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A LECTURE

ON

THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE JAPANESE,

AND THE PROGRESS OF

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN JAPAN,

BY

REV. WM. B. COOPER,

Of the Protestant Episcopal Mission, Tokio, Japan.

PUBLISHED BY THE
BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
Of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. A.
NEW YORK, 23 BIBLE HOUSE, A. D., 1880.

FRED LOCKLEY
RARE WESTERN BOOKS
4227 S. E. Stark St.
PORTLAND, ORE.

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A LECTURE ON
THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF THE JAPANESE,
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CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN JAPAN.

To understand, and estimate properly, the importance and prospects of our Missions in Japan, it is necessary to know something of the country and its resources ; the physical conditions under which the people live, their habits of life, and modes of thought.

If our Foreign Missions languish, it is owing largely, I believe, to the fact that our people are not acquainted with the nations among whom these Missions are established—are not convinced that they are in a condition to receive the Gospel—that men and means may be used among them with a hope of reasonable returns.

This, at least, is the most charitable way in which I can reconcile the smallness of the Church's offerings with the magnitude of her Foreign work.

If I succeed in conveying to the mind a true impression of Japan and the Japanese, the wonderful susceptibility of the people in receiving new ideas and adopting new customs, and the manifold ways in which they have been prepared for the reception of the Gospel, I shall have made as strong a plea for the Church's prayers, and offerings, as I could hope to make.

It is not my intention to preach a sermon, or confine myself to the established rules of a formal address, but to talk as plainly and familiarly as I can, giving as far as possible the results of my own personal experience and observation during a stay of nearly five years in Japan.

Japan has attracted possibly more attention during the past few years than any other country of the East, and she has well merited all of the interest manifested in her. She has not forced herself upon our notice by such deeds as usually bring heathen nations before us, but by a frank acknowledgment of the superiority of our institutions over her own, and by a noble and ready willingness to discard her own civilization, though hallowed by associations two thousand years old, and adopt whatever

there may be in our new and Western civilization, calculated to advance the welfare of her people.

Closed for two thousand years, and alienated from the western world by the darkest superstitions, and the feeling that a people of heavenly ancestry (which they claim for themselves) could not mingle with us, a lower order of created beings whom they call "Barbarians;" the wonderful revolutions both in the spirit of the people and policy of the government are truly marvelous.

I shall have occasion further on, to speak of some of these revolutions and changes, and so will proceed to tell something of Japan as a country, and of the habits of its people.

Japan, it will doubtless be remembered, is an island of the Pacific just off the coast of Asia, from which it is separated by the sea of Japan. In the extreme north the mainland is quite visible, and in the extreme south is not more than fifty or sixty miles distant. It is about one thousand miles long, and from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles wide.

EXTERNAL APPEARANCE. TREES AND FLOWERS.

Mountain chains, interspersed here and there with active volcanoes, extend north and south throughout the entire land, and from these mountains, covered with the most beautiful evergreens, flow innumerable creeks and rivulets to the sea.

With a temperate climate, not unlike that of our Southern States, it has the external appearance of a tropical country. It abounds in immense forests of magnificent trees, and flowers, infinite in variety and beautiful beyond description, bloom throughout the entire year. The saying, however, though not altogether, is alas! too true, that "the flowers of Japan have no odor, and its birds do not sing."

The mineral wealth of Japan though great is comparatively undeveloped.

FERTILITY OF THE SOIL. PRODUCTS.

The soil is fertile, producing in some localities, two crops a year, and on some lands from forty to fifty bushels of grain to the acre.

Although less than one-third of the country has been brought under cultivation, it now supports a population of 33,000,000. When its forests shall have been felled, and its mountain lands utilized, it may easily be made to support twice this number.

The lands are held by the government, and let out to the people at high rentals. The farmers work hard, and with inferior implements of husbandry, but generally earn a comfortable living.

The principal products are Rice, Tea and Silk ; some Cotton is also

grown. Fruit, though abundant and cheap, is inferior both in size and quality to that of our own country.

There is not that struggle for existence in Japan noticeable in other countries of the East, or even in some parts of Europe; and thus we find the Japanese a contented, home people, not a migratory or dying people, but a living and growing people, proud of their nation and devoted to its prosperity and growth.

JAPAN, THE COUNTRY OF THE GODS.

They claim that their country is the country of the gods, and that they are descendants of the gods. It may not be uninteresting to read a quotation from their ancient history or mythology, touching the creation of their country, and the origin of their people. As in other heathen countries, their gods are male and female. "The first manifestation of the male," we are informed, "was Izanigi—of the female, Izanami—standing together on the floating bridge of heaven. The male plunged his jeweled spear or falchion into the unstable waters beneath and withdrawing it, the trickling drops formed an island on which they descended. The creative pair, designing to make this the pillar for a continent, separated, the male to the left, and the female to the right, to make a journey round the island. At the meeting, the female spake first and said, 'How joyful it is to meet a lovely man.' The male spirit, offended that the first use of the tongue had been by a woman, required the circuit to be repeated. At the second meeting the man cried out first, 'How joyful to meet a lovely woman!' They were the first couple and this was the beginning of the art of love, and of the human race." The island with seven other large, and many other small ones, became the "Everlasting Great Japan."

THE JAPANESE.

Many of you have no doubt seen Japanese, so I need hardly describe them. They have a complexion but little lighter than our American Indians—have black almond-shaped eyes, straight black hair, and are small—the men not averaging more than five feet two or three inches in height.

