



A JAPANESE SCENE.

him, and will follow him to his distant field of labor with their prayers and best wishes for an abundant blessing.

The following letter from Bishop Bickersteth to the Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society shows that signs of undoubted progress are already visible in the mission:

"M. DEAR SIR, —I have recently visited Nagano, the capital

city of the province of Shinshu (otherwise written Shinano), where the Rev. J. G. and Mrs. Waller are working.

"The progress that has been made during the year and a half that has elapsed since they took up their residence in Nagano is quite remarkable. I have seen no work in Japan which has seemed to me more satisfactory or successful. Some forty persons have been baptized, including a good proportion of young men of intelligence, occupying independent positions on the railway, etc. I confirmed twenty candidates in Nagano, and five others in the out-station of Nakano. With God's blessing on the work which has been begun, I look forward to an independent congregation being formed in Nagano within the next few years.

"The population of the city seems divided into two main classes, of which the one is dependent on a great Buddhist temple, to which pilgrims resort from all parts of Japan, and the other is more or less under the influence of the modes of thought and action which characterize 'young Japan.' It is a matter of course that there should be this latter class in a provincial capital, and it is from it that the converts have principally been drawn. The strict Buddhists have yielded comparatively few enquirers. In Nagano, however, as in other parts of Japan, the progress of education and of a wider culture than was known to an earlier generation is gradually thinning their ranks and lessening their influence. It may be doubted if this is a matter for congratulation, except just as far as the partial and imperfect restraints which Buddhism has supplied are superseded by the grace of Christ, and its errors by His truth.

"I was very thankful to learn from your last

letter and its enclosure that the Board is able at once to increase its mission in Japan. Nagano is the centre of a number of flourishing cities and towns; the mission will, I hope, not be content till it has established churches in all places of importance. Mr. Kakuzen, as you will have heard, is now in Matsumoto, and seems hopeful of the prospect of Christian work in that city.

"Mr. Waller has informed me that the suggestion I threw out in a letter which I addressed to you last November in reference to the extension of your mission under a Canadian bishop has commended itself to Canadian Churchmen, and that there is hope of this plan being carried out as time goes on. With this in view, I have recently agreed with Dr. McKim, the bishop in charge of the American mission in Japan, that in the event of a Canadian bishop being sent to this country we would ask him to take charge of the province of Echigo (now under the jurisdiction of the American bishop), as well as of the district of Nagano, now under my jurisdiction. This will secure to the Canadian bishop a sufficient and important missionary diocese. Were there six clergy, Canadian and Japanese, ready to co-operate with him, a good start could be made. It will be alike a joy and strength if this can be accomplished. I am, yours very faithfully,

"EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

"Bishop."

While the Bishop has been led in some way to form too sanguine an idea regarding a Canadian bishopric for Japan, yet there seems no reason why the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, at no very distant date, should not support a proper chief pastor and superintendent over her work in that distant country.

"However, the pressing need at the present time is the erection of suitable buildings for the mission. The Japanese houses are unfit for occupation by any people but themselves in winter. The climate at Nagano is said to be as cold as in some parts of Canada in winter, and the Japanese have not learned the art of making their houses warm. They are of the flimsiest and thinnest nature. "It makes little difference in the summer," Mr. Waller says, "but in the winter it is rather trying to pass the season in a building which in the matter of protection from cold cannot compare with the ordinary Canadian woodshed."

The Board of Management feel distressed at a statement like the above, and have been endeavoring to hit upon some plan by which suitable buildings may be erected at Nagano. The great difficulty lies in the fact that foreigners outside of the treaty ports are not allowed to hold property in Japan. If this difficulty can be overcome, the necessary funds would surely be forthcoming for the much-desired buildings.



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