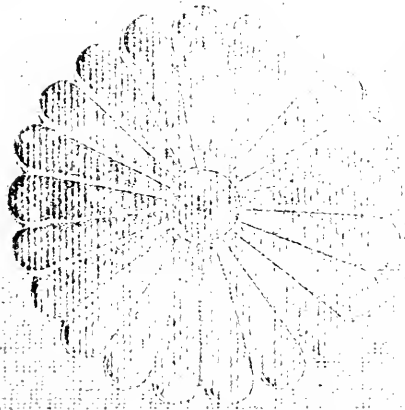


THE GREAT EAST
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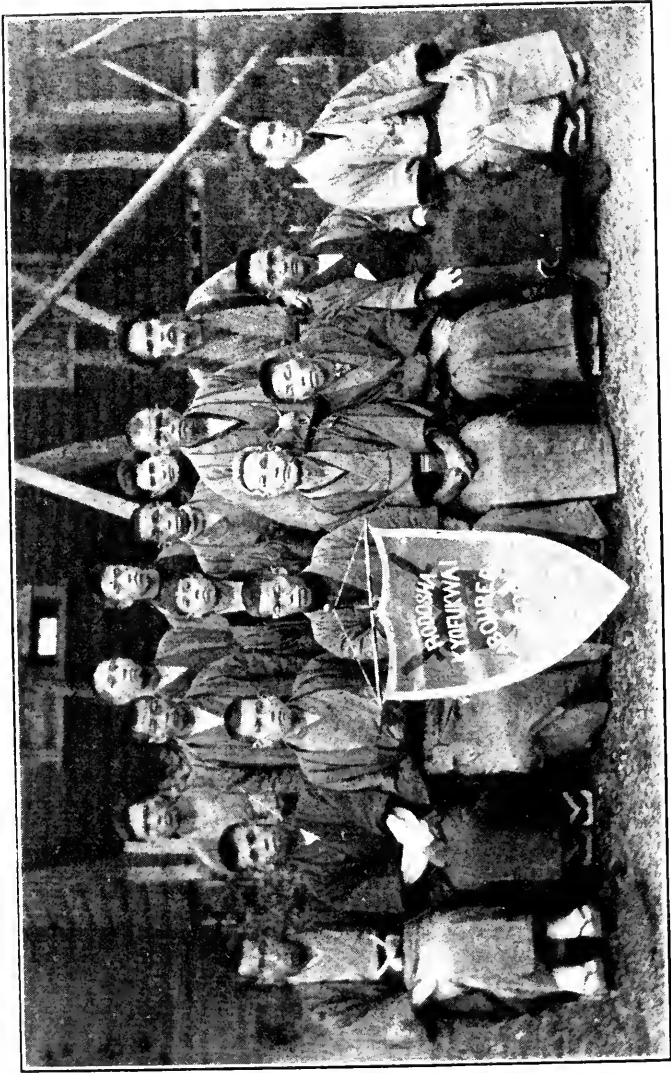


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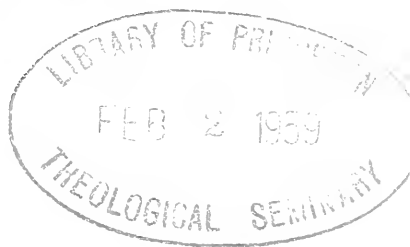
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They that sat in darkness





MEMBERS OF THE UNION AT THE BEGINNING OF ITS WORK

THEY THAT SAT IN DARKNESS



An Account of Rescue Work in Japan
in the words of

THE
REV. YOSHIMICHI SUGIURA

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY
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PREFACE.

It was some thirty years ago, while a student at St. Paul's College, Tokyo, that I began to study the Bible with the guidance of the late Bishop G. M. Williams, and by his kind efforts and the great influence of his saintly character, that acted upon my miserable self thirsting only for the worldly fame and riches, I was converted and baptized by the Bishop, in December, 1881.

In those days the Christian influence in this country was very weak, and almost all the students even in this Christian college were much disgusted with the religious instructions. My friends in this city were constantly cautioning me not to believe the foreign religion but only to study English, as it was advantageous to learn it in such school taught by foreigners. When I was baptized, however, I had contrived how to surprise them by informing it. One Sunday evening, when the Bishop was going to preach in a chapel in Kanda, in which district many of my

such anti-Christian friends were staying, I called on them and persuaded them to come to the chapel to hear this great man's sermon once. Having got the Bishop's permission beforehand, I ascended to the pulpit to my friends' surprise, and preached first and told them that they were misunderstanding this true religion. By this unexpected conduct of mine, they had rather to give up their hope of me, while one of them got very angry with me and told others even that he would kill me.

Seeing such adverse circumstances of my country and that the volunteers for the mission work were very rare, I was deeply impressed with that it was really the most urgent matter to consider, and I thought it necessary to offer myself to Lord's service. But for many years I could not prepare myself for Holy orders on account of many hindrances. So I worked as a layman and converted my family and other people in my native town, Obama, in Fukui Prefecture, and a church was at last founded there. The church in Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, was also founded as a consequence of my work, when I was in Osaka city, and a pastor was sent to it from the Presbyterian church.

At last, in 1888, I entered Trinity Divinity School, Tokyo, as I was hoping for many years. While I was a student there, Bishop Williams asked me to take care of the True Light Church. This church was formerly in his care and is indeed the first church he ever founded in Tokyo, thirty-seven years ago. But when many churches and chapels were built afterward in the city, many a member of this church began very naturally to leave it and attend those nearer and more convenient to them, so that in about 1890 the church was at its lowest ebb, and the Sunday attendance was seldom more than ten, and therefore its remaining members asked the Bishop to send me. I am working ever since for this same church.

As soon as I began my work in this church there occurred an event that aroused my sympathy with the poor people in this part of the city. In the afternoon of a Sunday in Lent, 1890, a member of my church took me by my request to a person who used to attend the church before. He was a blind man, and was very ill when I called on. His wife was a blind woman too, and was out for her work then. They were shampooers by trade, and

they had no child between them. They were poor, even more so now that this man fell in his sick bed: feeble hand of the blind woman had to support herself and her sick husband.

When I took my seat by his bedside the sick man told me that he had been ill for two months, and that, as there was no hope of recovering his health, and as it was only to give his wife a longer trouble to postpone his death, he was refusing to receive the medical attendance for many weeks then. The poor man's eager desire was only to die as soon as possible!

This was my first experience I ever met with in a slum. He was so much self-abandoning but lack of faith. But when we think that he came to such a conclusion as to wish death only because of misfortune and poverty we cannot help feeling deep sympathy and commiseration for him. So I taught him that our life is in God's hand, and without His permission it is impossible to make it longer or shorter at our own will; and I prayed for him by his side that the will of God would be revealed and we shall be given the means to proceed.

I continued to pray for him day after day

for the whole week, and when I called on another member of my church on the following Sunday I got a very clear answer of God. Among the friends of this man there was a Christian by the name of Mr. R. Tsuda, who belonged to a Presbyterian church, and he happened to be present in my member's house also. As our conversation went on, and when I told of the poor blind man, Mr. Tsuda clapped his hands and informed me that there was just the man wanted, a physician, who was looking for such poor sufferers to give help. So I left the house at once, and hurried away about three miles to see the physician, who was staying in a lodging house near the Imperial University in Hongo district. Though I was told the name of the doctor, Michitaro Fukuhara, his exact address was unknown to Mr. Tsuda, and consequently it was a very difficult task to find him out, as there were hundreds of the students' lodging houses around the University. I was wandering about there for nearly two hours, and when it became dark in the evening it was almost impossible to go on further searching. I then began to question if it was the answer of God. But courage, I said

to myself, and ventured once more into a hotel in a lane nearby, and lo! the gentleman that appeared before me answering at the door was the very man I was looking for.

Having agreed, we visited the blind man on the next morning. After a careful examination, it was found that the disease was of serious nature, and it was urgently necessary to put him into a hospital at least for five weeks.

Dr. Fukuhara was very obliging, and took trouble to obtain for him a free bed at the University hospital. When we visited the patient next time to convey him to the hospital, the man declined to accept our kind offer upon such foolish ground that he would rather die in his own house, not in a hospital. His obstinacy was never to yield, notwithstanding my hard endeavor to bring the right idea home to him. Dr. Fukuhara was much perplexed and despaired, for it was impossible to perform surgical operation in this dirty room. But I said that, since he wanted to die as soon as possible, we did not need to be so timid; if he die, that is all; it is the duty on our part to do our best; should he desire it,

we have no choice and must proceed to operate even in this unsatisfactory way.

On the next morning we visited him again. The physician brought his instruments and I a bottle of the carbolic-acid and other necessary articles. Without giving the narcotic help, and with such imperfect preparation we began to venture the risk. While Dr. Fukuhara was cutting his body, I was to help his operation, holding fast the patient's limbs, as he cried and shook his body in pain. The operation, however, was finished in a rather satisfactory way. We used to visit him alternately to wash the cut for about a month, and he became a very strong man again, and was baptized by me. He lived on for seven years as a Christian, giving glory to God until he was taken away of consumption.

This event, which occurred at the beginning of my work in this peculiar part of the city, led me to start "The Good Samaritan Dispensary" for such people, whom I found always crowding in it, and at last I was induced to organize the "Laborers' Reform Union," after a long experience in my work among them, as I give the explanation of it in this little book.

They That Sat in Darkness

I.

WE DEPEND ONLY ON GOD'S POWER AND
HELP.