In their own loosely fitting, flowing costumes, they present a dignified and graceful appearance. The young ladies are exceedingly fond of dress in which they display good taste. Many of them spend hours every day before their mirrors, which, by the way, are not unfrequently on their front verandas, in arranging their hair, and other matters of the toilet, and in admiring their own wonderful beauty. They paint their lips and their cheeks, but they do not care who knows it. Indeed, if asked the name of the third finger, they will frankly tell you, "Rouge-applying finger."

The Japanese are a very cleanly people in their habits. The whole nation bathes daily, in almost boiling water, and yet they have a peculiar, and at first a very disagreeable odor, owing no doubt to their peculiar diet.

Now, they admire our white complexion and style of dress, but in other respects, at least of a personal character, think they excel us. They laugh at the peculiarity of our hair and eyes. "We," they say, "have black hair and black eyes, while some of you have black hair and white eyes, some white hair and black eyes, and some blue eyes and even red hair," and so on *ad infinitum*.

As to the matter of odor, they say we are intolerable. A Japanese, the teacher of one of my Missionary friends, once remarked on entering his room, "I knew you were in, before you opened the door." "How could you have known?" asked my friend. "Why," said the Japanese, "I smelt you."

JAPANESE DIET.

The principal diet of the Japanese is fish, rice and vegetables. Although much more simple than a meat diet, upon it the Japanese perform harder labor than almost any other people.

MEN USED AS HORSES.

Men in Japan are really used as beasts of burden. Much of the heavy produce of the country is conveyed in wagons drawn by men, and formerly travelling was done altogether in chairs carried by men,

This mode of conveyance has recently been superseded by a kind of larger baby carriage on two wheels, with shafts in front, called "Jinrikisha," or man-power carriage. I have frequently ridden in these Jinrikishas, drawn by one man, from thirty-five to forty miles a day with apparent ease, and sometimes even with enjoyment to my steed. It was with difficulty, however, that I could reconcile myself to driving these men, as horses, at full speed to church, and then address them, sitting in the front pew, as "Dearly beloved brethren."

JAPANESE HOUSES.

The Japanese houses are comfortable, well adapted to their climate, and will not soon give way to our modern style of architecture, owing to the frequency of fires (the whole city of Tokio being supposed to burn every seven years). They are usually built of cheap frame material. I have, however, seen a house said to be nearly a thousand years old, and still in good preservation. In external appearance Japanese houses do not differ materially from our own frame buildings, and the most marked difference in the inner appointments lies in the almost entire absence of furniture. The floors are covered with mats, six feet long,

three feet wide, and about three inches thick. These mats are considered equal to any and all of the emergencies of tables, chairs, and beds. One is never asked, on entering a Japanese house, to "take a chair," but simply to "sit down," which he does as best he can; nor is there any "place of honor" at the table, since meals are served to each person separately on little stands eight or ten inches high, wherever he may be sitting when meal time arrives; and there is left no room for speculation, in entering a house or hotel, as to the kind or quality of bed which is to be occupied.

COUNTRY AND HOME LIFE.

There is comparatively very little of country life in Japan, and nothing synonymous with our English word "home." The people live almost entirely in villages, towns, and cities; and seek their diversions and pleasures at the various public places of amusement rather than in their own family circles. The evil effect of such a life can hardly be overestimated, and is largely owing, no doubt, to the inferior social position which woman occupies.

WOMAN'S POSITION IN JAPAN.

She is regarded as a lower order of being, is allowed but few advantages of education, and seldom rises above the position of a mere slave.

* "The American who leaves his own country, in which the high honor paid to woman is the chief glory of the race to which he belongs, is shocked and deeply grieved in beholding her low estate in pagan lands. He sees the might of physical force, and the power of government and society in league, to keep her crushed, as near to the level of the unreplying brute as possible. He finds that the religious systems agree in denying to her a soul, and popular superstitions use her as a scape-goat of all tempted and sinning men.

"He sees, too, young girls as pure as the purest of our own land, sold by their own parents for the basest of purposes, and in obedience to the sentiment of the country compelled to submit without a murmur to a life which they loathe, to disease, premature old age, and an early grave."

The immorality of the Japanese is lamentably great. Virtue is an article of traffic, and is really the cheapest commodity in the country. The marriage tie, however, on the part of the Japanese wife, is regarded as most sacred, and her fidelity cannot be excelled. As soon as the marriage ceremony is ended, the young bride shaves her eyebrows, blackens her teeth, adopts a plain and uniform style of dress, and of

* "The Mikado's Empire."

arranging the hair ; thus averting or avoiding as far as possible the attention and admiration of the world.

Japanese women make excellent mothers, according to their conceptions of maternal duties, and are model housewives. They are economical and industrious in their habits, and have a secret power of controlling their children which has certainly not been discovered by some even in our own country. I have spent weeks in Japanese families without ever noticing any unkind act from one child to another, or the slightest disregard for parental authority, and yet during my entire stay in Japan, I do not remember seeing more than two or three children punished, and have seldom even heard them scolded or reproved.

“Honor thy father, and thy mother,” more, possibly, than any other injunction or precept, recommends to the Japanese the Christian religion.

POLITENESS OF THE JAPANESE.

The politeness of the Japanese is, I believe, proverbial. It seems to be an inseparable quality of the people. Some persons are polite by force of circumstances ; some on particular occasions ; a Japanese is naturally and always polite. He never forgets his politeness, because he has never learned it. He seems to have it by instinct. It is the pride of the nation, the strongest tenet of his social and religious code. When Japanese meet each other in their houses they always kneel down, bowing their heads to the floor two or three times, and apologize at the same time for being so impolite. In entering or going out of doors, they sometime contend for five minutes as to who shall go first ; and he who is finally compelled to take the lead, cannot do so without first saying he is exceedingly impolite. If a Japanese should be inadvertently run against, and knocked down in the street, he would get up, no doubt, and beg the man's pardon who did it.

