

brought our first snow-storm, and in right good earnest it came. It would have compared well with some of our fiercest storms in Ontario. It lasted, however, only a few hours, covering the ground to the depth of about six inches, and was all gone in a couple of days.

January, February, and March have been cold, with piercing winds, that made us glad to wrap up quite as warmly as in Canada. We have seen snow only twice since the New Year's storm, and in neither instance enough to whiten the ground.

Since the 1st of April the weather has been delightful. Fields and gardens are blazing with *camellias* of exquisite beauty and in every variety of colour. Peach, plum, and cherry trees are in full bloom. The uplands are covered with charming, luxuriant vegetation, among which are wheat fields of most promising appearance, though what may be the quality of the grain, we cannot tell until the harvest, which usually takes place early in June. This must suffice for the present, as to the climate and productions of the country.

#### PROVIDENTIAL OPENING.

Regarding the movements of Dr. McDonald, I have already given you some information, and he has no doubt furnished you with full particulars. I need not therefore give you details. A mere outline of events will be sufficient from me. He went to Yedo on the 12th of January last, and found quarters at a hotel in *Tsukidji, the part of Yedo set apart to foreign residence*. His intention was to look out for a house and begin his work as soon as possible. The offer, however, of a situation in the interior of the country, at a place called *Shidzu-oka*, about 100 miles from Yokohama, that had been made to us some time before, but which we supposed had failed from some cause to us unknown, was renewed after he had been in Yedo only a few days. The negotiations concerning this matter were slow, as we are informed is always the case with the Japanese. But the opening was so favourable to our purpose that we felt warranted in waiting to see what would become of it. At last, toward the end of March, everything was satisfactorily arranged. The *Gaimusho*,—a department of the Imperial

Government which has charge of all things relating to engagements with foreigners,—gave permission for the Doctor to reside in the interior; and the department called *Mom-bu-sho*, which manages all educational affairs, permitted the parties who engaged him to open their school. All private contracts of Japanese with foreigners must be by permission of the Imperial Government. It would be quite impossible for any foreigner to reside outside of the Treaty ports, without special permission, *under contract* to render service of every kind. We count it therefore a most Providential circumstance that this invitation came to us, and that we were prepared to accept it. As I wrote you some time ago, I am fully persuaded, from personal knowledge of the locality and people, there is not a more desirable place for Missionary operations in Japan. The Doctor's contract runs two years, and, in making it, we distinctly informed the gentlemen who proposed to open the school, that on no consideration would we engage to go into the country to do any kind of secular work, except on the condition that we might introduce the Bible and teach Christianity; and they not only complied with this condition, but declared themselves pleased and gratified with the prospect of being able to learn what Christianity is.

During the two years of his contract, Dr. McDonald will have a direct influence with the people, both as teacher and physician, which, at the same time, he will be able to make subservient to Christian work. He will also have an excellent opportunity of acquiring the language; and, at the expiration of his contract, should the country be open for residence under Treaty, we will be on the ground, have made a beginning, and can thenceforward devote the whole time to direct Missionary labour. All Missionaries here do more or less secular teaching, as they find it the best means of getting into communication with the class of persons whom it is most desirable to influence towards the acceptance of Christian truth. Therefore Dr. McDonald's present situation is quite in harmony with the course of Missionary work in Japan, and may, with propriety, be continued until the country is thrown open to