

LETTER FROM MISS WINTEMUTE.

THE following interesting extract is taken from Miss Wintemute's letter, addressed to the St. Thomas Auxiliaries and Band. One cannot help noting how thoroughly the Japanese have been indoctrinated in the matter of *giving*. They seem to understand that prayers without gifts avail but little. Let us hope that Christianity will not lessen but rather intensify this belief.

"Tôkyô, March 16, 1887.

"I am not able to take my Japanese lesson to-day, so I thought I would take the time to tell you about a visit that Miss Cartmell and I had a week ago last Saturday to the temple of Suitengu (Sôo-ee-teng-oo), one of the principal gods, the god of the sea. It is three or four miles from the school, and we had a pleasant ride there, although the sun was so bright that it was a little trying on one's eyes. Mr. Tsuyuki went with us to explain everything. We went on Saturday because it was a feast day, and we could see so much more than on another day. When we were yet quite a little distance from the place, the streets were literally packed with people; and the crowds going in and out of the temple gates reminded me of a fair, as far as numbers were concerned; but the people were mostly of the lower classes.

"We pushed through the crowd, to get to the temple itself first. It was seemingly composed of one good-sized room, with walls on the two sides and at the rear, but open in the front, although I think there were sliding doors with which the front could be closed. The floor extended two or three feet on the same level in front of the walls; then there were several steps down, and then another level space of a few feet. This sort of platform had a railing about two feet high around the front and sides; and the roof of the building extended out to the edge of the platform, coming down lower, as a verandah roof slopes from the main roof of a house. On the edge of the roof, over the railing, were fastened about two feet apart large brass bells, nearly eight inches in diameter, and very much the shape of the little round sleigh bells that we put on the horses in the winter. To each one of these ten bells, three streamers of pink, red, and green cloth, about three feet long, were attached; and as the people came up and threw their offering of a cent or two—seldom more, and sometimes less—on the floor inside the railing, they took hold of these streamers, and gave the bell two or three jerks to call the attention of the gods before they offered their prayers. Then kneeling, half kneeling, or standing, they repeated their prayers, sometimes audibly, and usually rubbing or clapping their hands together at the same time. Although it was quite early in the afternoon when we got there, the floor and steps inside the railing were literally covered with money and little pieces of paper twisted up with money inside.

"There were also offered with the money, many little white, round cakes, made of pounded rice; they looked much like the tiny loaves of bread, before they were baked, that we used to make when we were children. The amusing part of it was that these little cakes were

bought by the people at the left hand of the platform, and that when the people threw them in as offering, the priests had them picked up and sold again; so I have no idea how many times they would go the round during the afternoon. I stood close to the railing quite a few minutes, and the bells were continually ringing, and the coppers flying past me and hitting me from all directions, being thrown by people in the crowd behind, who could not get close up. Mr. Tsuyuki said that they would probably take in about 300 yen (dollars), and the same day (5th) of every month, is a similar feast, when the gates of the grounds are open. On other days, if the people wish to make an offering, they put it in a box for the purpose, outside the temple gates.

"Inside the railing, suspended from the ceiling above the platform, were several more brass bells, some larger and some smaller than those I have mentioned.

"Inside the temple were costly bronze lanterns, one or two mirrors, a large iron anchor about four feet high, and other little things that we could not see well, as we were not allowed to go inside.

"The people believe that if they do not give some money, however little, that the gods will not hear their prayers, no matter how much they ring the bells to call their attention.

"If any person's prayer is answered, he buy some of the little pictures that the priests have for sale, and puts it up on the side of the building as a thank-offering.

"The gods are kept out of sight in a small room at the back of the temple, and separated from the main part by a sort of thick screen for a partition. They think that it shows very little faith to want to have the gods in sight when you pray.

"Those mirrors I spoke of, are a sign of wisdom and knowledge of the gods, just as a mirror shows us the appearance of our bodies, so the gods are all wise, and know the true state of our hearts. They consider it a very meritorious act to walk a hundred times from the gate to the temple. The priests have for sale bunches of a hundred little pieces of rope, which, if a person buys, he leaves one piece every time he walks the distance, and so when they are all gone, he knows he has walked the hundred times.

"On either side of the temple were other small shrines, one to the god of the harbor, and the other to the gods of rain, wind and fire.

"A few yards to the left, in front of the temple, was a bronze lion, the god of strength, on which the people came and rubbed their hands, and then rubbed their own bodies, believing that it would make them strong and healthy.

"Opposite the lion, on the other side of the temple, was a stand with several buckets filled with water on it, and metal cups attached by chains. This was supposed to be healing water, and many people came and drank a little of it, or rubbed it on their sore eyes or face—first, however, always having dropped their contribution into the box beside it.

"Both just outside and inside the gate were places for the people to make themselves ceremonially clean before going to worship. They would take up a little water with the right hand in a wooden dipper and pour it on the left one, and vice versa. Then they