Any breach of etiquette without an immediate apology, is often fraught with the most serious results. I remember reading of a man being unintentionally pushed from the steps of a public building, and the person who did it, forgetting, or neglecting to ask pardon, the offended man got up, drew his sword, and committed suicide. The other party was expected to return the compliment by killing himself ; this being the only honorable way of settling so grave a difficulty.

In business transactions, it is not polite for the parties interested to discuss the matter, but a middle man must be employed who smoothes the way, and makes it possible for the parties interested to tell a dozen complimentary lies without prejudicing in any way the interests involved.

A Japanese always depreciates what belongs to himself, and praises

that which belongs to another. To an American this politeness is absolutely painful, and makes years of the closest association with the people necessary to understand their real feelings.

AMUSEMENTS.

There are no people more fond of amusements than the Japanese. They are called the "French of the East," and are in reality nothing more than a nation of children. Their most popular amusements are the theatre and wrestling matches. One play at the theatre often lasts a whole week, beginning at eight or nine A.M., and closing at five or six P.M. Whole families go together, taking their lunches with them, or are supplied from restaurants near by. The plays are principally dramatic. The Japanese are naturally good actors and have the stimulus of large and attentive audiences.

The wrestling matches draw the most immense crowds. The last match which I attended was witnessed by at least fifty thousand persons. As there was no fee for admission, I wondered how the performances would be made to pay, but soon the mystery was solved, as one by one I saw some infatuated and admiring spectator arise, take off his coat and throw it to the successful competitor of the ring.

Although the Japanese, as I have remarked, are a people of small stature, the wrestlers are among these largest men I ever saw. Some of them are as much as six feet two or three inches high, and weigh between two hundred and fifty and three hundred pounds.

WANT OF SERIOUSNESS.

The Japanese as a nation are devoid of seriousness. There is no subject so sad, which if broken suddenly upon them, will not provoke a smile.

I have not unfrequently heard them speak of some serious loss or bereavement with faces beaming with smiles, and had them laugh outright when informing me of the death of some relative or dear friend.

This is not from want of sympathy or affection for their friends, for the Japanese are kindly disposed and have very strong attachments, but they are taught to treat all kinds of bodily or mental pain with contempt, it not being thought manly or brave to manifest any evidence of suffering.

REVERENCE FOR LAW.

Though amiable, gentle and inoffensive in their manners, if once aroused, they are very dangerous. They have but little fear of death, and are not unfrequently restrained from murder, suicides and other crimes simply by their great reverence for the Emperor, and his laws.

I cannot better illustrate their reverence for law than by alluding to an incident which came under my own observation.

In the Southern portion of the Empire there stands upon a precipitous hill overlooking a deep and rocky ravine, a large and popular temple. It was thought that if a man threw himself from the porch of this temple upon the stones below, a distance of forty or fifty feet, and escaped unhurt, he would always be greatly blessed by the gods. Though no one ever succeeded in proving the truthfulness of the superstition, suicide became so frequent that the government ordered large palings put up to prevent persons from throwing themselves down ; but this not succeeding, a law was at last passed, and nailed up in a conspicuous place before the temple. It read thus :

“ Persons positively forbidden to commit suicide here.”

I was told that it had the most wholesome effect.

CIVILIZATION, EDUCATION, LANGUAGE.

Though secluded for so many centuries and cut off from all intercourse with the outer world, Japan has not been without its civilization, and that of no mean kind.

Its ancient bronzes, porcelains, lacquered wares, wood carvings, and silk embroideries, would compare favorably with works of like kind, whether in our own ancient or modern art.

Many of its old temples and palaces were built at an expense of millions of dollars, and display a high degree of architectural skill, a deep religious sentiment, and a very cultured taste.

The physical sciences are but little known in Japan, but education of a lower grade is possibly more generally diffused than in any other country.

I have met with but few Japanese who could not read and write, even among the lower classes, and to learn to read and write in Japanese requires almost as much labor as would be necessary to acquire an ordinary common school English education.

In quickness of intellect or brilliancy of wit, it is hardly necessary to say that the Japanese are not to be excelled. Their students abroad have abundantly testified to their mental abilities, some of them having taken away prizes from our best Universities, as well as from those of England and the continent of Europe.

The memory of the Japanese is quite remarkable. I once gave a boy a lesson to learn from one of our catechisms, telling him to get as much as he could. Three or four days afterward when he came to recite I found that he had committed the whole book.

The literature of Japan is principally of a historical or mythological character. The Japanese language has an alphabet but Chinese characters are also used.

The works of Confucius and other Chinese sages, bear the same relation to Japanese learning as the Latin and Greek classics to a liberal education in Europe or America. And thus we find the educated classes among the Japanese fairly conversant with the characters and literature of China.

There is no similarity whatever between the two languages; the Chinese being rough and monosyllabic, while the Japanese is smooth, flowing and polysyllabic.

JAPANESE RELIGIONS.

The Japanese are a very religious people, as the number of their temples and their innumerable gods would indicate. Their temples are generally built in secluded groves, and though not striking in outward appearance, some of them are very highly decorated and beautiful within. A single incident may serve to illustrate the force of the religious instinct and sentiment of the people.