Tokyo, September 2, 1910.

Man plans his work first by raising the money necessary for it, and starts it on the scale according to the amount raised. But I took a different course, and started the work of the L. R. U. on the principle that where there is the spirit there is the way; and as to the funds for it, I never cared for that, entirely depending on the true commander's supply, thinking that the only duty on my part is to work, with earnest prayers, in union with the will of God. I therefore asked that He would send His faithful servants to help me, that His mighty power be revealed in my work through them. I am getting His an-

swers so plentifully that I have often burst into grateful tears, when I kneel down to thank God for them.

I have also taught my poor members of the Union that they should never rely upon human power for help, but fight themselves with the power which is within them. We are not yet given special house for meeting, but in the little house of a laborer, Mr. T. Gonda, the work is going on very nicely as from the beginning, to the astonishment of those who come to see it, hearing its reputation. The work, however, is not limited in this little house only, for all the members of the Union are preaching the Gospel daily according to the rule of the Union, whenever the opportunity presents itself in their work houses or in the streets.

And thus the Union is progressing on its way, without any funds for the house and workers, led by the mighty hand of God.

II.

THE ORIGIN OF THE L. R. U.

It is twenty years since I became the minister-in-charge of the Shinko Kyokwai (True Light Church). This church is in the industrial part of Tokyo, which comprises the districts of Fukagawa and Honjo. From the beginning of my work in these districts I investigated the condition of the laborers and my sympathy being roused I determined to do what I could for them. To this end I started the Good Samaritan Dispensary in February, 1890, and tried to use their bodily salvation as a means to bring about their spiritual salvation. The dispensary helped many poor people, but as the lepers of old few returned to give glory to God.

Beside the dispensary, I tried many other methods of reaching them, but their character was such that they gave thought only to the things of this world. One of the great difficulties was that their point of view and mine were so absolutely different, that we mutu-

ally misunderstood each other, and all my plans ended with almost no fruits. These failures of my work for past seventeen years gave me the knowledge as the preparation to plan another, and I decided to select some of the few that did understand and reach others through them. That is how I came to organize the L. R. U. in April, 1907. The words chosen for the name of this society are secular, and the people who attend the meetings found that they are thrown with laborers like themselves—men they could understand. So the reputation of our society became great, and many people began to attend the meetings.

Truly their condition was like hell on earth. They are refusing to partake of the heavenly food offered them. They were drunkards and gamblers; they were lazy and servile. So first we taught them of an earthly paradise, to enter which repentance for such sins was necessary. Then I showed them the spirit of self-denial, self-help and self-respect could only come through God's help. Thus little by little I brought the truth home to them. Those who resolved on reform could become members of the Union.

Laborers dreaming of an earthly paradise came in and they conquered sin and improved the condition of their lives; their thinking became gradually higher and higher. At last they realized that man does not live by bread alone and their ideals reached beyond an earthly paradise to the heavenly. Finally some were baptized and became Christians. I used those Christians as the officers of the Union, and made them direct leaders and overseers of their fellow laborers. This method works well. Their influence is effective, where my influence would amount to very little.

III.

SOME OF MY PRESENT DIFFICULTIES.

The society of our country has as yet no sympathy for my work. So now, since almost empty-handed I am facing the lowest stratum of society and its darkest side and have well begun the battle, the difficulties seem more than I can tell. Yet I believe that God is with me and ever miraculously sustains me. I am carrying on the work without one penny, and yet the results are comparatively great and beautiful. As I have mentioned already, the absolutely essential thing for my work is workers. I thank God that it is that, rather than money or furnishing. He has given the Union the very men it needs. Among them I can count Messrs. T. Gonda and T. Kikuchi, who are the early converts of the Union, and Messrs. K. Majima and N. Wada, who are earnest Christians and rendered their help to me in every possible way. Then there is Mr. H. Hatano, who is a writer of a large magazine in this city, *The Jitsugyo no Nihon*, has

joined us to render assistance with his mighty pen. He wrote in his magazine Mr. Numari's history, to show forth to the people God's miraculous power, which had just begun to work in the Union, in its numbers of June and July, 1909.

I wish to mention in passing about Mr. M. Numari. In November, 1907, he had called on me and asked me very earnestly to give him my assistance, confessing all his past sins and crimes. He told me that he had spent his life in committing dreadful crimes, having been sentenced at least twenty times to imprisonment, after he had run away from his father's house when he was but thirteen years of age—1895. He was released from the last term a month before he came to me, and went to his native town, where he found no one who had love or sympathy to receive him—even his own father had refused to take him into his house, telling him that if he stayed any longer in the town the father must commit suicide, for he could not endure to be called the father of such wicked fellow by his townsmen. So he reluctantly came out again to this dangerous city, where his old companions were waiting to receive him into

their bands. Fortunately, however, he was introduced to me by a deacon, Rev. S. Tsuchida, who was working in the town, and fell into my hands. I gave him work immediately, and treated him most carefully, and committed him to Mr. Wada, who volunteered to take him into his house to enable him to escape from the dangerous environment. He was so much moved by the kindness of Mr. Wada that he burst into a loud cry one day, and told a friend that if he cannot be saved this time there is no way to go in this world but only death. By the kind help of Mr. Wada he studied the Bible with the utmost zeal, and his bad character was thoroughly subdued by the amazing power of the Holy Spirit. The change was so great that the police authorities of this city, who at first doubted the repentance of such a famous thief, and even cautioned me for my safety, had thanked us for his complete reform. After a few months I took him from Mr. Wada's hand and made him live with other members in the boarding house. After his conversion he began to work with hunger to convert his old friends, and many of them were moved and repented.

Indeed, the essential for this work of the Union is the workers God had thus far given. On these men the work, the very existence, of the Union depends.

IV.

MR. NUMARI'S FIRST BATTLE FOR HIS FAITH.

It was not rare that our members were attacked and persecuted by the ignorant people when they tried to preach the Gospel at everywhere, and this is an instance of the cases:

It was in June, 1909, that Mr. Numari went into Sunamura, where gangs of villains are living. He was attacked by three of them. It was the best test for his faith, for he was very violent and fierce, and was easily waxed warm in rage before. But he did not resist their assault now and stood silently while they thrashed him, and then told them that, as a Christian, he will never get angry against such violences, but rather have pity on them, for he anticipate that awful punishment of God is coming upon them. Saying this he prostrated himself before them and prayed God to pardon them. By this astonishing conduct two of them were much moved, but the third, who was intoxicated with "sake,"



THE WOUNDED SOLDIER IS WAITING FOR HIS
SECOND CAMPAIGN

was enraged even more fiercely, and gave heavy blows with club and began to drag him to throw him into a stream near by. But as he made no resistance at all the other two now turned to his side, and seeing his danger they treated him kindly and made him escape.

As he had received many wounds, he waited to recover for about ten days, and went again to the same place with more vigor than ever, and brought the enemy to repentance. When he told this story in our meeting, he exclaimed most emphatically: "Who can say among you that there is no God or it is impossible to see him? Such a saintly conduct was done without any will of my own, and it is even the astonishment of myself. Are you so blind and foolish that you cannot see this visible power of God, that lives so clearly within me? Take it out from me now, then I would be the great thief instantly as before who shall steal into your house this night."

V.

MR. WADA'S JOURNEY TO NORTHEAST.

Mr. Wada, who undertook a delightful plan to preach the Gospel and the purport of the Union among the laborers outside of Tokyo, started for the tour on the 1st April, 1909. But as the Union is not yet rich enough to pay the traveling expenses he had entirely to rely upon Christ's words to His disciples, when He sent them out preaching. It was a matter of course that he was quite prepared to take any work that God gives him on his way, and if necessary to sleep in the fields or on the mountainside. He pushed on his way northward, town after town, village after village, preaching in the street or in the chapel, in the schoolhouse or in the factory, always attracting a wonderfully great audience around him, and leaving the repentants to the care of the churches there. Of course, I had sent him money whenever I received the gift for it, but the difficulties he had encoun-



MR. WADA AS A MINER

tered were beyond imagination. By the mighty protection of God, however, he returned to Tokyo on 18th July, with more success than we had hoped, after going round even in some part of Hokkaido.

When he was staying at the Arakawa mine, near the city of Akita, he actually became a miner, with a view to get acquaintance with those laborers in it, and worked with them. After a few days' labor he held a meeting in a schoolhouse and succeeded in gathering an audience of about 700 workingmen and officers of the mine. Such a large meeting was never held there before, notwithstanding the great effort of these officials, with a hope to give them the moral instruction. And therefore one of them has wrote to me thanking us for our work, and informed me that they will prepare to start a branch of the L. R. U. there in a near future.

VI.

THE EFFECT OF MY WORK ON THE HEARTS
OF POOR PEOPLE.

Most of the laborers can get money enough to support their families by their own work. God is not partial, and so long as they lead their lives in honest way, there is no reason that they should be so unfortunate that they must depend upon others' help. Nay, they are even able to promote their happiness by their efforts, if they have the higher spirit. However poor and miserable they might be, all the laborers who became the members of the Union were excited to strive with wonderful courage to overcome the devil's power, which debase them, trusting only in God. Let me describe here an instance of our triumph:

At the end of the year 1907, in which I started this work, a gentleman called at my house and asked my wife to give him assistance by leading him to the poorest slum for his charitable work. But as I was not at

home then my wife told him to go to the meeting house of the Union, where he was directed at last to the house of one of the poorest members of the Union, who lives in a slum that seems more like hell than like this world.

