

Up the Hill.

Up a steep and rocky hillside
 Climbed a little child one day,
 Headless of all stones and briars,
 Hastening, panting, all the way;
 Hair all flying in the breezes,
 On she went with cheeks aglow,
 Though her tiny feet were weary,
 And her steps became more slow;
 But she never faltered till she
 Reached the summit; then stood still,
 And with childhood's joyous laughter,
 Shouted, "I am up the hill!"

Backward through the misty shadows
 Of the years that since have flown,
 Comes the echo to my fancy
 Like some long-forgotten tone.
 I can almost feel the bounding
 Of that baby heart again,
 As the world lay stretched before me
 In that long ago. Since then
 I have climbed another hillside,
 And am toiling upward still,
 And the evening shades as ever
 Find me climbing up the hill.

But this hill seems so much longer,
 And the way sometimes so steep,
 That 'tis hard to keep the pathway,
 And to shun its pitfalls deep.
 Then the briars on life's journey,
 Harder are to thrust aside,
 And most all that early courage,
 With that fresh young hope has died.
 Many of the dearly loved ones
 Now are lying cold and still,
 And have left me sad and lonely,
 Slowly climbing up the hill.

But the summit of life's mountain
 Must be very near to me,
 And I know when I have finished
 All my climbing, I shall see
 That if oft-times I have laboured
 When I fain would stop and rest,
 It had made that rest but sweeter—
 For the Father knoweth best
 And perhaps ere long—who knoweth?—
 I may cry out with a thrill
 Of that same old joyous rapture,
 "I am safely up the hill!"

Progress of Christianity in Japan.

BY MRS. COCHRAN.

[THE following interesting article is the substance of a paper read before the Woman's Missionary Society at Hamilton, by Mrs. Cochran, wife of the Rev. Dr. Cochran, missionary in Japan. Dr. and Mrs. Cochran have since both returned to their beloved work in that land.]—Ed.

Mission work in Japan, which was slow at the outset, has, during the last eight or ten years, received a new impulse, and much good has been accomplished in all the open ports. For example, in the case of Kofu, where Mr. and Mrs. Eby spent two very successful years and now Mr. Hiraiwa, one of our ordained native ministers, is in charge. I had a letter from him which I will read; it will give you an idea of him and his work.

Kofu, Japan, Jan. 31, 1884.

My dear Mrs. Cochran,—I am very glad to hear from you again. I had been working here with two others, helpers, till the end of last summer, when one was taken from the Church militant to the Church triumphant. A very faithful worker he was. Since then I became specially busy, as the field is very large. In the beginning of last autumn I was requested by the warden of the penitentiary here to come and preach Christianity to the prisoners. From that time a voice for the Gospel is crying in the prison on every Sabbath afternoon, when all the prisoners are excused from their work and tasks for the sole purpose of hearing the preaching. If they do not like to come to the preaching place, then they must work as hard as usual. I have at present about four hundred of an audience of male convicts, and about thirty female convicts in a separate place. I preach

two sermons in the prison on Sabbath afternoon, and I hold two services every Sabbath morning and evening in the Kofu chapel. If you would come back to Japan we all will welcome you with hearty greetings, and you shall find Japan in respect to Christianity quite changed since the time you left her.

You heard, I suppose, from Dr. Meacham, of the Ecumenical gathering of native Christians in last May, which was very grand meeting. Well, that formed a new epoch in the history of Japanese Christianity, which made, since then, very rapid progress in the realm. Already there have been added more than two thousand souls, by rough calculation, to the whole community of the Protestant Church in the last year; and there were over seven thousand Christians in the realm by the last December, including children. This year, which is only one month old yet, is very encouraging, weekly religious papers all laden with good news every time they come.

Last November almost all Churches in Japan celebrated the 400th anniversary of Luther's birthday, and several of them were visited by high officials, and all were a grand success; even this little church of ours here had very good meetings; thrilling and interesting addresses were given.

We are now enjoying very large religious liberty. We believe it will not take long for our beloved Emperor to embrace Christianity, which has touched the Imperial court through a few individuals of the Government.

I remain, yours very sincerely,

K. HIRAIWA.

This place, Kofu, was opened for missionary work by Mr. Kaamura, who, although not a Christian, still is one who believes the religion of the Bible to be a grand thing, and seemed never to tire telling what it did for his son, his only son, how he lived and how he died. When the son was dying, his father asked if the religion he had told him so much about was good to die by. The son said, "Yes, father," and died in great peace. He was like a shining light in all our services. It can truly be said, his life was his testimony.

WOMAN'S POSITION IN JAPAN.

The husband is compared to heaven, the wife to the dirt under his feet. The husband is the day, the wife the night. A woman may have every beauty, grace and virtue, still she is lower than the lowest man.

Woman's position in Japan is better than in most other Eastern lands, still it is not what we find it in Christian lands. Woman in Japan is never her own mistress. She seems never to come of age. Until married she must obey her father; when a wife, the will of her husband; if a widow, her eldest son. I knew one case, however, where the mother ruled as with a rod of iron, and made her son's life most miserable. He often came to us with his trials and troubles. Sometimes she would watch him, and when she found him praying would throw water on him. Still he kept on praying and believed she would become a Christian, and she did. And one New Year's morning she took all her gods, for she had many of them, and threw them into the canal. I received a letter from this young man, after his mother's conversion, in which he stated there was hope for all Japan, now that his mother had accepted the truth.

