

after my third visit. During these three visits I have passed the greater part of a year among those strange and greatly underrated people. I have eulogized the most intelligent of them over and over again upon the subject of religion, and it is my firm conviction that the utmost caution and circumspection will be requisite to avoid alarming their suspicions. Let me relate extracts from several of the conversations which I had with them on this subject. You will observe how vivaciously I approached it:—

"Where does the money come from to build these magnificent temples?" I asked; "I seldom see any but the priests and a few old women at worship—men do not provide money without an object."

"They are built," the interpreter replied, "with funds begged by the priests. When a new temple is desired, the priests go around to every one, and are seldom turned away empty-handed."

"But what is the use of building them," I asked, "when so few use them as places of worship? The money thus spent might better be employed in planting rice."

"True," he replied; "but they are often used as quarters for persons of rank when travelling. Your Consul-General at Simoda, for example, lives in one of them. How unfortunate it would have been if there had not been a temple at Simoda when he arrived. How could he have been provided with quarters suitable to his rank?"

"In our country," I replied, "we build large houses expressly for the accommodation of strangers. We build temples also, which we call churches, but they are sacred to the worship of our God."

"Which God? Tell me something of your God."

"We have but one God—the Father of every thing that is good, and the Master of all that is evil. We believe that no evil power can trouble us without the consent of the Master; and He tells us to ask Him daily to protect us from its influences. He tells us also to love each other, to return good for evil, and to hate the devil, who is the father of all evil. In Japan you worship the devil, supplicating him who is your enemy to spare you. We, on the contrary, go directly to his Master, and say, protect us from thy slave, who is seeking to destroy us. Which course, now, is the most sensible of the two?"

"Yours is the best for America, and ours for Nipon," he replied. "You know, a great many years ago, the Christians came to Nipon, Japan, and after that we had rebellion and much blood shed. Nipon is better as it is. What do you want with religion? Nipon is very well now."

"I was only asking you how you built your temples," I replied carelessly, and changed the subject.

Three or four days later I was taking lunch with Dr. Pompo Van Meerdervoort, the Dutch physician, of Desima (we were at Nagasaki during this time,) and mentioned the result of my conversation with the interpreter. "They are morbidly suspicious upon the subject of religion," he observed. "There are many who think that Commodore Perry's sole object in coming here was to pave the way for the re-introduction of that faith which was exterminated in 1816. I have observed that when your mild old chaplain comes on shore for a walk, they cast glances of mistrust, perhaps of fear, at him. I was speaking only a few days since to one of the most intelligent of my pupils (the Doctor has a class of some fifty medical students, from the best families in Jeddo, to whom he lectures daily) in regard to our religion and theirs, and I must confess that he got the better of me.

"Our religion," I observed, "conduces to a

high state of morality, to the preservation of law and order, and to the comfort and welfare of the poor."

"Then why is it," he asked, "why is it that in your country people die of hunger in summer, and of lungs and cold in winter? If your religion is better than ours, why does it not feed and clothe those unfortunates as that of Nipon feeds and clothes its unfortunates? If it is conducive to law and order, why do I read in your Dutch books of so much crime and of so many punishments? If it is productive of a high state of morality, why do your merchants swindle us?"

"Now, what could I say in answer to all this?" continued the Doctor. "I could only point to the purity of life inculcated by our religion, and to the impurity of life advocated by theirs."

In speaking of our "mild old chaplain," the Doctor referred to the Rev. Henry Wood, of New Hampshire, at present a chaplain in the United States' navy and attached to this ship. And now, before relating another conversation which I had with a second interpreter on this subject, I wish to show how he overcame the "mistrust" and "fears" of which the Doctor spoke, and finally succeeded in working himself into their confidence, and indeed into their affections. I doubt if there is any man who has the interests of "the religion of Christ Jesus and Him crucified" more at heart than this gentleman; and during our three months' stay at Nagasaki he devoted himself with untiring energy to the task of preparing a groundwork upon which future brother-labourers might stand while spreading their nets. Now let us see how he commenced.

Every day one or more of the interpreters (of whom there were six or eight set apart by the government to master the English language) came on board in charge of wood, water, fresh provisions, or something of that sort, for the use of the ship, and they were invariably invited below by any of the officers who happened to be on board. Sometimes we talked upon one subject, sometimes upon another—mutually seeking information at each other's hands. One day Mr. Wood brought out a little book, a common primer, with a cat, or dog, or ox, or lion, on each page, and with the name underneath it in large print.