While passing through the Art Gallery of the National Exhibition in Japan, my attention was called to a very large and handsome picture which seemed to attract more than ordinary interest. It was a representation of the death of "Dai Butsu," or "Great Buddha." Around the spot where he lay dying, were birds and animals of all kinds in the attitude of weeping adoration. Nearly three thousand years had elapsed since his death, but his memory was still fresh in the minds and hearts of his followers. Few among the great throng of curious spectators, even in the crowd and hurry of the exhibition passed that picture without stopping to drop a tear, or utter a silent prayer.

Buddhism.—Buddhism is the principal religion of Japan. It was first preached some time in the sixth century. Its missionaries were the pioneers of that civilization which has done so much for Japan. It embodies some good moral teaching, but is a gloomy atheism, and teaches the transmigration of souls, and final annihilation. "Life," it says, "is the origin and cause of pain, and the only happiness for man is in getting rid of existence. Follow the commandments of Buddha, live the true believer's life and you will be born into higher and higher states of existence, until you are finally absorbed into the bosom of Buddha; get out of that circle of deaths and births, and you are extinguished as the light of a candle. Reject the teaching of Buddha and you will be born into lower and lower states of existence; suffer innumerable deaths, and continue still to be born until an opportunity is offered for rising higher."

According to Buddhism the true religious life consists in severe penances, frequent fastings, the daily repetition of innumerable meaningless prayers, and constant meditation.

When Buddhism first came to Japan it found a religion and compromised with it. The ancient gods of the country were but different manifestations of Buddha which the people might continue to worship.

Polytheism.—Polytheism is still prevalent. The principal objects of worship are Sun, Moon and Stars, Thunder and Lightning, Rivers, Mountains and Trees, the Mikado, the souls of ancient heroes, and of their deceased parents and ancestors.

Confucianism.—Confucianism, which is really nothing more than a philosophy, dealing alone with the things of time, prevails to a certain extent among the educated classes. But we find in Japan some who are in advance of, and better than their religions; men who live above them, who are led by a clearer light, in whose hearts may be found a spark of that True Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world; men like Plato and Socrates, true seekers after GOD, ready and waiting to see and accept the salvation of the LORD.

NEW JAPAN.

I have attempted to give, though necessarily brief and indefinite, some idea of Old Japan, or Japan under its old civilization and heathen religions.

We will now consider for a few minutes New Japan, or Japan in contact with our western civilization, and under the dawning light of the Gospel of CHRIST.

It will doubtless be remembered that the first overtures made by Commodore Perry, on the part of our government, toward effecting a treaty with Japan, were met by a blunt and immediate refusal, and that it was not until the Japanese government saw that resistance was in vain that it consented, though reluctantly, to admit the "Barbarians" (as they called us) upon that sacred soil.

Mikado and Taicoon.—There were in Japan at this time two rulers, the Mikado, or as he is sometimes called, the "Spiritual ruler," and the "Shogoon," or "Temporal ruler." The Mikado was the lawful head of the government, and had for more than a thousand years held undisputed sway. The Shogoon, or "Lesser ruler," as the word implies, was originally but a vassal, or general. He had gradually added to his claims and power, however, until he now called himself "Taicoon," or Great ruler, and though but a usurper, was in reality the ruling power in the land. Under him had developed a most burdensome feudalism, and the most rigid caste which must ever have proved an effectual barrier against any attempt at reform.

The Mikado from centuries of seclusion and isolation from the outer world, at first of divine ancestry, had now developed into a real

god. He was never seen in public, or even in private, except by a few of the chosen nobility. When he had occasion to visit different portions of the country, he always traveled in a closely curtained car, drawn by bullocks, and at the approach of this car, all persons, whether in the fields, the streets or in their houses, were compelled to prostrate themselves and worship the supposed divinity, enshrined within.

Tired of the divinity which had so long hedged him in, the Mikado gladly took advantage of the opportunity now offered to assert his rights as a man.

The causes which led to the overthrow of the Taicoon are too numerous and complicated to mention here. The feeling against him, which had been increasing for years, aggravated by his regard for foreigners and foreign civilization, was made at last the pretext for a change of government. The Mikado, taking advantage of this anti-foreign sentiment with which neither he nor his ministers sympathised, assumed the reins of government, and with scarcely a battle, declared himself the sole ruler of Japan.

Soon, the same charges of friendliness to foreigners, brought against the Taicoon were made against the Mikado, and the discontent of the people manifested itself for a time in some serious revolutions; which only served, however, to show the firm and resolute policy of the government, and the division, weakness and decay of the anti-reform party.

WONDERFUL REFORMS.

With the reinstatement of the Mikado, and change of government in Japan, followed in quick succession the abolition of feudalism, and of the military class; the reducing of the nobility to the ranks of mere citizens; the disestablishment of Buddhism, and the various other reforms, so startling and yet so real as to challenge at once the wonder and admiration of the civilized world.

Thus we noticed, with the very entrance of our civilization, possibly the greatest reforms recorded in the annals of history.

I shall now endeavor to picture to your minds a few of the external and visible effects of our civilization, such as would be observed by the casual visitor to Japan. No one, however, can conceive how deeply and widely it has permeated the nation, without mingling with the people, conversing with them on the subject, observing their greed for any and all kinds of knowledge about foreign countries, the avidity with which they appropriate such knowledge, and the vanity with which they display what they may chance to know.

From the deck of the steamship "China," on the evening of October, 17, 1873, I caught a last glimpse of the receding shores of California.