He was much pleased and satisfied that he had come to such an ideal place for his purpose. He then told the member about his mighty plan, and asked him to help by distributing his charitable presents to his neighbors, expecting that the member should accept the commission and be very much pleased. Ah! How the friend answered? How he acquitted himself? This was the true test not only of him but of my own work!

Thank God. The member, showing the greatest vigor and perseverance with his cheerful smiles, answered as follows: "I was fettered for more than thirty years of my past life under the power of the devil, and lost all the money that I could earn, wasting it in merely drinking. I was so debased and poor that I oftentimes was forced to ask my wife to go abroad as a beggar. If this kind offer had been made to me at that time I should have accepted it with the utmost eagerness and

heartfelt thanks for myself and for my friends about here. But I cannot do so now, as I am a member of the L. R. U. My only hope is that you will understand the reason of it perfectly. The people about here are truly poor and miserable, as you may see for yourself; most of them are shuddering in this cold season without clothes and crying with hunger for food. But what made them so miserable? It is the necessary question to be solved before you do that act of charity. God gives them a good many jobs of work every day, but they do not use the money thus given for a proper purpose, and are losing it by gambling, drinking, and committing every other sin. It is by God's law and will that they are in such a state, so long as they lead their lives in the present way. I am an old man over sixty years of age, and am not able to work as hard as they can, but since I became a servant of Christ, and my life was changed, I am made so happy with my wife and children. Not only can I supply the necessity of my family, but I am moreover able to help others and to save money. You see by this (and he showed him the book of a savings bank), and may know that I am speaking

the truth. I am a prophet among these poor people, and am persuading them to repent their sins and to yield to God to become happy like myself, witnessing God's grace with this actual change of my character and life. Now my sincere hope for you is that you may understand perfectly that your charity can do no good for them, except to make them lazy and help them to go on in a more sinful way, while they are declining to accept our instruction. Is it not more clear now, that man shall not be saved by bread alone, in this case? You had better spend your money in a more useful way."

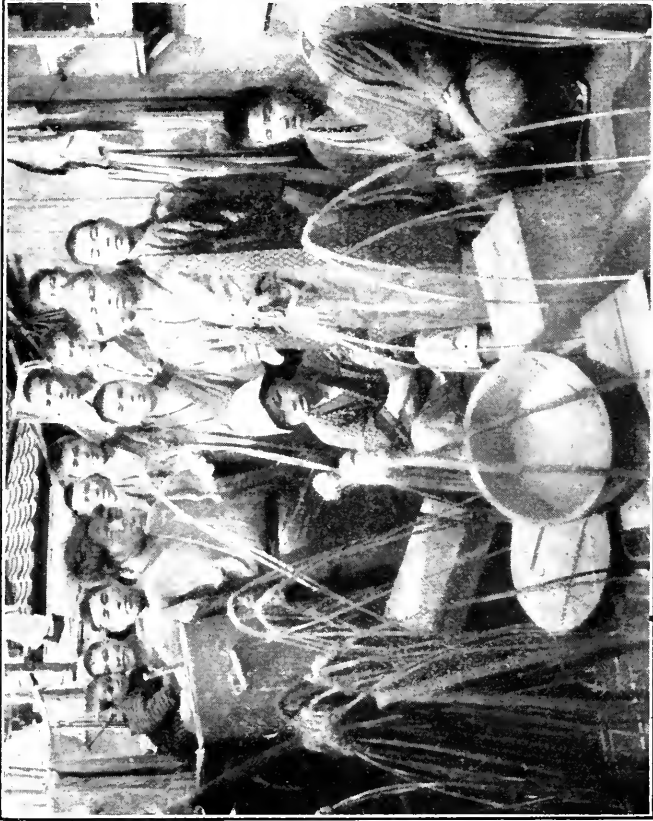
When this old member told me how he has answered, with pleasing countenance, I praised him highly, and received his report as if I had heard the first shout of victory in my battlefield, and Banzaid many times in my heart. Whether this gentleman could have understood the truth, or displeased by such proud and unwelcome answer of this poor fellow at that time, was unknown to me, but when he called on me again a year afterward he praised my work and promised to help it.

.VII.

THE KEY TO OPEN THE OBSTINATE HEARTS
OF THE POOR LABORERS.

It is truly hard work to raise the debased hearts of poor people to such a high spirit of self-help and self-respect—much harder than to see the mere nodding of their heads by the simple charity of giving. I have decided, however, to abstain from such fruitless charity, and bend my whole energy to convert their hearts at first for many years. But in case of necessity I used to give in such a way as the receivers could not feel it, and I got at last a splendid result in the hearts of few men. Among them are Mr. Gonda and Mr. Kikuchi; and he was this last one, whom I have mentioned in last chapter.

They served me as the key to open other obstinate hearts, and afford me a great facility to push my work on, making first one and then another a key to another in turn. The whole number of the members of the Union is about one hundred at present (August 17,



THE LABOURERS IN THE BOARDING HOUSE

1910). And as the Union became known rapidly thus among the poor people the number of those who come to ask our help has increased month after month, and I am endeavoring to give the proper work to each when I have found that he is worthy in his spirit to receive it. The urgent necessity has made me start a boarding house for those who have no home in July 1, 1909. As I did not have money enough for it I have borrowed a very small house in a slum, and very soon it was filled with fifteen bodies. The house is too small and too dirty, but I have no power to improve it in any way at present. They are crowded in a small space, and their miserable condition is beyond description. Yet their number is swelling day by day, and it seems to demand me to enlarge it endlessly.

To them we are supplying many kinds of articles to sell easily every morning, and when they come back at the evening they make an account, and take their interest. I am making Mr. Gonda direct this business, which is going on very well. They are holding prayer meetings in the house with other members who live in the vicinity to receive their spiritual salvation as well.

When they could save some amount of money in this way, I am making them start their own business in a small scale independently. Some of them have succeeded very well in it already, and made their own home.

VIII.

THEIR SAD HISTORIES BEFORE THEY CAME
TO ME.

Though their poor circumstances before they came to me were divers and different, they all alike deserve our deep sympathy and commiseration. Let me describe a few instances of them.

A POOR YOUNG ORPHAN.

One of them was a poor young orphan, who came out from his native country to Tokyo with a hope to get some work. When the poor fellow was searching for it, he was deprived of all the money he had by bands of certain wicked men, and was wandering about for some days without taking any food. At last he was advised to come to the Union by a kind sympathizer.

A SON OF SOME COUNTRY GENTLEMAN.

Another was the son of some country gentleman near Tokyo, who died a few years ago, upon which the whole property was seized by his bad uncle and the family was reduced to a miserable condition. So he left his native place in agony to search for the uncle to ask his merciful help. But when he found him out in Yokohama, the uncle relentlessly refused to accept his earnest entreaty, and drove him away, without giving him a sen of money or a little bit of bread. He then came to Tokyo walking on foot, without any hope, and wandered about in the city, sleeping in an iron pipe of an aqueduct, which was thrown on the wayside, at night, and fell into my hands eventually.

MR. S. YOKOTA.

Another was a man, Shofu Yokota, who is about forty years of age. He was once a political speaker, an official of the government, a speculator in the rice market and a stock broker. At one time he made a fortune of

many thousands of dollars, but after failures in the business he fell into such narrow circumstances that he could in no way support his family. He thought in utter grief that it was a great pity to leave his dear wife and hungry children in such a severe pain of poverty, and determined rather in his half-frenzied state of mind to put them into the eternal rest, and that he should go after them.

Late one night, when they were fast asleep, he silently rose from his bed, after a fierce struggle in his heart with his love toward them, and desperately forcing it back, and went first to the children, holding a glittering sword in his hand. But at this dangerous moment he saw a peaceful smile on the face of his youngest child, who would perhaps been in happy dream, and he felt suddenly a strange emotion in his heart and his throat was choked with bitter tears.

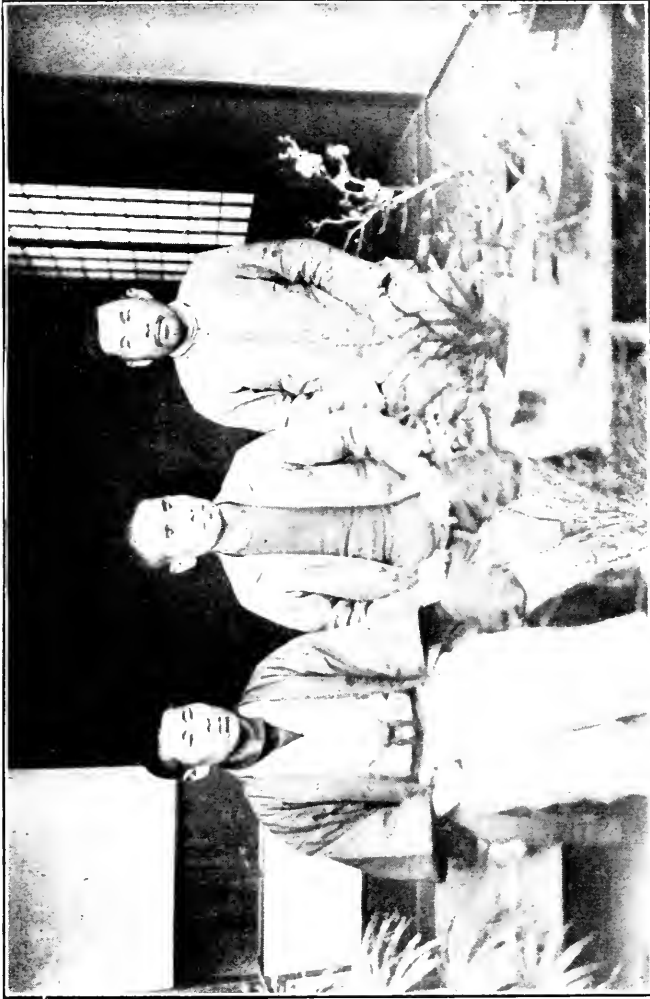
He stooped by its side to cry, and pondered about his own foolishness, and he then understood that this misfortune came not from any other cause than his own sins; he remembered that his previous life had been so licentious, led by a mind that lacks any good motive, and that it was necessary to change his

heart entirely, and lead his life in a new way. Gnashing his teeth in regret, crying out his sorrow, he apologized himself in his heart to the sleeping family about such a horrible misconduct, and determined to become an entirely different man.

