum, and say:

'And what are you going to do with the plum?'

'I am going to give it to Tenshi-Sama' (the Emperor), he will answer.



'What will you do for the Emperor when he needs you?' the mother will ask.

'I will die for Tenshi-Sama.'

To die for Tenshi-Sama! When it is under-