

is an extract from the report of the opening sent to the *Dominion Churchman*, by one who took part in the service—"The now venerable church, a familiar land-mark to travellers by Yonge street for many years past, has been completely transformed. Within the memory of the writer it was a dingy, rusty church, with high pews and ragged old chancel carpet. The old pews have just been swept away, and beautiful open seats of oiled ash, perfect models of form and comfort, have been erected in their place. The old dingy windows have been removed, and really beautiful rolled and tinted cathedral glass has been substituted. The whole interior of the church has been tinted, and the wood-work painted and a chaste and beautiful result obtained. There are few prettier churches than St. John's found to-day. Besides the \$300 subscribed by Mr. Lambe toward the improvements he (Mr. L.) presented the church with a very handsome stone font, and also chancel kneeling cushions. The desk and pulpit hangings, etc., were given by Mrs. Osler, while the Sabbath school children provided the matting for the aisles. The cost of the improvements, not reckoning the value of the gifts, of font, etc., was \$1,017.63. The Bible and Prayer Book (large folio size), presented by Chief Justice Powell to the old church, are still in use and are in a good state of preservation. On the fly leaf is written the following:—"a gift of the Hon. William Dummer Powell, Chief Justice of Upper Canada, to the second Episcopal Church in York, Upper Canada." In 1839 a house and two acres of land were purchased for £200, for the rectory. This house was removed and the present brick house erected in 1877.

A TOKYO FIRE.

BY REV. J. G. WALLER, CANADIAN MISSIONARY IN JAPAN.

EVEN among the Japanese Tokyo is famous for its great fires. In old Japan they had great fires, and in new Japan they have the same. The revolution of 1868, abolishing the old order of things, and ushering in the present period of progress, seems to have made little change in the fire record. A fire in 1879 destroyed about 15,000 houses, and it took only about four hours and a-half in which to do it. It began about noon, and by half past four had burnt to the sea. A fierce wind was blowing at the time, and, although such rapidity may seem incredible to one who knows only the brick and stone buildings of America or Europe, yet those who have examined the Japanese house can well believe it. At this fire, the sparks were blown in great showers, and houses a quarter or half a mile in front of the fire would catch, so that there would be sometimes as many as four different centres of the conflagration. Many poor people were in this

way hemmed in, in the narrow streets, with fire at both ends, and lost their lives.

And the promulgation of the new constitution a year ago last 11th of February seems not to have awed the fire-fiend. He is working away as steadily as before. Last year a fire in Mita, a department of Tokyo, took between 1,000 and 1,000 houses before it also reached the water's edge. Again, on the night of Tuesday, February 10th last, the eve of the first anniversary of the promulgation of Japan's new constitution, the anniversary of Jimmu Temmu's accession to the throne about 800 A.D.—if, indeed, such a person ever lived, which many doubt—and most important to us Christians, the eve of Ash Wednesday, a fire broke out in Tigura Machi—the largest I have witnessed since my arrival in Japan. It began about half-past six in the evening and by half-past eight was under control, but close upon 200 houses, with three lives, had in that time been destroyed. And since then, that is for the last twelve days, there has only been one night in which we have not heard the fire bell. But these other fires have been comparatively small.

The fire bells also are not of the latest American or European make, and so the distance they can be heard is very limited. In Tokyo, or any other Japanese town, they are always the same. At a street corner, what looks like two telegraph poles, about twenty-five feet long, are set in the ground four or five feet apart. Bars are fastened across these, giving the structure the appearance of a very wide and clumsy ladder. Close to one pole at the top is hung a bell. This is shaped like a thimble, and is about one foot and a-half in length and uniformly nine inches in diameter. When a fire breaks out someone climbs to the top of this ladder and pounds on the bell; and this is all the fire alarm we have in a city which is full of hills and valleys, has as large a population as New York (omitting Brooklyn), and is said to cover as much ground as old London. However, by the way in which the bell is struck, you get an idea of the fire's proximity. This is your guide—if the bell is struck three times in rapid succession the fire, in the opinion of the man at the top of the ladder, is not far away. If twice, it is some distance off, and if only once, it is still more distant. But rarely does one hear the bell ring the once—perhaps because no one thinks it worth his while to go to the top of the ladder when the fire is so far away.

Yes, Tokyo is famous for its fires. And well it may be. The houses would seem to have been devised almost for the convenience of a fire. Not only are they joined together (as the stores in American cities), but they are made of the lightest wood and paper. A Japanese house is built with the summer heat in view. The best of them have great cracks in the floor, great cracks in the walls and great cracks around the