He then sent his wife and children to his native city, Tsuyama in Okayama Prefecture, for a while, and when he was searching for work he read the poster of my Union on the street, and came to me. He began to work in the Union immediately with the bright hope to prepare a new home for his dear ones. He had entered into the boarding house in November, 1909, and by his hard effort he succeeded in providing a small house to live in, and called his eldest girl to help him already.

MR. Y. JINZENJI.

Mr. Jinzenji is another one who have a special history to be described. He was born in an old and rich family, in the Jinzenji village, Kochi Prefecture, forty-three years ago. In his youth he received a good education, and graduated from the Kochi Normal School and the Imperial Agricultural College. But after



MIR. T. TANABE

MIR. S. YOKOTA

MIR. Y. JIZENJI

his parents had died, and he became the sole master of that great wealth, he delivered himself up to wantonness and squandered all his property, which had been laid up through many ages by his ancestors.

When he repented of his misconduct, however, it was too late, and he found himself in the depth of poverty. He then left his native place, and went out to Ibaraki Prefecture, which is notable for its richness of coal mines. There he engaged in the mine business for more than ten years, with great zeal to recover his lost wealth. Though there were some ups and downs, he fell more and more into the bottom of misery, and became utterly helpless at the beginning of this year.

He came out to Tokyo, but there no better fate waited him, and at last he determined to commit suicide in despair by throwing himself into the sea at Shinagawa. On the evening of the 15th January he left his lodging in Ushigome, and went out to search for a suitable place for death. Fortunately, however, it was ebb tide, when he arrived at Shinagawa by the tram-car, and therefore he directed his steps, without any will of his own, toward Omori along the seaside.

It was a very cold and dreary winter night, and the snow began to fall heavily. He was walking in an absent-minded state, and reached to Omori at midnight. All the stores and houses were shut, nobody was seen on the street, and the wind was cold and high, the snow flakes falling in every direction; a truly lonesome scene it was! While he was thinking how to die, he found, to his surprise, that a man was standing before him under the eaves of a house. He then approached and asked him who he was. It was a young man, who came from Kasukabe town, drawing a large cart to carry merchandise to Yokohama, where he must arrive before nine in the following morning. But being checked by this snow storm, he was greatly harassed, and was at a loss as to what to do. He told that his parents had died when he was quite young, and he was living with his grandfather, who is very ill, and for whose sake he was striving against all the worldly distress in this manner.

Hearing the story of this poor young fellow, Mr. Jinzenji was much ashamed, and found that there were much more unfortunate persons in this world than himself, and under-

stood that it was the voice of God to encourage him. So he gave up his weak purpose and determined to try once more his fortune. He began to work at once, and started for Yokohama, with this young man, rendering him help to draw the cart through the whirling snow.

After searching for work in vain, he returned to Tokyo, and by the kindness of an officer of the Salvation Army he was introduced to Mr. K. Ozawa, a member of my Union, and was sent to me. He has confessed all his past sins, and asked for help. I gave him work immediately, and he has been working happily ever since as the member of the Union.

MR. T. TANABE.

Mr. T. Tanabe is one who was saved very early in the Union. When I had held the first meeting of the Union on the 1st of April, 1907, in the house of a laborer, thirteen bodies were present at it, and Mr. Tanabe was one of them. He was a man who did not attract my attention specially, but looked to us to be a man of avarice. At the beginning of this

year, however, I found that there was the reason for it. On a Sunday, in April, this year, he came into my vestry after the service was closed and reported to me that his elder sister had been a harlot in the city of Niigata, and that he had been working with all his might to rescue her. She took up such a disgraceful profession with mere hope to help her poor sick father when her brothers were yet young and the family was in a helpless state. She was staying in such a sad condition until the money which her father had received in advance should be paid back.

When Mr. Tanabe became our member, and his heart was enlightened, he felt that it was his duty to save his sister from that shameful position. When his younger brother came to Tokyo, and became our member also by his influence, they both united to devote themselves with admirable zeal to the noble work, though they kept it in secrecy, till they had succeeded in it at last. All the members of the Union were also much surprised and showed them their profound respect and praise when they heard it.

A POOR SICK YOUNG MAN.

It was at the beginning of Lent in this year that a man sent to me a poor sick person, Iseji Kato, who looked as if he was ready to die in a short time. I was much perplexed and murmured that the man is too foolish to bring him to any one like myself, who was not a physician, and not to a charitable hospital. But as it was too late in the evening, Mr. Gonda, the director of the boarding house, was compelled to make him stay in it that night. The young man was extremely pleased by it, and told that it was for the first time he could lie down in such a warm bed and receive such sympathetic treatment. It seemed that his words were not mere flattery, for he looked to be so very grateful that his words became choked in his throat as his talk went on, and at last bursted into loud cry with thankful tears. Noticing his hearty sincerity, I inquired about his matter and heard of his previous sad history.

Nothing was known by him about his mother except that she came from elsewhere to Sawane, a village in Saitama-prefecture.

She has supported herself and the child by her own work of sewing, until he grew up to the age of five years, and then she died. Being left helpless as a poor orphan, he exerted himself for his existence and grew up in a most painful manner. He worked as if he were a slave in the house of the farmer, Jinsaku Sakurai, where his mother died. But when he became sickly and weak he was driven away by the merciless master and came to Tokyo. While he was wandering about in the city his energy was exhausted and he fell to the ground perfectly helpless.

When we heard such a pitiable story we all thought that God had sent him to us to render him every possible help. To take the first step, it was to inquire about his disease and health, and made a physician examine him. It became clear that the nature of his illness was not fatal, though his health now is in the most dangerous state by the long want of nourishment.

So I have told all the members of the Union that he might be saved if we would keep this Lent with the spirit of love and give him our life blood as a sacrifice for him. It was our delightful work, and with the forty days and

forty nights, the man, who had nothing but sure death to wait for, was saved by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, who wrought in the hearts of those selfish persons who had been merciless thieves, gamblers, drunkards, and so forth, letting them render him that urgent help cheerfully.

Now he has become stronger and is able to work as other people. Whenever we look at him we can not help associating him with that grateful memory of our privileged work during the Lent of this year.

A POOR WORKING MAN, G. IRIYAMA.

I wish to add one more story of a poor working man, G. Iriyama. Some three years ago there lived a working man by the name of G. Iriyama not far from the meeting house of the Union. He was working in a glass factory. One hot day in the summer his wife prepared a kind of food with flour, which she bought from a shop by sending her eldest son.

When this innocent boy was on his way home he found on the street some flour much like that he had just got. So he scooped it

up with his hands and added it carelessly to his own. It was arsenic acid, a deadly poison. And no sooner the wife, unfortunate victim, ate one piece of the food than she began to feel the stomach ache, and the pain increased every minute. The frightened children cried out; all the neighbors assembled by the voice; the doctor and her husband were sent for. They all assembled together around her, but there was no way nor time to find out the remedy. And thus, after awful torments for about two hours, she expired, surrounded by the sobbing and crying family and friends.

The loss of his wife, however, was only the beginning of this man's calamities. The youngest son was but one year old, and unless there was some one kind enough to take it from his arms, he could not go to his work. But it was impossible to find out so kind a person among his companions, for they were also too busy in the struggle for their own existence. And when, moreover, the other two children became very ill, he was left so poor and helpless. Being thrown into such desperation, he understood that this world is full of miseries and truly a hell, where there is no love nor sympathy, and the whole inhabitants



THE MAN BORN AGAIN AND HIS FAMILY

in it appeared, in his hopeless eyes, as the wild and remorseless beasts.

In such agony he made up his mind to go into river to die rather than to endure the pain to see his sick and hungry children without any means to help them in his hands, for he thought that if he would disappear himself from this world the children might be rather happy, being taken into the hands of some charitable person. So he sold all his remaining articles, and with that money he roamed about in this city with them for two days, entertaining them with the last fatherly love, and at last he bade farewell in his breaking heart, in disguise, and turned his tear-streaming face away from them and ran away, leaving them at the corner of some street near Asakusa Park.

It was just at this last moment when one of the workers of the Union met him on the way to the real hell. Having inquired the circumstances, he was led to us, and God gave us means to help him, responding to our earnest prayers, and the heart of this once despairing father is now looking bright with joy and hope, having been baptized by me.

IX.

THE WORK FOR CHILDREN IN SLUMS.

In carrying on my work for these poor people I understood that it was most needful to give religious instruction to their little children, but at first I found it difficult to start an efficient meeting for them. I had to hold it on the same night, an hour before the adults should be gathered, twice a month. But to my surprise they were more unmanageable than I had thought. They were so thoroughly accustomed to the vicious and lawless life in their homes that we were at our wits' end to know how to teach them, for when they assembled together in a room they cried, laughed, romped or blackguarded each other, without listening to any of our words, and moreover some of them were carrying little babies on their backs to add their noisy crying to this abundant vociferation. Those who seemed so gentle and quiet among them were either sick or hungry.

