

## Encouraging News from Japan

BY REV. R. C. ARMSTRONG, B.A.

SOME time ago, I was invited to go hunting mushrooms, by a member of our church, who lives about eight miles from Hamamatsu. We got up and left here by stage-coach at about 6.30 a.m., arriving at Mr. Y.'s factory at about 8 o'clock. Everything was in a state of hurry and excitement. The hands were getting ready to go on the excursion. They were all going to gather mushrooms, and seemed to be happy in anticipation of the day's sport. After taking a photo of the group, we went on to the neighboring village and waited at the little inn for the others to come up. Here we were joined by our host's children and their grandmother. They were all going on the excursion with the factory hands. In about half an hour the employees came marching along headed by a brass band. It was a bright scene that met my eye when, boylike, I went to the paper door of the hotel to see what the music meant. All the employees carried little paper flags. The band was very gaily dressed. Their trousers were a flaming red, and their coats blue with brass trimmings. It was a very impressive scene to see the employer and his mother going for a day's recreation with his own servants. To my mind this is the

hear Christian sermons. He also has special religious services for and with his employees. This is practical Christianity.

Let me tell you of a case that has not come under my own observation but has been told me by one of the oldest missionaries of the Congregational Church. It will show the influence of Christianity upon even the lowest classes in Japan.

Mr. H., a mason, living in the western part of Japan, was once a very immoral wicked man. He came under Christian influence and became a very earnest Christian worker. Like Jerry McCauley he began to work for those of his own kind, and took prisoners and criminals to his home and gave them work and taught them to be noble. It is said that even a high school student went astray and was thus won to right living by this worker's influence, who led him to his real self and God. The young man is now doing well. It was also said that once a convict just out from prison tried to kill Mr. H.'s wife. Mr. H. put up his arm to shield his wife and himself received the blow on the elbow. Then both husband and wife forgave the criminal on the spot, because they felt



THE MUSHROOM HUNTING PARTY, HAMAMATSU, JAPAN

true Christ spirit. The rule among those in social position in Canada as well as in Japan is to appropriate the fruit of the laboring class and then to despise the man because he is only a toiler. In fact very often they are used as if they were machines.

In some of the factories in this town some women operators work for about fifteen hours a day for very small wages. Japan needs to put more value on the individual souls of her working classes. Perhaps it would be well if we all learned to treat "Humanity . . . in every case as an end and never as a means."

After searching for mushrooms for about two hours, we joined in a procession headed by the band and went to the appointed place for dinner. Mr. Y. had prepared lunch for the whole crowd. We all sat down on straw mats laid for us and ate as much "O SuShi" as we were able to take with the chopsticks. The chopsticks are much more simple and convenient than knife and fork on such an occasion. It would be a good thing if you would adopt them for use at picnic parties, etc. They are very convenient when used as the Japanese use them. Mr. Y. opens his fine home to the preaching of the Gospel and many gather there at times to

he was an unfortunate brother. They even went so far to obtain permission from the police to put the criminal on trial in their home, and the result was he was reformed and is still living in their house an industrious God fearing man.

In Japan there is a class known as "Shinheimin." They are a class that have been made chiefly by the teaching of Buddhism—their chief occupation having been those of leather dressers, cobblers or burriers of dead animals, and Buddhism taking an extreme attitude re the taking of any life, was opposed to them and offered no religious life that applied to them. They were depraved. The old idea of the total depravity of man certainly was made to apply to them, and they are the product of such teaching. They seemed to come to believe that they were really totally depraved, and as a result they became a degenerated class. Even to-day I am told that most of the criminals come from that class. It is a great problem for the moralists to solve. But the above story will illustrate the method of the solution of it. Christianity comes teaching the Godhood of man and the manhood of God; not alone to those in high classes and places, but as Mr. H. grasped it, even the lowest criminals have the spark of Divinity that needs to be fanned to a flame.