I would have narrowed the ocean, drawn the shores of my native land, now doubly dear to me, nearer to my future home, had I been able to have done so. Twenty-four days, five thousand two hundred miles, through storm and calm, and the Captain bade us look for land.

Soon in the distance we saw the snow-capped summit of Fujiyama, the great sacred mountain of Japan. Solitary it stands upon a level plain, and as symmetrical as from an artist's chisel, lifts its head, a perfect cone, 14,000 feet up into the blue of heaven. Some Japanese on board returning home, bowed and worshipped it. Symmetrical from summit to base, white with the driven snow, typical I thought that great mountain was, of CHRIST, for so He shall rise above all philosophers, sages and idols, and sharing with none shall claim the undivided reverence and worship of Japan.

Histories written fifteen years ago are already old histories of Japan.

YOKAHAMA.

Yokohama, where we landed, twenty-six years ago but a small fishing village, has now a population of seventy thousand, two thousand of whom are foreigners. A portion of the city is laid off in handsome streets, built up with foreign stores not inferior either in point of size, or quality of merchandise to those of our own cities. It has its banks, its courthouses, its post-offices, its churches, and I must not fail to add, its billiard and drinking saloons, almost without number. Overhead in the streets may be seen the telegraph wires which extend north and south, throughout the whole length of the land.

In the harbor where the American men-of-war puffed and blew twenty-six years ago, to the consternation of the inhabitants of the surrounding country, may now be seen merchant ships, bearing the flags of all the civilized nations of the world. In the distance may be heard the whistle of the steam engine, which now whirls one through sixty miles of country.

A Missionary to Siam, returning home after a stay of more than forty years in his distant field, saw a rail-road and train of cars for the first time here at Yokohama. He was so overcome with delight that he jumped up and clapped his hands like a child.

TOKIO.

An hour's ride by rail brought me to Yedo, or Tokio, as it is now called. I was met by a Missionary who had come to escort me to my new home. In area Tokio is one of the largest cities in the world, but has only a population of about 1,000,000. Our civilization up to this time had made but little perceptible change in the external aspect of the great city.

My friend, after some gesticulation and much loud talk, finally succeeded in contracting for jinrikishas, or the little "man-power carriage," of which I spoke, to take us to the different places of interest in the city. It is always necessary to have a definite understanding with these horse-men before getting into their vehicles. I rode through the city once with a party of tourists, and in getting out of my carriage I handed the man who drew me the proper amount of money, which he gladly accepted with the most profound bow. When my companions offered a like amount, their men drew back indignantly, each protesting that it was not nearly enough for them to pay. I interposed, condemning the swindle, whereupon they replied, "Why, you understand the language, and what you gave is the proper price, but these men don't, and it is unfair not to allow us to take advantage of their ignorance."

After a day of constant wonder, for we went from one heathen temple to another, and to almost every place of interest in the city, we drove up before a Buddhist temple, which was to be my first home in Japan. The priest in charge had consented for a reasonable consideration, heathen and barbarian though he considered us, to allow us to occupy a portion of his sacred building.

Our apartments were divided by paper walls from the room in which the idols were kept, and in which the people worshipped. The surroundings were not such as to make me feel altogether at home to say the least. Being somewhat fatigued we retired early, but I had scarcely fallen asleep, when I heard a noise like that of distant thunder. Soon the timbers of the house began to creak, the bed to shake, and everything to predict a general crash. "This," said my friend, "is only an earthquake." As to how long it would continue, or how much reserve force it had, no one in the house felt safe to venture even a conjecture, but I know the fact came very forcibly to my mind that twenty-five years before one shock had destroyed fifty thousand persons in Yedo alone.

It was soon over, but I had scarcely fallen asleep again when we heard the cry of fire. Learning that we were in no immediate danger, I went to sleep again, not to be disturbed until our neighbor, the Buddhist priest, at the most extraordinary hour, by no means yet day, began beating a drum and singing his long and monotonous prayers which lasted for hours.

Thus during my first night I was introduced to the most frequent and dreaded enemies with which the resident of Tokio has to contend.

Time forbids me giving fully my first and favorable impression of Japan. I believe, however, that I participated in that wonderful infatuation manifested by all during their first week in Japan.

The politeness of the people, the cleanliness of their houses, the beauty of their gardens, the magnificence of their temples and temple grounds—in fact everything is unlike one's preconceived ideas of a heathen people and a heathen land.

I shall now pass on to Tokio as it is.

At the time of my arrival in 1873, the principal reforms had been inaugurated, and many of the enterprises now so flourishing had even then been fairly begun.

COLLEGES.

There is now in Tokio a University with a large staff of foreign professors. Connected with it, there is a College of Civil Engineering, a large and flourishing Medical School, with German professors of high standing, and also a department of Law.

There is also in the city a Naval College under the direction of officers of the English Navy, an Army School under the direction of the French, and an Agricultural Department and School under the management of Americans. Connected with this School are several farms, with horses, cows, sheep and other animals imported from America.

The land is cultivated on the American plan, with American implements of husbandry, and under the supervision of American farmers of experience. All of these departments have large and handsome foreign buildings, as well as residences for the various employees.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS. FOREIGN STORES AND MERCHANTISE.

There are also a number of public and private hospitals and schools built upon the American and European plan.

The government has now built up a portion of the city with brick stores from two to three stories high. These stores are rented to Japanese merchants, and are used almost exclusively for the sale of foreign merchandise. Almost any article to be had in London, Paris, or New York, may now be had on the Tori in Tokio.