My co-worker told me that he saw once in a slum one drunkard, who sent his boy to the charitable school one morning without giving him any food to take beforehand, and when the boy came home at noon and teased for dinner, rebuked the boy violently, saying, "Be quiet! Even your father has not taken his breakfast yet, except drinking 'sake' only." What a brutal slave to drinking! What an unfortunate poor boy!

Some children in the meeting were seemingly weak and sickly, but their parents were supposed to be unable to take any care for them, leaving them to their own fate. A boy who came out from a poor large family looked to be very tired, and when we called at his house we found that his father had been long ill, and understood that he was in sad and pitiable state of hunger.

It is impossible to mention here all such instances about these unhappy children. When I looked at them at the meeting and found that I was powerless to give them any material help and comfort, I could not help breaking into tears from the sympathy that I felt in my heart, and it is a burden almost greater than I can bear.

Those wayward and wretched children used to come to attend our meeting only to excite their own curiosity by singing out songs or by looking at the pictures, which we occasionally show them by the magic-lantern.

The ordinary hymns of our church are too hard to understand their meanings for these children, as well as adults about here, and are not of much use for the meetings of the Union, and so I was composing special ones, which are suitable to excite their interest by their purport as well as by the tunes. As I got a few of them by the kind aid of my friends, I have committed them to print and got a nice little book, the "Union Songs," just this month, August, 1910.

Little by little, however, this clamorous meeting of the children became peaceful, and after a few months it changed into an utterly different state. The children became much more courteous, and listened to our teaching with keen interest. The change of their daily life was also so manifest that their parents were surprised by it, and many of them came to thank us for it. I saw a mother one day who heard such a good rumor of it in her society, brought her rude boy with her, and

asked us, saying, "Is it this house where as they say I may apply to make this boy good for something?"

At present I see many mothers who bring their children at every meeting. From the summer of last year I have increased the number of the meetings for these children, and succeeded in starting the Sunday school for them, opening it from 2 P. M. on every Sunday. The number of those children who are present at every meeting is now from 50 to 70. We are obliged to limit their number by the reason that I have no house large enough to receive more, as it is in the case for adults.

We had a very nice Christmas with these poor children last year for the first time. They looked very grateful and happy, when they received such nice presents as they had never seen elsewhere.

X.

A VISIT TO A SLUM.

It was my long hope to become the friend of the wicked villains, with the hope to convert their hearts, and I wanted to pay my visit to the slums, where they specially lived. But it seemed very hard to make any successful visit to them without the help of my converted laborers.

Just after I had started the work of the Union the first villain to whom my eyes were directed was the jinrikisha-man, whose name was Hijikata. He was a fierce looking, wicked fellow, who was always intoxicated while he had money in his pockets. His wife had been taken away by a disease many years ago, leaving three children behind her. Though he might receive god wages for his daily work, he could not bring them to his house, spending all the money merely for drinking. He was not, however, without tears of pity for his children, and when he started from his house for his work in morning he

left many kind words of love to them, but he lost the sense to feel pity for those who are waiting for his return with hunger as soon as he began to drink. Some members of our Union, knowing it, had been accustomed to give food to them whenever they passed by the house on the way of their trade. At last two of the younger children became very weak and died, but the eldest girl was sent to be employed in the spinning house and fortunately survived them.

At the end of the summer, 1907, there was a flood, and all the people in his slum were moved to the school house near by. While he was staying there he became a friend with a woman, and after the flood he took her home as his second wife, who brought her two children with her. After a few months, however, she disappeared with her own children and brought away all her articles when he was abroad at his work.

He then learned that he had been deceived by her, who had her real husband and came only to stay in his house for a while, for her husband was a thief and had been in prison, but as he was released from it she returned to him.

So he got very angry and determined to kill the faithless woman. Casting off his work and taking a dagger under his clothes he began to search for her with bloody eyes day after day. When we heard of it, and were wanting to meet him, Mr. Gonda saw him on a street and brought him to his house. He endeavored to quiet the rageful man, and succeeded to make him understand that it was too foolish to become such a dreadful sinner by her, and sent him to his home, plucking away the dagger from him.

Catching this good opportunity, I wanted to call on him at his house, and to hold a meeting for the people about there at once. But Mr. Gonda told me that it was yet dangerous, and wanted me to let him make the preparation for it. For there lived a band of gamblers in the neighborhood of the house of Bijikata, and they were so violent and ignorant that Mr. Gonda feared that they would attack us while we were holding the meeting there.

At that time Mr. Gonda's trade was to sell some articles of food going round the streets. When he came to pass the gamblers' house one day one of them came out and, wanting to

buy his articles, higgled the price of them. Taking this opportunity, Mr. Gonda scoffed at him, saying, "It is not only impossible to lower the price for you, but I do not even like to sell my articles to such a person as yourself." This challenge of course provoked the gambler as he expected, and their discussion grew more and more harsh, and at last the gambler demanded that Mr. Gonda should come into his house to explain more about the matter, for he told him, "The Son of God would not like anything to do with such sinfulness."

It was truly a dangerous risk. "Without entering into the tiger's den one can not catch the tiger's young," so says our proverb. And our brave and faithful soldier of the cross had entered into it. In the house he found the villains were just in the heat of their sinful business, and they were much surprised when he appeared suddenly before them, and encircled him ready to do violence at any moment.

He then prayed earnestly for our Lord's help, and began his eloquent speech calmly in the following words:

"Dear brethren! Why do you think it is

strange to hear that I called myself a son of God? I had not been a man so different from you all. I used to gamble; I used to drink; I used to do whatever you are doing to-day. I have had all the experience that you have now. But you must agree with me, such a licentious life never affords us true happiness.

“I could never send my children to school. I often left my family in hunger, without giving them anything to eat, and I quarreled day by day with my wife, when I led my life in your present way. I feel that my life was much inferior to that of the birds and beasts.

“But, dear brethren, when I became a member of my Union, and this beautiful badge on my breast began to shine, my heart was thoroughly changed by the miraculous power of God, and all such unhappy elements in my house were cleared off. I can not only have money enough for the livelihood of my family, but I am able to contribute some of it to charitable works at present.

“Compare this with my former condition, and if I was a son of devil, what do you say I am to-day? My sincere hope for you all is that you may become more happy men than I am now, by the merciful help of our God.”

Hearing this kind, fraternal advice, they were much surprised, and some of them were so much moved as to promise to come to our meeting. This is a good explanation of how much I owe to the earnest and faithful service of my officers in doing the work of the Union.

The way to the slum being thus open, I had visited the slum in the afternoon of the following Sunday, 16th February, 1908, and called on the jinriksha-man's house. There are many kinds of jinriksha-men in this city, and he belonged to the worst kind of them, which we call the "moro-shafu." They work only in night, and are very greedy for outrageous gain with slightest possible work, in the darkest side of our society. He was then sleeping, and by our invitation he came out with an astonished face, and was obliged to receive us into his house, which was only one room of intolerable dirt, with lousy mats, and a few simple articles and furniture on the floor.

He seemed to be much confused, and lost his head as to what to do. Then Mr. Gonda introduced me to him very solemnly and bade him to go round the neighborhood and gather the people for us. While he went out, we

took our seats in the room. In a short time he came home with his neighbors, and they sat around me. A very wry-faced working man, who was right next to my seat, was introduced to me by Mr. Gonda with such strange words: "Sir, this is a man who abhors Christianity so bitterly that he gave me a heavy blow with a club the other day when I met him on the street about here."

Being thrashed back with this unexpected introduction he was greatly ashamed, and nodded his head unhesitatingly before me. In answer to this I began my speech, which lasted for more than an hour. While I was speaking their heads were dropping lower and lower, and to my surprise I found that they were very weak in their hearts, and easily surrendered to us. I understood also that they are liable to become slave to sins easily by the same reason—a truly pitiable race, who want to be taken care of by us constantly! Vicious and pitiless as the master of this house was, he fast melted into a flood of tears, and twice he went away, while I was speaking, to soothe his troubled conscience. Among the crowding audience outside of the house were seen those gamblers to whom Mr. Gonda had given his

first instruction already. The meeting was closed with my prayer, and we came out of the house, and heard the voice from the people outside, which said, "Your teaching was very useful to us and gave us the good instruction." All the members of the Union were greatly encouraged by this triumph, and began to fight against the enemy with more vigor and confidence than ever. It has opened the way before us to push our steps into such slums in night to hold the open-air meeting with no obstruction.

September 2, 1910.

