

OUR JAPANESE MISSION.



THE division of Japan which has been agreed upon by the English and American Church, necessitated the removal of Rev. J. G. Waller, from Fukushima to Nagano. Of this move he writes to us as follows, his letter bearing date January 26th :—

Nagano is rather larger than Fukushima, about 25,000 population, is the capital of Keu of the same name (as Fukushima was) but it is more commonly known to the people by the older name of Shinano or Shinshū, the boundaries of the older province corresponding exactly with those of the new state, erected under the past Revolution Government. It was the largest of the old provinces, and is, with a single exception, the largest of the new states or Keus. There are over a million people in the Keu, but much of it is very inaccessible, because of mountains. The climate somewhat resembles that of Canada—more snow than Fukushima, and the thermometer goes down lower, but yet far more pleasant than the latter because there is scarcely anything of those piercing northwest winds of which we had such a terrible experience last winter.

It will, apparently, be a hard field to work. The old town came into existence through the story of some miracles supposed to have been worked here several hundred years ago in the interest of Buddhism. The main street leads up to the great Zenkoji temple, visited by thousands of pilgrims from the country every year, and the rest of the town seems to overflow with Buddhist temples. However, the people seem indifferent to Buddhism as to all other religions—the lull of putting off the old faith and putting on the new, I trust. But through the enormous wealth and influence of some of these temples, and especially because not a few of the inhabitants make their living from the offerings and spending money of the pilgrims in such ways as lodging them and selling gods, shrines, charms and quack medicines, they are interested in opposing the Truth. Demetrius is very strong. But here we hope, as in Ephesus, God has “much people.”

We were very sorry to leave Fukushima. True we had not been very successful, so far at least as baptisms measure success—generally a very small degree, by the way—but we had got to know the people of all the large towns in the district, most of whom I think loved and trusted us. Our Catechist, Shiraishi San, remains behind, receiving the American Board as his new director. I am glad of this, for had we both left at once it might have gone far to undo much of the last two years' labour. I fear it will be long before we shall gain as much ground here. But someone must bear the brunt of the first shock, and break up the ground—the crop will come later on.

We reached here just before Christmas, but could not get in our house for Christmas Day, which we spent in a yadoga (inn), and substituted fish, soup, bean cake, boiled rice and raw turnip tops salted with other Japanese food for the orthodox turkey and plum pudding. I have no catechist with me, but a young Christian from Tokyo, who acts as my teacher, has given assistance to some extent.

Bishop Bickersteth's pastoral lately issued to the clergy of the Church of England in Japan thus speaks of this Mission :—

“Let me mention that I am assigning the district of Nagano in Shinshu to the mission sent to this country by the Board of Missions of the Canadian Church, of which the Rev. J. G. Waller is the first representative. It is a subject of thankfulness that in this mission, and in that in which Nagoya is the centre, where there are three clergy at work from Wycliffe College, Toronto, and in the newly established Nurse's Training School in Kobe, the growing interest in missions of the Canadian Church is beginning to afford us very valuable aid. The towns in Shinshu are numerous and of considerable importance. It is my earnest hope that the Canadian Board may be able to send out and support a fully equipped mission to that province, consisting of not less than four clergy besides lady workers. Such a mission working in a limited area might before long attain very valuable results.”

MACKENZIE RIVER.

THE following letter from Bishop Reeve, of Mackenzie River, will be read with interest by many :—

Before proceeding to diocesan matters it may interest you, perhaps, to give you a brief account of my journey hither, a very different affair now from what it was twenty-three years ago when I first came to this district! *Then* the journey occupied nearly five months; *now* it could be accomplished in thirty days. *Then* the railroad did not come within 2,500 miles of us; *now* it is only 1,000 miles away! *Then* there was no steamboat nearer than Winnipeg; *now* one passes our very door! There is steam communication in summer, nearly all the way, excepting about 200 miles. *Then*, and for nearly ten years afterwards, it was necessary to order our clothing, groceries, flour, etc., two years beforehand, and sometimes they were three years, and even more, before they reached us; *now* we can receive them within nine months! *Then* we received our letters twice a year; *now* we get them three, and occasionally four times! These are improvements for which we are very thankful.

Leaving England on April 29th by S.S. *Arizona*, after a pleasant trip across the Atlantic, I