Some of the principal streets of the city are lit with gas and, whether by day or night would compare favorably with the streets of our own American towns. Many of the men of Japan have recently adopted the foreign dress. No officer of the government is allowed to appear at his office unless in foreign uniform. Some of the government officials and merchants of Tokio have their houses furnished throughout in foreign style as handsomely and with as much taste as any in our own country.

Foreign food is being largely adopted. Bread, in many houses, has almost taken the place of rice. Full rations of bread and beef are now regularly issued to the students of the different colleges. Six years ago

there were not more than two or three meat markets in the city. There is now scarcely a street where beef may not be had. Although the Japanese have always raised cattle, they were until recently used entirely as beasts of burden.

The Buddhistic doctrine of transmigration of souls forbade the taking of life. In eating a palatable beefsteak a man might be guilty of the awful cannibalism of feeding upon his innocent old grandmother, or some other member of the family, but the appetite of the Japanese proved stronger than his conscience, and his religious scruples soon disappeared. The beefsteak finally prevailed.

THE PRESS.

Among the civilizing influences at work in Japan, there is none more worthy of mention than the Press. There are now in Tokio alone more than a dozen daily, native papers, edited and published by Japanese ; some of them very ably conducted, and are strong advocates of our religion and of our civilization.

Some of the most highly educated men of Japan have given, and are still giving much of their time and energies to the translation of English books. Our best authors on Political Economy, Moral and Mental Philosophy, History and Law may be now read in the Japanese language.

JAPANESE LAW.

The laws of Japan up to this time have been most arbitrary, little more than the edicts of the Emperor. Judges are appointed by the government without any regard for the knowledge even of Japanese law, and act generally in the capacity of both counsel and judge. Trial by jury has not yet been allowed.

The government has, however, employed a number of French jurists who are now engaged in framing a code similar to that used in France. This will no doubt become the law of Japan.

CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN.

I will now dwell briefly upon the rise and progress of Christian Missions in Japan, and give some of the reasons for predicting that she is soon to be made one of the greatest conquests of the Cross.

It would be unfair to speak of the influence and success of missions in Japan, without alluding to the peculiar obstacles which confronted them from the very first.

Had Christianity come to Japan for the first time, with our civilization, it would, I believe, have been as readily and willingly accepted. Such however, was not the case. More than three centuries ago Francis Xavier, that great pioneer of the Cross in so many lands, went

first as Missionary to Japan. It required the heart of a true man, fired with more than ordinary zeal to undertake a mission fraught with so many dangers. I will not dwell upon his labors, or the manifold miracles claimed to have been wrought by him ; reliable history shows us however, that he laid the foundation of what under his immediate successors became a very flourishing Mission. It is said that there were between six and seven hundred thousand Christians in Japan at the end of the 16th century. The Missionaries of the different orders, Jesuits, Franciscans and Augustinians soon, however, become jealous of each other, drew their converts into political plots, incited them to intrigue, and even open war, for the advancement of their several ends, and at last brought upon them the fury of the government, which did not spend itself until sixty thousand Christians were put to death, and Christianity entirely swept from the land. **“The Christians suffered all kinds of persecutions. They were wrapped in straw sacks, piled in heaps of living fuel, and set on fire. All the tortures that barbaric hatred or refined cruelty could invent were used to turn thousands of their fellow men into carcasses or ashes. Yet few natives quailed, or renounced their faith. They calmly let the fire of the wood, cleft from the crosses before which they once prayed, consume them, or walked cheerfully to the ‘blood pit,’ or were flung alive into the open grave about to be filled up. Mothers carried their babes at their bosoms, or their children in their arms to the fire, the sword or the precipice’s edge, rather than leave them behind to be educated in the pagan faith. If any one doubts the sincerity and fervor of the Christian converts of to-day, or the ability of the Japanese to accept a higher form of faith or their willingness to suffer for what they believe, he has but to read the accounts preserved in English, Dutch, French, Latin, and Japanese, of various witnesses to the fortitude of the Japanese Christians of the 17th century. The annals of the primitive Church furnish no instances of sacrifice or heroic constancy in the Coliseum, or the Roman arenas, that were not paralleled on the dry river beds and execution grounds of Japan.”*

For nearly three hundred years it has been a part of the education of the Japanese to be taught to hate “Yasu,” or JESUS, and to regard Christianity as the enemy to the loyalty, peace, and purity of society. But eight years ago one, walking through the streets of Tokio, might have seen written on large boards, nailed up in the most public places, edicts forbidding any one to embrace the “corrupt and dangerous Chris-

* See Chapter on Christianity and foreigners.

tian faith." Up to this time services were held for the most part in private houses, and attended by a few shy and suspicious natives, principally the servants and scholars of the Missionaries.

In 1872 these edicts were removed from the streets. Little by little we saw the prejudices of the people vanish, and the policy of the government relent. Our congregations began immediately to increase, men and women were baptized and became Catechists and teachers, and chapels were soon opened here and there throughout the whole city. There are now more than a dozen churches in the heart of Tokio, where public services are held almost daily.

TEN THOUSAND CHRISTIANS IN JAPAN.

The few timid worshippers have increased to thousands, and now go boldly "up to the House of God." To-day there are ten thousand professing Christians in Japan. The same creed and commandments which we once learned, are now recited in our Sunday Schools by hundreds of boys and girls, and our old familiar hymns are not unfrequently heard in the streets of Tokio and Yokahama.

Men and women, who a few years ago were idolators, filled with every dark superstition, now play our church organs, form our church choirs, and superintend and teach in our Sunday Schools.

SCHOOLS.