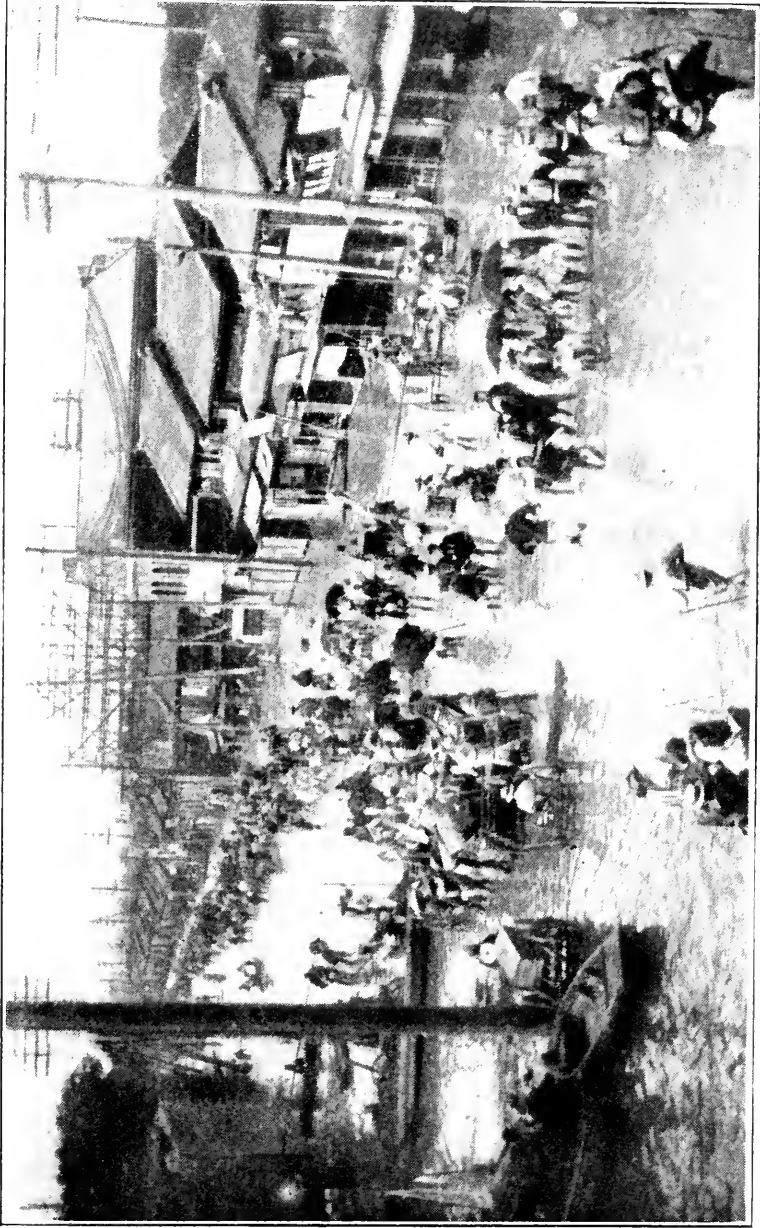
XI.

THE RESULT OF THE FLOOD ON MY WORK.

BEGINNING OF THE OVERFLOW.

Following the rainy season of this year, successive storms of rain have been experienced in the eastern part of our empire throughout the summer, and the water in many rivers in and about Tokyo awfully increased at the beginning of August, and we were very restless and anxious for what would come about.

It was on the evening of 11th August that the Sumida River suddenly began to overflow its banks at last, when I had just reached my church to preach on my way home from Oji. Many people who were present there reported that they came through streets which were flooded already as high as their knees, and the matter seemed very urgent. So I decided to suspend the meeting and proclaimed that those persons who came from lower parts of the city should go back to their homes and others



TOKYO IN FLOOD TIME

to visit their friends in the dangerous quarters to render them help.

The field of my work, composed of the two districts, Honjo and Kukagawa, is the lowest part of the city, lying on the eastern side of the River Sumida, and moreover the numerous canals that ran through it in every direction gave the flooding water great facility to submerge the whole part of it at once.

The night was passed by the terror-stricken inhabitants, in whole part of these two districts, without sleep in making their own relief. On the next morning, however, the water seemed to increase no more, and their hearts were somewhat tranquilized. But when one danger was over another great one was coming.

DESTRUCTION OF THE TONE BANK.

In the afternoon of the next day, 12th August, at about three o'clock, we received a most terrible telegram that the strong embankment of the Tone River was broken at a spot about twenty-five miles from Tokyo, and its furious water was rolling down toward us at its full speed. We had a dreadful remem-

brance that it was broken once, about one hundred years ago, when the tremendous damage ensued, it flooded over many districts of the city, as high as fifteen feet at some places. Of course, the telegram caused a panic of the people, and in the mean time the new great force of that water arrived and the flood began to swell suddenly.

In the eastern part of Honjo district the water in the canals soon rose many feet higher than their embankment and began to fall down into the streets in the shape of a broad cataract. So that it flooded there so suddenly that a man in Umemoricho, for instance, whose wife had just been in labor, could scarcely lift her up on a shelf, and when he came to the child, he found it dead in the merciless water.

A poor laborer, who had been living in Oshima-machi, had a girl of eight years old and twins, which were born only nine days before the flood, and was nursing his wife, who was seriously ill. When he found the water like the sea around his house he was much perplexed how to make good their escape by his single power. They waded a long way through deep water in dark night, directing their steps toward higher places, but

everywhere the flood became higher and higher, and they were forced to change their refuges three times in a night, until the energy of that unfortunate wife was at last exhausted and she died the next morning. In what condition of distress he was at such time can better be imagined than I can describe.

The loss of his wife was a severe blow to this poor family. The man lost his entire power to work from that day, having these helpless children in his hands to be taken care of by himself alone, and the consequence of it was the starvation of the whole family! He was one of the poor sufferers from the flood, who were reported to me by our members, and I tried to help him by paying the expenses of a foster-mother for the twins, until they died one after another before the end of this year.

THE PROVIDENTIAL PROTECTION OF GOD OF THE
MEMBERS OF THE L. R. U. IN THE CALAMITY.

Almost all the houses of the members of the Union who lived in these districts were inundated, but they fought this natural enemy with the same faith and perseverance as in

their daily life, and the flood itself seemed to have been a great baptism to my work, and renewed our faith by the practical experience of God's gracious providence revealed very clearly in it.

Before I describe a few instances of that grace, however, I wish to deal with an example that taught us how unavailing human power and contrivance were at such a moment.

There lived a rich man, Mr. K. Watanabe, in Rameido (eastern end of Tokyo), who had built a fine large house and moved to it a few months before the flood. When his house was inundated a large boat was sent to him from his kindred to save his family out of the danger. All the members of his family climbed into it at once, and were about to leave the place. The poor people around, who were desperately crying for the help from the top of their houses, saw this happy family, amazing at the wonderful efficiency of the power of gold, and complained of their own sad fortune.

Receiving such a melancholy send-off, the rich man's boat started, rowed by a strong crew, and rode down over the rapid stream along the streets of Taihei-cho and Umemori-cho, and came near to the Honjo Railway Sta-

tion. But when it was steering round the corner of Nagasaki bridge it went whirling round at the mercy of the angry eddy, and at last was overturned. Eighteen bodies in it were all scattered about in the furious torrent before hundreds of spectators, who sent out many life boats in an instant and endeavored to save them.

Notwithstanding of their great efforts, the eldest girl of the rich man, with many thousands of yens of money, and a servant were by no means saved, and the body of the former was found afterwards in the canal near my house, about a mile below, and the servant's under a raft of timbers not far from the spot.

This unexpected news must have been a great surprise to those poor people in Rameido, who found themselves rather in safety on their houses, and they understood that they should be grateful that they were not so rich as this unfortunate family. Such events occurred everywhere in the flood, and I have no time to describe them all. So now to compare with this instance of the unreliability of human power, I wish to return to the accounts of our poor friends who were saved by God even in the most dangerous circumstances.

MR. SHIGEKICHI HASHIMOTO.

Mr. S. Hashimoto is a typical member of the Union, full of the spirit of self-help and self-respect. Formerly he worked in the Honjo Railway Station in this city, and had a most unfortunate accident.

The accident happened on the 15th January, 1900, when a train was just running into the depot. At that moment he lost his footing from the platform, and no sooner had he fallen flat upon the rail than the train went over him, cutting his feet off by the middle of the thighs. Though he was once in a most critical condition, he held on to life, and underwent a long surgical treatment in the Rôtō Hospital, and recovered his health again. All expenses in the hospital were paid for him by the railway company, but as he could not receive a sufficient subsidy for future relief, he soon fell into great privation with his family, and encountered unspeakable hardships and pains for many years. But all adverse circumstances could never conquer this feetless man, and I used to encourage, whenever I visited him. Carrying a trade in a small

scale, he supported his family, then the old mother, the wife and a child. At the same time he devoted himself to learning with great perseverance, and at last he opened a private school at the eastern end of Honjo district, and now is teaching English, Chinese, mathematics and book-keeping. His wife is also an admirable woman. It is by her faithful service that he attained his end. His mother died when they were at the depth of their poverty, and he has three children at present. In lucky or unlucky days, he is always in a most happy frame of mind, and every member of the Union who called on him was encouraged by his good humor and faith. He is truly a living sermon in my Union.

However vigorous in his spirit he might be his house was in the most unfavorable position in the flood, not far from the said rich man, and, moreover, his wife had labor only three days before the overflow. Even his eldest son was only seven years old, and therefore there was no one who was strong enough to do any work in such calamity. So I was in the greatest anxiety about this helpless family from the beginning. Therefore I sent two strong young men, when the Sumida

River began to overflow, on the evening of 11th August. But at that time there was not so much water in Kameide, and his house was in safety. On the next day, however, when the bank of Tone River was broken, the water from it had directly rushed into his part and submerged his house immediately, before I could send the relief hands. When two strong men ventured to cross the dangers on the way and visited him on that night, I had not the slightest hope of his safety.

