

Reclaiming Japanese Convicts.

(By Mr. Taneaki Hara, in 'The Christian.')

When I was laboring in a branch prison in the province of Kushiro, Hokkaido, the twenty-third year of Meiji, robbers and felons to the number of about two hundred were brought there from Tokyo. I was much surprised to find one among them who had a New Testament. I wanted to know how he came by it, and called on him at once. He was tall and his face depraved, and I could easily see that he was a wicked and cruel man. I asked him first the cause of his having the Bible, but he made no reply. I learned that he was ignorant, and knew not even a letter. When I asked him again, he replied, 'This book is my valued possession.' The manner of his speaking made me more earnest to know what it meant. He said, 'I am a great law-breaker, but heaven has not forsaken me, and delivers me from sin. I had been robbing and stealing much, but one day there was nothing to get, so I broke into a girls' school in Yokohama with my companion. There was a great cry that robbers had broken in. We went into one of the rooms, and there found a little girl sitting in her bed engaged in earnest prayer. We took many of her things, but she quietly raised her head and watched what we were doing; and when we took one of her dresses, she said, "Grant me the privilege of keeping it myself, and you may take all the rest of my things. My mother gave this dress to me. It was woven by her own hands. There is nothing to me more precious than this." It was not a valuable dress, so we put it on the end of a drawn sword and threw it at her. When we were going away, someone came after us, calling with a girl's gentle voice. We stopped and heard her say, "Please, take this book and read it." It was only a book, and, thinking it was no good to me, I threw it back at the little girl.'

When relating this to us his face became flushed, and he seemed very much ashamed; but he continued, saying, 'I lay concealed next day in a secluded place; but the day after went to visit my accomplice. He had already been arrested, and a detective was then waiting in the house. When I called at the door a little old man came out and inquired my name. He told me to go with him to the police station, as he had something to ask me. I remember well the events of that day. I was exceedingly ignorant, but knew enough to understand that I was going to be arrested, and that there was no escape. I was taller than he, and had strength sufficient to enable me to escape easily; but I felt that he had some power which I could not resist. After a little while I found myself in a prison. It seemed as if I had just wakened from sleep. I was carried before the police officials the next day. The injured one, that little girl, was there, and after the cross-examination was over the superintendent of police showed me a book, and asked me if I had seen it before. He said, "This is a religious book which was given to you by this little girl to make you repent of your deed, and to lead you in the right way. As soon as she heard you were arrested she came here to give you this book. There is no other wicked person so favored as you are in the gift of this girl. Remember, therefore, the precepts of Christianity and repent of your sins." I was then quite broken in my heart, but I did not know what Christianity was. However, I believed it was a religion of righteousness. That weak little girl's fearlessness and filial love pierced my heart very deeply. Therefore I have repent-

ed, and in order to reward her love I carefully keep this Bible which she gave me.'

When he had finished his story, I returned thanks to God that his power, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the salvation of Christ, extend even to such a sinner, and then I persuaded him to read the Bible constantly. Also, I taught him the Japanese characters. Unfortunately the time came that I could not live near him longer, but I instructed him constantly by letter. I was much pleased to find by his letters that he did not forget to read his Bible. The letters were written better each time, and showed general improvement of mind.

There have been 365 men—all robbers and thieves—whom I have helped during the two years past. The number now in my home is sixty-two. Twenty-one others have made homes, and already have families. Some of these are in Tokio, while others have gone into the interior. Among the 365 there are twenty-three who have committed offences a second time, and twenty whose whereabouts are now unknown to me. During this time eleven have run away from me. But eight-tenths of the whole number have regular and lawful occupations. This charity work is based upon the words of Peter, 'Silver and gold have I none. . . . In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.' It is not by the power of money that I do this work, but I let them follow their own occupations. Though I have been helping such a large number I have not given them any money, but have allowed them to have only things which they earned themselves. Some are blind, deaf, and crippled, but all support themselves by their own labor.

A Gentle Way.

Counsel and admonition gain immeasurably in their influence when the smile goes with them, and the word is spoken in a sweet voice wisely. A deep impression was made on the heart of a young girl visitor to a quaint peasant who had this gift of a gentle way. One day he was picking up fallen fruit in his little orchard plot.

'Don't you get weary stooping so much?' asked the girl, watching his slow movements.

'No, miss,' he said, brightly, 'I don't weary; I'm just waiting. I think I am about ripe now, and I must soon fall to the ground; and then, just think, the Lord will pick me up! Oh, miss, you're young yet, and perhaps just in blossom. Turn well round to the Sun of righteousness, that you may ripen sweet for his service.'

That humble German peasant had learned in the school of love how to bring others to the Master. If sometimes we fail when we attempt it, it may be because we have not the knack of pleasantness.—'Bright Jewels.'

Toplady's Conversion.

He had been the child of many prayers, but to all the entreaties of his pious mother and others he answered by inwardly resolving not to become a Christian. When he and his mother were on a visit to Ireland on the Lord's Day they went to a place where a good man was going to preach. He was very earnest in his sermon, and put the question to the unsaved present, whether they would give themselves to Christ or remain rebels? Every time the young man said in his own heart, 'I will not yield, I will not yield,' his heart was hardened against God's grace, and at the close of the sermon it seemed to be harder than ever it had

been. When the sermon was finished, the minister gave out a hymn:

'Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore.'

The congregation, stirred by the earnest sermon, sung the hymn with their whole heart; and what a sermon could not do, the singing of the hymn did. It broke the hard, unyielding heart. He found God and gave himself to him. He lived to be an honored preacher of the Gospel. He was Augustus Toplady, the author of the great hymn:

'Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.'

—'English Paper.'

Generous Friends.

We have pleasure in acknowledging this week a kind remittance of one dollar from L. A. N., Diligent River, N.S., for copies of the 'Messenger' to be sent to any mission where they are needed. We think of using this sum for sending 'Messengers' to Miss Dunhill, 12 S. Parade, Bangalore, India, who will distribute them among the natives. L. A. N. asks where a box of reading matter may be sent. The Westmount Sunshine Society, Victoria Hall, Westmount, Que., gladly receives literature for distribution where it will be appreciated.

ANOTHER GIFT.

R. McCoy, also kindly sends a remittance to cover the cost of sending the 'Messenger' to India. We think of sending it to Miss Dunhill, as above.

A Secretary's Alphabet.

Miss Martha E. Race, when secretary of the Florida Christian Endeavor Union, conducted the conference of district secretaries at Washington Convention. She prepared a fine printed programme, carefully systematized, and on the back of this programme was this alphabet of adjectives describing the qualities of a model secretary. He should be,—

Accurate,
Businesslike,
Conscientious,
Determined,
Energetic,
Fair-minded,
Gracious,
Helpful,
Intense,
Just,
Kindly,
Lenient,
Modest,
Never-failing,
Open-hearted,
Persistent,
Quiet,
Resourceful,
Systematic,
Tactful,
Unbiased,
Vigorous,
Willing,
Excellent,
Youthful,
Zealous.

—'Christian Endeavor Paper.'

That Christian nations should make sa- loons toll-gates for revenue, and sanction crime-breeding to coin money for current expenses, is unspeakably sad.—Albert C. Lawson, D.D.