The Church is not our only school, nor the Bible our only text book. We have schools in our private houses, where a good English education may be had, and where the Japanese boys and girls, removed from their corrupt and heathen associations, may see something of Christian family life.

LIVING CHRIST. PREACHING CHRIST.

One of our Japanese scholars, fifteen years of age, was baptized contrary to the wishes of many of his heathen relatives and friends. On one occasion they taunted him with the decline of power in the Church. "We read," said they, "in the Bible of the apostles performing miracles, and with the promise of this power to their successors. Why don't your ministers now perform miracles?" Instantly he replied, "They do perform miracles." "Do they?" his friends asked. "What kind of miracles? We should like to see some of them." "Well," said he, "I live with three Christian ministers, all of them single men. They do not drink whiskey, nor commit adultery but are honest, upright, charitable men, who work every day for us, without any other hope of remuneration save our good. This certainly is a miracle in Japan."

WOMAN'S WORK.

Our schools are well patronized and are an important element both

in the civilization and Christianizing of Japan. I wish I had time to rehearse what the ladies of the various Missions are doing in this and other departments of Missionary work. I can only say, that there are a number of them at work in Japan—(three of our own Church,) who are laboring earnestly and with much success, going into heathen households, speaking to women who otherwise could never be reached, instructing them in Christian duties and lifting them from their degradation to the position of Christian wives and mothers.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY AND MEDICAL MISSION.

We have the beginning of a Theological Seminary for the building up of a native Ministry which must ever be of the vastest importance to our work. We have also a medical Missionary who by his zealous and efficient labors, has done much to recommend the cause.

The number of our Communicants and baptized members, of our Catechists and teachers, the efficiency of our schools, or the size of our congregation can give but a poor conception of the influence which Christianity is exerting in Japan.

Powerfully, though quietly it is at work in the hearts of the people removing ignorance and old prejudices and leading the nation onward, slowly, though surely into the church of GOD.

HEATHEN RELIGIONS LOSING THEIR HOLD.

As I observed before, the Japanese are a very religious people, and may point to the number and magnificence of their temples with a just pride. Hundreds of these once beautiful temples, however, are now in ruins, and in some localities idols are considered of no more value than the stone or bronze which they represent. Men of position are seldom seen at temple worship, and there is a very noticeable falling off in attendance, even among the lower classes.

I walked over a stone bridge away off in the interior of Japan, made of idols, laid there by the hands that once fashioned them for worship.

In the centre of Tokio, surrounded by a magnificent grove of forest trees, stands what was once the great Confucian Temple and College of Japan. It has been recently converted, by the government, into a public Library and Reading Room. In a conspicuous place in the library room, stands the once popular shrine of Confucius, now neglected and closed, while on book-shelves on either side may be seen the Bible, Evidences of Christianity, Sermons by various authors, and other Christian books. The government has also made our Sunday the national holiday.

THE BIBLE.

A few years ago the people would not accept, or read the Bible under

any circumstances. It is now purchased in large numbers, and read with great interest. Passing a temple in the interior of the county, I noticed several heathen priests pouring intently over a book which lay before them. Observing me, they immediately invited me to come in and tell them something of the wonderful book. It was the Bible they were reading, and they listened to what I told them about it, with the most profound interest. These heathen priests now frequently make quotations from the Bible in their sermons.

Our Missionary physician was once called in to see a dying man. On entering the room he noticed that he was dead. By his side sat his bereaved wife weeping; near by he noticed an open book. "My husband got this book" said the woman, "while passing a Christian chapel. He brought it home, and soon after was taken sick. Since that day it has been constantly in his hands. In it he told me that he had found his SAVIOUR, and that he died full of hope. Wont you teach it to me?" Fifteen cents was the price of that Bible. What a blessing GOD sent upon that small offering! It must have been given with an humble and earnest prayer. What a consolation would it be for any one to know that he gave the price of that Bible which saved that poor man's soul!

INCREASING DESIRE OF THE PEOPLE TO HEAR THE GOSPEL.

Every mail from Japan brings appeals for more Missionaries, and tidings of the wide spread and increasing desire of the people to hear the Gospel and to be baptized into the Church.

I once visited a little town eighty miles in the interior of the country, and gave notice that I would preach. Before the appointed time had come, the paper partitions of the house were removed, and the whole house thrown into one large room. It was soon so crowded that I could scarcely find standing room. The subject of my sermon was JESUS CHRIST, the Saviour of the World." No sooner had the words fallen from my lips, than a man got up in the congregation and said, "I hate that name, JESUS." "Please tell the congregation why you hate him," I said. He had only been taught to hate Him, knew nothing about Him, and so sat down. After listening a few moments he arose and said, "I don't hate JESUS."

As I went on preaching, old men, who could not hear distinctly, came and sat at my very feet. Occasionally I forgot a word, but instantly some one would give it to me, and so with the assistance of this congregation who were now listening to Christianity for the first time, I completed my sermon, and sat down, amid the cry from a dozen voices, "Go on, we want to hear more."

I had no sooner retired to my private room than it was filled with persons deeply interested, who wished to inquire particularly about Christianity, and some of them asking to be baptized.

The following day (Saturday) I went to a village about ten miles distant, and about three thousand feet down the mountain. On Sunday morning before I had arisen, I heard some one inquire, at the hotel where I was stopping, if the Christian Missionary was there, and would he preach again that day. Ten miles they had walked to hear another sermon.

HEATHEN AT HOME.