When they reached there they found, to their despair, that his house was flooded already, and that the rapid torrent with many floating materials was dashing mercilessly against its closed doors. But when a door was open, to their ecstasy and surprise they saw the whole family in ease on a strong shelf, which was constructed very well. The newborn child, knowing not anything of this world, was peacefully sleeping with its mother in the bed, only one foot high above the roaring water, which was running through the house from the front door down into the canal behind. But whence had such a timely relief come? The question in the visitors'



THE FEETLESS OFFICER OF THE UNION AND HIS FAMILY
WITH THE BABY BORN IN THE FLOOD

hearts could never be solved. It was God who sent it actually.

A friend of Mr. Hashimoto, who lived far away in Tabata village, had come out to Tokyo on that day, without thinking anything about him, but when that person saw the telegram, posted up by the side of Azuma bridge, and learned that the Tone embankment was broken just a few minutes before, a thought flashed into his heart, and felt a great necessity to render his assistance to his maimed friend. He hurried on hither at rapid pace, with two other bodies, who joined him while on the road by his request. When they have arrived here, no drop of water was seen around his house, and Mr. Hashimoto could not understand why they did come in so hasty a manner.

But when they had built the high temporary floor, and were putting up the family and furniture on it one by one, the water began to rise up at enormous speed and ran into the house. It submerged the floor at last, when their work was just finished. Thus this helpless family was saved out of the great danger beyond all human expectation.

OTHER FAMILIES IN DANGER.

There were many other families among the members of my church and the Union, in this quarter, who were no less in need of help, and though my heart was bursting with anxiety for their fate, I could not get time and hands enough to do so many things at once at such an urgent moment.

Among them I can count Mr. Kurahashi, who was a blind man; Mr. Otaki, Mr. Tani-shima and Mr. Majima, who were in the worst part of the flood; and Mr. Sakurai, who missed his mother and sister in the water, when they were escaping from the danger in night, and other sick men. But when circumstances allowed me to visit around I found them all in safety, and none of them lost even simple pieces of their furniture, obviously protected by the providential hand of the Almighty, while many folks around them were receiving much damage to their property and even to their lives. This clear contrast gave us a profound instruction and made our confidence in the words of God much stronger than ever, as in the time of Noah.

THE TRIAL OF OUR MEMBERS' COURAGE.

There could never have been before so good opportunity as this great calamity to test the faith and courage of our members. I would conclude this description of the flood by recording the interesting accounts of their struggles in this battlefield of our faith.

MR. D. OTAKI.

Mr. D. Otaki was a poor artisan, living with his wife and two children in the most dangerous quarter, as was said above. His work is to make toys in his own little house. From the morning of 12th August the water was increasing little by little, and his neighbors were in great consternation, and no one could take their works. But as the member of the L. R. U., he worked assiduously to make up some toys before 3 P. M., as he promised to his customer, while he ordered his wife to prepare food for many days. When his work was finished he carried out the products by a cart and brought them to the customer. He conveyed also his elder boy, important furni-

ture and clothes by the same cart to intrust them to the care of a friend on his way. Seeing his distress to draw that heavy cart through muddy and flooded road, his wife joined him to push the cart from behind, leaving a baby to the care of their neighbor for a while.

When they returned home and were making precautions for the flood the water from Tone just reached them and increased at every moment. Then the family climbed up higher and higher as the water rose, until they were driven into the ceiling, in which they were trembling with terror, for the water came so high up that they could reach its surface with their hands. As it was a little house of only one story, there was no higher place for them to climb, and when the gloomy night fell they were entirely sealed up in that narrow space under the roof. I heard that a dead family was found after the flood at somewhere in Kameido, having been killed by the suffocation in the same circumstance.

Mr. Otaki, however, broke a hole in the roof, and climbed up to the top of the house to look abroad. The surrounding scene was truly sickening; the painful and urgent cry for help

from the neighboring inhabitants mingled with the mournful echo of the cattle growling in their last agony were arising in the dark as in a sanguinary battlefield; the roof upon which he was standing looked like a little rock to be carried away at any moment by the roaring torrent; death truly stared him in the face!

He feared that his wife should lose her consciousness in an instant, if he allow her to look out over this awful scene. So he determined rather to retire with his family to the ceiling and cheer them, entrusting their fate to God. Their prayer was answered, and the water increased no more, standing still at a few inches below them. They passed three days in this state, having sufficient provision, that was prepared by his wise foresight, and were saved out by a life boat sent from the city authorities in the morning of 15th. Though there was much damage in this neighborhood, he did not lose anything that belonged to him, and even got the more confidence of his customer by his honest behavior at such a time.

THE MEMBERS IN THE BOARDING HOUSE.

The quarter where our boarding house stood was soon inundated, when Sumida River overflowed on the evening of 11th. All bodies in it constructed high shelves, and prepared every thing for the coming calamity, as far as they could. When the unexpected water from the Tone united its new great force, however, the place became very dangerous, and the naval soldiers and policemen went round about here with many life boats and persuaded the people to flee.

Many thousands of the poor sufferers were sent off to the school buildings, Buddhist temples and wrestling circus, where they were well provided with all their daily necessities; there they slept under the brilliant gas and electric lights at night; there they passed their lazy days without any toil for their livelihood; they were rather happy to stay longer there. Therefore they are dreaming of the "gracious flood" even now, and praying that it would come again in next year.

But our members in the boarding house, however poor and miserable they had been, had an entirely different spirit. Mr. Gonda,

the director of the house, much grieved that they must sacrifice the long-cherished spirit of self-help and self-respect in their hearts because of receiving the merciful help of others in this temporary trial. All persons under him thought that such disgrace was more intolerable than hunger or any other pain.

So they assembled together and held a prayer meeting, standing in the water, and asked God that they might save themselves out from all dangers, without receiving others' mercy, and they made up their minds to strive for victory over all difficulties in the flood. Mr. Gonda, however, persuaded that any one who thinks himself to be unable to take such hard work should go off at once, and two weak men were carried away by a life boat. Then Mr. Gonda sent the women and children to my church, which was not flooded, to be taken care of by other members of it, that the remaining persons might struggle freely against this strange trial.

All the neighbors had kindly told them that it is too indiscreet to remain in such a dangerous place, and earnestly tried to bring them to the same opinion with themselves. But when they saw our members' obstinacy would

never yield, they began to reproach and abandon them, crying, "Barbarous Christians! Obstinate fools, who can not care for their own lives!"

Then Mr. Gonda consulted with the members how to support themselves in this circumstances, and they decided that every one should go to certain places and buy any articles he thought suitable, and go round in the water to sell them to the sufferers, who were yet remaining at the far end of these districts.

As they foresaw, the water did not increase higher than their breast on the street, and they went about in the slums, especially where the people had been missed by the officers sent to save them and were in the most distressing state of hunger. They tried to sell their articles to such sufferers at the lowest possible price at first, but as the time went on their miserable condition became greater and greater, and our members were at last obliged often to forget their own matter, and give their articles for nothing. So they were welcomed by the people at everywhere as their saviors almost to be worshiped. When they came home at evening they used to make account, but it was not the money that they

brought home, but diverse kinds of delightful accounts of their day's work done for the poor sufferers for the sake of our Lord.

There were not a few who understood the true love of Christians for the first time by our members' generous behavior during this flood. One night, however, when they assembled together they found that they had all given up their articles for nothing, each thinking he has met with especially poor people, and on making up their accounts, there were only three sens in cash at all, and they passed that night with hunger, each taking only a morsel of bread. But timely relief came soon, when I visited them to present a contribution of money that had just reached my hands, without thinking whether they were in such a condition. After it, the contribution of money, rice, clothes and many kinds of food began to reach me, following one after another, and it encouraged them to devote themselves more diligently than ever to such charitable work. They ventured to go far and wide into the most dangerous places, and exerted themselves to distribute the merciful presents to those hidden sufferers, whom most people could never find out.

Unless we are poor and acquainted with all their circumstances, we can not detect the secret of poor people. Moreover most of them are selfish and cunning, and therefore, however prudent and cautious the relievers should endeavor to be, their alms will be easily seized upon by idle rogues as their prey, and in many cases their works end with no fruit, while the innocent donors alone are proud of it, dreaming mighty success. I saw many facts of this kind in the flood. Many poor people, who had not so much damage, were deceiving the visitors with admirable skill to attract their sympathy to seize upon the charitable presents intended only for true sufferers. There were many vagabonds, who took such opportunity and entered into the flooded quarters from other districts. They mixed with the true refugees in order to be taken into the shelters, and received undeserved entertainment.

Our members, however, had been living among such people always, and therefore they were not deceived, and served me as the most efficient distributors of the alms, and by their diligent exertions our Union succeeded in conveying the love of our friends to those whose circumstances most needed it. Led by the

hand of God, they were thus induced to do a most momentous work at the most needed moment, when no help from the rich or authorities could reach such people; and those who received most of the grace of God were none but our members, who, being called barbarians or fools by other people, experienced such mighty work that none can dream of.

The flood, that caused much damage to crops, business, properties, and lives generally, was thus a gracious baptism for my work, as I said, which renewed and confirmed the faith and spirit of all the members of the Union.

August 15th, 1911.

XII.

AN OLD AND NEW MEN IN ONE PERSON.

Every member of my Union, who was blessed and born again by the grace of God, has his own peculiar account about their change of the character and life, which would be very interesting to my readers. But as I can not describe all of them here, I will mention one case of Mr. M. Numari, of whose conversion I described already in the preceding chapter.