"Here," he said, "you are asking about animals. Here you can recognize them by the drawing; and if you will step to my room I will teach you how to pronounce their names."

"Ah! yes," they exclaimed, "you very kind. Now not time—to-morrow."

"Very well," he replied, "you'll come to-morrow?"

"Yes, we thank."

And the next day they did come. And as I passed by the little state-room an hour later, I heard, "Ba, be, bi, bo, bu," sounding just as natural as if coming from a "country school for grown people" in my own country. Thus commenced the first minister of the Gospel to enlighten Japan.

The day following this I was walking on the quarter-deck, and noticed a small corner of it screened off. It seems that the Japanese had suffered from the heat of the confined state-room on the previous day, and that Mr. Wood had obtained permission to screen a space on the quarter-deck for his school-room. A week later, while on shore, I intruded suddenly (as had been my custom) into the reception-room of my friend Yashero, the interpreter, when, to my unbounded surprise and gratification, I saw Mr. Wood seated at a low table, with five of the eight interpreters gathered around him. Just as I interrupted them, Yashero, was spelling "Ba-ker, baker." They were evidently making great headway.

"You see," said Mr. Wood quietly, in reply to

my surprised look; "you see we were so often interrupted on shipboard, and there was so much noise, that Yashero yesterday proposed that we should come on shore to this room. So here we are. They have asked me to meet them here every morning at ten o'clock, and I must try to do so."

"Yes it is better than ship," joined in Yashero. "They are the most apt scholars that I have ever been my fortune to meet with," continued Mr. Wood; "but there is one stone over which they all stumble. They cannot, to save them, pronounce the letter L, they invariably get it R. Pronounce the word 'lead,' Yashero, 'red.'"

"No, not red, but lead."

"Cannot," objected my friend, with a deprecatory shake of the head.

"That's strange enough," I observed; "more especially when we reflect that the Chinese, from whom we are told these people are descended, have a failing in exactly the opposite direction. Don't you remember the boatmen of Hong Kong, who always tried to get double fare by saying 'Mo velly poman! You velly litch man!'"

"Of course I do; and it is strange."

"Well, that being the case, I won't interrupt you any longer. Good morning, Yashero. Pronounce 'lead,' old fellow."

"Cannot, my friend," accompanied by another deprecatory shake of the head.

Months passed, and the day arrived which was to see us leave our quiet anchorage. I was ordered to call upon the Governor before sailing, with the usual compliments of the flag-officer. To make myself understood, it was necessary first to call upon Yashero, and carry him along as interpreter. I found him seated upon his knees, calves, and heels, studying out a few simple exercises preparatory to the arrival of Mr. Wood.

"Come on Yashero," I said. "Pick up your two swords and come along. I am going to call on the Governor from the Commodore. You can't go to school to-day, old fellow."

"Why will you speak Governor?"

"The Commodore will say good-bye, and hope that he shall live a thousand years."

"Ah! I am ready."

He hoisted his large paper umbrella to protect us from the sun; I took his arm, and the next moment we were following the long, straight street which passed within a few hundred yards of the Governor's palace.

"You are sorry to come away from school, Yashero? You like Mr. Wood?"

"Oh! Mr. Wood very good. Japanese all like him."

"Is he a good teacher? Does he teach you well?"

[I am here giving the precise words of Yashero, as well as I can recall them.]

"Oh! very well. Interpreter riko (like) Mr. Wood stop at Nagasaki. Vice-Governor riko Mr. Wood stop."

"Ah yes," I returned, "but Mr. Wood cannot stop, as you express it. He is sent to our ship by the Government to make the sailors good; and we are all so bad that he must talk all the time. I'll tell you what it is, though, Yashero; if the Japanese want Americans to come and teach them our language, there are a great many more just like Mr. Wood in the United States, who would be glad to come. They would teach you, and you in return could teach them. We must learn each other's language now, you know, since we are going to buy and sell."

"Ah, yes."

"Come now, Yashero, you and I are friends. I want to talk something inside to you. [If a Japanese is telling you something which he wishes