Woman in Japan enjoys many liberties and advantages of education. She is not degraded nor kept in ignorance to the same extent as in India or China. Nine of the sovereigns of the Empire were women. But, after all, Christianity alone gives woman her true position, and creates the home life and the happy child life. Hence the importance of woman's work for woman in all heathen lands.

I think and speak from experience when I say that mission life in Japan is in many respects more pleasant than in other countries of the East. At least, missionaries who have laboured in those fields tell us so. The Japanese are more sympathetic and cordial. They have also a native culture that surprises the foreigners, and their sense of honour is at least equal to that of the average European. Some of our customs and habits are to them far from being desirable traits of civilization, such as eating beef, drinking milk, eating cheese, hanging our limbs on chairs, as they call it, making use of knives and forks and spoons instead of chop-sticks, wearing our boots and shoes in the house, and private places for bathing. Some of their bathing places are at the front door, especially in country places.

The common people, with their simple wants and frugal ways of living are, at least, as happy and contented as the corresponding class among ourselves. Buddhism teaches them various virtues, restrains them from excesses, costs them little trouble or expense, and seems to meet their present religious necessities. "Then why press upon them Christianity?" We have heard people say, What is the use of trying to convert these people? It is often argued that they are well enough in their present condition. Well, as a people, they certainly excel us in politeness, gentleness, obedience to parents and superiors, and in social life are our peers. Still our reply to all this is, that whatever culture may be possessed by the higher classes of these people, even their lives on earth would be better, their hopes brighter, and their passive existence quickened and elevated by the incoming of Christianity. The religion we present to them is not a mere myth like Shinto, nor a bewildering form of worship like Buddhism, nor yet a callous moral code like Confucianism. It is the very life of the soul. It breathes into man a new being, and warms the heart with a new glow of love to God the Father of all. The Japanese belong to the same sinful, cramped, sorrowing race as ourselves, and they stand in need of the same Redeemer. But how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear unless the Gospel be sent?

The harvest truly is great, but our labourers there are few. I do think Japan one of the grandest mission fields in the world, and if I were younger and felt called to do mission work for the Master, I would choose Japan. I would take up the language of Isaiah, the prophet, and say, "Here am I, O Lord, send me."

It is worthy of note that in no county or city has the Scott Act ever been repealed; and in every case in which the Act has been defeated, and a second contest has taken place, the Act has been carried upon the second vote. Public sentiment is growing everywhere in favour of the law.

John Tait.

BY THE REV. E. BARRASS, M.A.

SEVERAL years ago, when the late Rev. Thomas Hurlburt was returning from Hudson's Bay Territory to Ontario, when he reached Red River, now Winnipeg, he found a party crossing the plains and joined them. John Tait was his guide, and he has a history of his own which will illustrate the state of the country and people of Red River. Fifteen or twenty years before this time cattle and horses were taken from Red River to St. Paul to sell to the Americans. John Tait, a poor orphan boy, was hired to go along to drive cattle. Like some others, John Tait supposed that every American was a rogue and swindler, and consequently he was very shy on his first arrival at St. Paul. When, however, he became a little acquainted with the Americans, finding that they had not stolen his eyes or anything else, and being offered good wages, he concluded to remain for the winter, and at the termination of that period he decided to remain longer. By the time he attained to manhood, he had money enough to purchase a reaping machine, which he took to Red River about harvest time. He procured employment and put his machine in operation. All the people from far and near came to see the wonderful machine; and some who were engaged at the time in reaping their fields with the old-fashioned sickles—for they knew of nothing else—brought them along in their hands. The whole field was lined all around with eager gazers, like blackbirds in the fall around a field of corn. One old Scotchman gazed awhile, sickle in hand, and then threw it from him as far as possible, intimating that he had no further use for it. Tait returned to St. Paul in the fall, and the following season took a threshing machine to Red River. This was even a greater wonder than the other. Some of the old orthodox Scotchmen were afraid there was some horsey hidden away in these wonderful machines, for one was heard to say: "He didn't think it was right to thrash the grain in that way, for it was contrary to God's law." Nevertheless, Tait got as much employment as he desired for his machine.

Latterly there was a steam mill brought across the plains and put up, but many were very shy of it for a long time, and some even took their children from the school, one-half a mile from the mill, for fear it would blow up and kill them. During the transient visits I made to this settlement, some of their domestic customs seemed like a dream long forgotten, but now revived in the memory, as we see in them what, I suppose, our fathers were fifty years ago.

"What's the reason you didn't speak to Jones when he passed us just now?" "He insulted me the other day." "What did he say to you?" "He called me an old ass." "Called you an old ass! How ridiculous! Why, you are not old."

We walk here as if it were in the crypt of life; at times from the great cathedral above us we can hear the organ and the chanting of the choir; we see the light stream through the open door when some friend goes before us; and shall we fear to mount the narrow staircase of the grave, that leads us out of this uncertain twilight into the mansions of the life eternal?