Though he had run away from his father and committed crimes, his repentance was not hopeless. According to his account, he feared his sins dreadfully and repented from his heart when he was first sentenced to imprisonment, and really wanted to change his life at his return from prison. "If there was any kind person who would have helped me," he confessed to me, "I should have been saved." Unfortunately, however, there was none when he was released. "When I came out from the



NUMARI, THE EX-CRIMINAL

prison," he continued, "I was clothed with only a thin knit shirt and drawer in cold winter, and without one penny—a poor hungering dog! Unless one was a godly saint it is impossible for him to endure a holy death, not committing any more sins for living. Under such circumstances I was driven again to steal the food and clothes for my existence as soon as I left the gate of the prison." Thus he has now great sympathy with ex-criminals in the same condition, and is ready to receive and convert them.

But as he was going on to continue in his hellward course, his sensibilities of such fear of sin had gradually disappeared from his mind, and he became indifferent to it, and grew into quite a wicked fellow. When he was fourteen years old he was put in a non-Christian asylum for ex-criminals, started by a heathen, Zenkichi, Takahashi, as other kinds of our Christian social works are imitated by them. But there was no work of Holy Spirit among them to convert his heart, and, when the director of the asylum saw that he was so stubborn and wild, he gave him a terrible chastisement by binding him to a pole out doors and poured a bucketful of water upon

his head and exposed him in the freezing winter for the whole night. On the next morning, however, the director still found him not yielded, so that he determined to make him a maimed person who might no longer go on in his sinful ways. So he broke a joint of his right hand, and set him free.

Having been treated with such a violence, he thought that he would be killed soon if he stayed any longer with such a heartless man, and he ran away from the asylum. When he was running on a street in Kyobashi district, thinking how to get the remedy of his hand, there was a fire and the people were in a great confusion. So he stole some articles in the broad day light, that he might be arrested. He was sent into the prison, as he hoped, and received the perfect medical treatment in the prison hospital. He was much happier in the prison than in the asylum of the hypocrite! In the prison he met with other youngsters, who were in the same asylum with him, having been sentenced to much longer imprisonment than himself for the great crime, and he understood that it was advantageous for him that he did not stay longer in such asylum, and united them to commit the crime with

them. When he grew up he became a very famous thief among the policemen in this city, as he had an admirable skill to flee from their hands. Two policemen were dismissed from their office in the police station of my district on account of their failures to keep him. "It is a very easy work to escape from their hand," he remarked to me, when he confessed his past crimes, "if I can find one of the very many careless moments of the policemen."

Once when he was arrested in the Honjo Police Station he jumped up its high brick wall in a moment leisure and flashed away over it like a lightning before the policemen stirred up after him. Having ran round along the corner of the wall before the pursuers caught his sight, he jumped over it again into the compound of the station itself, when it became comparatively a safe refuge, and concealed himself in a narrow space of its back building. The policemen rung telephones to all other stations, and the extraordinary alarm cordon was instantly arranged in the necessary parts of the city. But all their efforts were in vain, as the thief himself was coolly looking at his watch in this unexpected refuge waiting for the time the cordon should be put off.

And then he came out from his hiding place there in due course, having dressed his head and face with a band that he made out of his white undercloth, and with the shoes stolen from the house of the head of that police station. He walked slowly and silently in the street as if one was going home from a hospital, having received a surgical operation. When he came to the Ryogeku bridge, where a policeman was standing with yet vigilant eyes, he approached the officer and asked in a rural dialect what was the hour, and thus escaped from their hands entirely, leaving the words, "Thank you, sir."

Such was his skill, and he was much feared by policemen in duty with him. But he told me that he could not run away when he was treated kindly by a certain policeman, as he felt so sorry if the policeman should be dismissed on his account. He behaved also very wild in the prison and often received special punishments of every kind in it.

He had, however, a peculiar patriotic spirit and tried to do some good for the country. Once he thought it is a patriotic deed to persecute the Christians and drive that foreign religion out of this country. So he helped a

Shinto priest, Shogen Hara, who lives near the Hachiman shrine in my parish, and went round the country, preaching their anti-Christian purport. All the expenses for this movement were paid by him from his unlimited resource. He, at the head of his band of the wicked men, often attacked the Salvation Army, holding its open-air campaign by the Takabashi bridge near my church.

Such is his former life. But when he came to my Union and was converted, he was entirely changed. The first work I gave him was to clean the street lamps. I told him that God's name could be glorified by any man irrespective of his work, and that he must work most honestly as an ideal lamp cleaner. He did just as I told him. One day, when he was doing his work at the gate of a mansion in Azabu, the master of the house, whose admiration had already been excited by his daily work, came out and gave him some money and said, "Take this little money; I am surprised by your honesty; it is for your tobacco; go on in your present way, and I am sure you will become a happy man." "No, thank you, sir," responded the amazed fellow;

“I am doing what I ought to do, receiving my daily wages from my company, and there is no reason on my part to receive such extra present.” But as the gentleman forced him to take it, he brought it to the manager of his company, but the manager only sneered at him, saying, “Don’t be a fool; that is your income.” However, his conscience would not let him keep it. So he came to me to ask what to do, and according to my advice, he bought a religious book with that money and gave it to the gentleman, and told him what made him different from other working men is explained in that book.

The next work I gave him was to go round the streets and sell some liquid. Now there lived in Honjo district his former chief—a man who was over fifty years old, also very wicked and sentenced many times to long imprisonment, and once killed a policeman and some other people. One day, when he came round near this man’s house, he accidentally stumbled and fell down, pouring out all his liquid on the road and lost it. Presently a maid came out from his old chief’s house, saw the poor young man in despair, and was much surprised to find him to be her old acquaintance.

She ran in and informed it to her master. The master came out instantly, and seeing all that, told him, "I was much moved having heard of your recent change, and hope for your success. I feel very sorry for you to see this unfortunate accident, but I hope you will never be discouraged by it. So I propose to buy all the liquid you have lost, and pay for it at your selling price, so that you may go home without damage by this accident." Mr. Numari understood his kind intention and sympathy very well, but at the same time he thought that he must not yield to any merciful help from that sinful man, whom he was to lead to God and make repent. So he declined to accept his kind proposal, saying, "It is very kind of you, and thank you very much for your kind offer, but there is a reason why I can not accept it. One who makes me stumble and lose my article to-day is none but the God, my new Lord," and smiling at the old man's perplexed face, he continued, "My God has seized my day's earnings from my hands to-day. But do you know why? There is a profound reason. As you heard, I had repented and become a Christian, and many persons are praising me; but there are great many sins more to repent in

my heart. You know very well, I was ignorant of the true value of money, as I could get it any time by an easy labor, and squandered it most carelessly. So my God gave me a very important lesson just now, and taught me that the money I used to steal before was so valuable that the people could earn it only with such pains and difficulties as I have now experienced. Now I understand more deeply about my past sins to repent, hearing this clear voice of God from above. I can not, therefore, sell such a precious grace of God to you whatever price you may offer me. It is the will of God to polish and enlighten my heart more and to lead me to the more happy life. I would rather pass this day with fasting and prayers, and receive this heavenly food to my thankful spirit." His old chief was greatly amazed and moved with this extraordinary change in the young man, and ever since he listens to his words with keen interest and reverence.

On one occasion Mr. Numari called on a police detective at Honjo Police Station, Mr. G. Ashida, who warned me for my safety when I took Mr. Numari into my Union. He was arrested several times by this man, and

they were old acquaintances with each other. Mr. Ashida is a Christian, but is not earnest, and Mr. Numari found now that he had done many things to him which were not becoming to a Christian. So in his return he went there to arrest him in the name of Christ, and persuaded him to become more earnest, and told him before the audience of many astonished policemen about the grace of God that changed him so marvelously.

He has visited also the Shinto priest, Shogen Hara, many times after his conversion, and told him to repent and to become a Christian, demonstrating the powerlessness of his work, by the fact that he could not convert him when the priest was with him so long time. The result of it is at least the priest's silence against Christianity, and that he has no more courage to do anything against my work as he did against the Salvation Army before.

Mr. Numari is one of my powerful weapons against such ignorant people at present, at the same time he is a good citizen, who pays the taxes to the government, successful in the trade of shoemaking, which work I gave him at last. He married to a good

Christian woman last year, and a lovely baby was born to them this year, whom I named "Nobuko," a daughter of the Faith. They are enjoying the luxury of the bountiful blessings of God in their wonderful happy home, glorifying the name of our Lord in this miserable heathen society.

As Japan has made some progress in the material civilization, some think that we are also much advanced in religion and morality. But it is a great mistake. Those who have hitherto hated Christianity became indifferent to it—that is about all of the present change. It seems to me that all foreign churches should now reinforce the missionaries and concentrate their forces, and do their very best for solving the problem, "Can Christianity conquer Japan?"

However, the age of arguing is now past in Japan; we must show the people the practical good of Christianity to humanity. Such is my humble desire in carrying the work of the Laborers' Reform Union. I have already begun it, and its foundation is laid upon my past work of twenty years. If I may be allowed to go on with my work in a greater scale, it is not only a blessing to the poor peo-



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ple, but it will also do a tremendous good in establishment of God's kingdom in this country by showing what His religion can actually do.


The following are the farewell words of *my father in faith, the late Bishop C. M. Williams*, which he wrote to me from Yokohama, when he was about to leave Japan eternally for Virginia:

“Sayonara:

“I hope your work among the poor wretched people will continue to grow and be blessed and that others will follow your example.”

I am ready to serve our Lord until my end against any hardship—my life and my all is offered in sacrifice to Him. I hope my readers in sympathy with my work will pray for me and for my work. I tried to keep silent for the last twenty years, but now I can not, not for myself, but for His glory.

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