

SUBJECT FOR THE MONTH: JAPAN.



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The Rev. Mizutaro Takagi.

Holder of the Japanese Scholarship of
Victoria University.

REV. MIZUTARO TAKAGI was born at Nagawo in the Shizuoka prefecture, on May 20th, in the first year of the Ganji era (A.D. 1864). At the age of four he began to attend a private school. This beginning of his education was in the style of Old Japan—including training in the ancient and stately etiquette of the land, and, above all, careful study of the teachings of Confucius, with their thousand-fold inculcation, both in general forms and in particular historical instances, of filial piety, respect for elders, sincerity of heart and faithfulness to duties. Before he was ten years old he had read, in the original Chinese, the Four Sacred Books of Confucius.

Then, when he went from that private school to a public school, there came a great change in the method of his education. As he himself would say, "God, in His mercy, had kept Japan in seclusion until the day of Spanish Inquisitions, of English 'Hell-fire Clubs', of Anglo Saxon slave holdings was past. When Western civilization had built up its literatures, had made its great advance in science, had chained steam and electricity as servants of commerce—when, too, Western Christianity had attained to a truly missionary spirit—then, and not till then, God allowed Japan to be opened to the influences of Western civilization." This time had now come. The Mikado's government had already been established in Tokio, and the reorganization of the Japanese school system in large measure effected. So that the public school to which Mr. Takagi now went was, in its methods, not greatly different from our own, in fact, there was probably less difference then than now, for since then in Japan American educational ideas have been largely superseded by German.

At thirteen years of age he left home and went to an academy about fifty miles distant. With this, too, the old religious atmosphere of his early life ceased to be about him, and he was increasingly influenced by the purely intellectual and anti-religious spirit which Western influences were

arousing in Japan. Next he went to one of the normal schools which had been established for the training of teachers, and completed the higher normal course about twelve years ago. Then he was appointed inspector of public schools. Soon after this appointment his attention was called to the teachings of Christianity. For about a year he studied the question, and those who know him intimately will understand with what keenness of intellect and conscientiousness of spirit he conducted that study. The influences on either side were strangely varied—on the one side, a revival of Confucianism and a corresponding Renaissance of those Chinese classics of which he had long been a student, the influence of utilitarian and naturalistic

teachings from Europe to whose dissemination Mr. Fukuzawa gave the weight of his great influence: not to speak of the offence which a patriotic citizen and official of Japan naturally felt at religious teachers who came in from outside and called the Japanese "heathens," on the other side, a perception of the influence of Christianity in shaping European history, and in influencing that English literature which he was studying: a study of Christian Apologetics: a careful study of the four Gospels (especially that of John), and of the Epistle to the Romans: and added to this the power of a deep bereavement which came into his life at that time of crisis. Finally the decision was made and he was baptized as a Christian.



REV. MIZUTARO TAKAGI,
*Missionary to Japan, supported by Barrle District
Epworth Leagues.*

Within a very few months after his baptism, Rev. Mr. Hiraiwa began to press him to enter the Christian ministry. To do so involved the greatest self sacrifice, it meant loss of his oldest and dearest friends, loss of social position, and no small financial loss. For two years he fought out that question. The pressure of what seemed a Divine call settled upon him. He was particularly touched by Paul's exclamation, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel." At last this battle also was decided. In 1889 he entered our ministry as a probationer and at the same time he entered our college at Tokio, Dr. Cochrane being Dean of the Theological Department. He completed the theological course and graduated in 1893, and was ordained in 1894. During his last year at college and the two subsequent