

Northern Messenger

Wm Bronscombe 303

VOLUME XXXVII. No. 33.

MONTREAL, AUGUST 15, 1902.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

How Japanese Babies are Welcomed.

(By Edith Hibbard, in 'Good Cheer'.)

The birth of a baby in Japan is the cause of much rejoicing in the family. As soon as the new little brother or sister arrives, a special messenger is sent to notify relatives and friends, who are expected to pay an early visit to welcome the new-comer into the world. Probably the women in this picture have just arrived to welcome a new little nephew or niece, bringing with them, as is the custom in Japan, some present, which must always be accompanied by dried fish or eggs, for

tions are made, and the baby is dressed in garments of finest silk or crepe, made specially for the festival. Accompanied by members of the family, it is carried to one of the Shinto temples, and there placed under the protection of the patron deity of the temple. Offerings are made to the God and to the priest, a blessing is obtained, and the god thus chosen is supposed to become the special guardian of the child through life. You know that in heathen Japan the people have not been taught to worship the one true God, and so these poor deluded people have a great number of what they call Shinto deities.

After the ceremony is over, there is usually an entertainment of some kind at the

garment made of silk, cotton, or flannel, the number of these garments worn being determined by the season of the year. They are all after one pattern, being precisely the same as the dress worn by their sisters and mothers, which is called the kimono. The method of putting these dresses on the babies is rather peculiar. The little garments are fitted one inside of the other before they are put on; then they are laid down on the floor and the baby is laid into them; a soft belt, attached to the outside dress, is tied around the waist, and the baby is dressed without any crying or screaming. These little kimonos are made long enough to cover up the little bare feet, and the sleeves also cover the hands, which must be rather annoying to active babies who wish to use their little fists.

The baby's first lessons in walking are taken under favorable circumstances, as in Japan there is no furniture to fall against, and babies can tumble about as they like upon the soft matted floors of the dwelling-houses, their little feet shod in a soft mitten-like sock. After learning to walk in the house, baby's first attempt out of doors is hampered by a straw sandal, called a geta, attached to the foot by a strap passing between the toes; but the little things soon become accustomed to the new foot-covering, and babies of two or three years trot about quite comfortably in geta that seem to us to give them most insecure footing.

The sex even of a young baby may be known by the color of its clothing, for in Japan boys are dressed in sober colors, grays and browns, while the little girls wear the brightest and most gorgeous garments, which often correspond very fittingly with pretty names which are given to Japanese little girls.

The Revival at Mitchell.

(By John R. Jones, in 'Standard'.)

The Baptist church at Mitchell had once been prosperous, but removals and backsliding had depleted its membership. Then had come that most unfortunate of all disasters which a church can suffer. It had chosen a pastor who had proved a wolf in sheep's clothing. After that the church had been without a minister, and it seemed that nothing could renew its life.

At length word had come that a young man from the seminary would like to take the charge. The church lifted itself from its apathy sufficiently to promise him a meagre living, then lay down to die—unless he could arouse it.

The new pastor came, and his preaching was listened to with luke-warm approval. He went among the people, and became acquainted with their family and social life. Here was one family in which the young people had drifted into utter worldliness. One of the boys was fast being ruined. Another family was struggling with poverty. In another, a separation had taken place, and the husband had left. In nearly all the families discontent ruled. When the situation was understood, the young minister was ready for work.

One Sunday he spoke in a way which



good luck. The baby, if it be the first one in the family, receives many presents in the first few weeks of its life, which must all be acknowledged at the proper time by its parents. When it is a week old it receives its name, but to call a child after a person would not, as with us, be considered an honor. Names of beautiful objects in nature are commonly used for girls, such as Snow, Sunshine, Gold, while boys of the lower classes are often called Stone, Bear, or Tiger.

The important event in the baby's life is on the thirtieth day after its birth, when it is taken for its first visit to the temple. For this occasion great prepara-

home of the parents, especially if the family be one of high rank. Friends are invited, and if there are any who have not yet given the baby a present, they usually give it at this time. A certain kind of rice, cooked with red beans, making a festival drink denoting good fortune, is one of the things prepared for this occasion.

After this festival a quiet life begins for the baby, as the babies in Japan are treated somewhat differently from those in this country. They are not rocked or trotted to sleep, and as their dress is very simple, little time is spent in dressing or undressing them. The Japanese baby's dress consists of a wide-sleeved, straight