There are many persons who would excuse themselves from giving to the support of Foreign Missions, because, say they, there are heathen enough at home. Now my brethren, I am not at all disposed to controvert that fact. Indeed, the great majority of the people of Christian America, as it is called, are ruled by motives but little higher than those which govern the life of the ordinary, respectable citizen of Japan; and the records of crime, committed in New York, for instance, absolutely shock the sensibilities of the citizens of Tokio.

But is this an argument against Foreign Missions? Do our people sin ignorantly? Do they not commit their crimes in the plain violation of the laws of the country, as well as of the laws of GOD?

Is the religious indifferentism which we see around us the result of ignorance, or owing to the Church's neglect to instruct or warn the people?

Let any one disposed to make this charge, enter our Churches, and behold the "sad array of empty pews," or listen to the melancholy story of unsuccessful attempts by earnest laymen and faithful Clergy, to reach the masses of the people.

Ah! if our people *are* in darkness, it is really because they love "darkness rather than light," and since they count themselves unworthy of eternal life, the Church is at liberty (yea it is her duty) to turn to the Gentiles—to the poor, hungering, seeking, willing souls ready to hear and accept the truth.

CHRISTIAN CONVERTS.

But I am not unfrequently asked, What effect has Christianity upon the lives of those who embrace it? Two examples, one of Christian living, the other of a Christian death must suffice as an answer to the question. One day, after preaching a sermon on Christian charity, a member of my congregation came to me and said, "The old rice merchant is giving away all that he has," and begged me to interpose. Now, he was a poor old cripple, and earned his living by hard and

constant toil, and yet, he felt that as a Christian man, he had no right to keep more than was necessary to sustain life, while so many around him were in need. The same old man came to me a few days before leaving Japan, and asked me to baptize his wife and daughter. I expressed my surprise, for I remembered that they did all in their power to prevent his becoming a Christian. But the consistency of his life had removed their prejudices, and they now wished to become Christians too, and receive that power which had so transformed his life.

The death was that of a widow with three helpless, dependant children. Sitting by her bed-side, a few hours before her death, I asked if there was anything that troubled her? She replied, "one thing only." I supposed she was anxious about her children, but said she "no, GOD will take care of them, but I did want so much to live to see your new Chapel opened."

Here, this poor suffering woman, a Christian for less than a year, with three dependant children, had but one thought in the hour of her death, and but one prayer. It was that she might be permitted to live to see another church opened where her people might hear of the love of GOD in CHRIST.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." There is a wide spread feeling in Japan that Christianity is superior to its own religions, that the true Christian is *far* better than the heathen man.

I have told you that Japan is one of the prettiest countries upon the face of the earth, that it has a genial climate, a fertile soil, a large, intellectual and industrious population, and of the marvellous progress which it has made in civilization within the past few years.

I have told you that the Japanese are a religious people, of the decay of their heathen religion, and of the willingness and rapidity with which they embrace the Christian faith. I believe it requires no great foresight to predict for Japan, and at no distant day, an important place among the civilized nations of the earth.

It need require no longer time to see her a Christian nation. Indeed, the agencies at work to make her Christian are far more potent than those to make her civilized. But, speaking for our own Church, the means which she has used are in no proportion to the results her Missionary character ought to make her expect and claim. The whiteness of the field is sadly in contrast with the number of laborers she has sent forth.

Our Bishop and the Rev. John Liggins (now retired) were the first Missionaries of reformed Christianity to Japan. Ten long years in constant prayer and humble trust, this noblest of the Church's Bishops, patiently abided GOD's time, and now when the fullness of that time

has come, he calls, and calls for help. Six Presbyters* comprise his entire Clerical force, and they, for want of sufficient means, are met by great difficulties in carrying on their work.

OUR NEEDS.

Men and women to whose consciences the Holy Spirit has brought with an awful sense of personal responsibility, the last words of our Ascended LORD, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," have accepted the call with the ready response, "Here am I, LORD! send me;" and yet the Committee for Foreign Missions, for want of means are unable to send out all who do apply, and who are so sorely needed. We need the men; we need the women; we need money to send them out, and to support them. We need money for our Boys' and Girls' Schools, and for our Theological Seminary, that we may raise up a native Ministry. We need money again to build Churches worthy of our religion, churches at least so large that we need neither crowd them nor turn away members of our congregation, nor be compelled to breath the vitiated air of densely crowded rooms.

Our needs, indeed, are great, but they are only in proportion to our opportunities for accomplishing great results; opportunities for which God will hold us responsible! Prayers and offerings now mean the salvation of men and women from iniquity and death, *speedily*.

Are there any too poor to give something to this cause, a cause which more than any other presses upon the heart of the Son of GOD?

If, in speaking of the Japanese, I have dwelt principally upon their virtues, it is not because their vices are few, but because they are of such a nature as to preclude more than a bare mention in the presence of Christian refinement, "For it is a shame even to speak of the things done of them in secret."

Christian women! what appeal could be more eloquent to you than the sad and simple facts I have given of the condition of the women of Japan? Christians! Japan appeals to you all. She appeals to you with all the sad eloquence of a nation buried in spiritual darkness, and steeped in sin, "Without GOD and without hope in the world." She appeals to you with all the proofs of her readiness to receive the truth. She appeals to you by the love of a common LORD, who loved her and gave Himself for her. She is worthy of your offerings and of your prayers. The honor of the Church demands them; our blessed LORD expects them. What will you do then to make Him at His second coming see in the conversion of this great nation "of the travail of His soul," that He may be satisfied.

* Another gentleman is under appointment, which takes effect upon his ordination, say in July.—ED.

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