



ordering the extermination of Christianity. The native converts were put to the sword, and many of them were even crucified ; while the Roman Catholic priests and all foreigners were banished from the land. Thus it was that for three hundred years the sea-gates of Japan were closed against Western civilization ; and thus it was that the Japanese learned to associate Christianity with intrigue and rebellion, and to look with aversion and distrust upon all foreigners.

In 1853 the United States Government sent Commodore Perry to Japan to secure a treaty for purposes of trade. It was on a bright Sunday morning when he with seven ships-of-war cast anchor in the peaceful waters of Tokio Bay. The Japanese were seen on shore armed for defence. Assembling his crew on deck, Perry read with cheerful voice the one hundredth Psalm, and then with his crew sang the hymn,

“ Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy.”

The sweet sounds echoed over the quiet waters, allaying the anger of the enraged Japanese, and opening the way for a peaceful settlement of the treaty, prophetic of that time when the true gospel should be echoed from heart to heart and from home to home of that lovely land.

Seven years after, in 1860, the American Presbyterian Board sent out the first Protestant missionary. He came not with the altar, candle, and crucifix of the Jesuits, but with the simple story of God's love for men. Now began to break upon the dark, pagan empire the light of the true gospel of Christ. At first the missionaries laboured under great difficulties. No native could be hired as a teacher of the language. Anyone having any dealings with a missionary was subjected to all manner of insult and persecution. Besides, the government would not allow the public preaching of the gospel in any part of the empire. At that time the Japanese had not learned to distinguish between Romanism and Protestantism. They were simply two branches of the hated Christian sect ; or as our proverb expresses it, “ Foxes of the same hole.” However, notwithstanding the difficulties with which the missionaries had to contend, progress was made. In 1870, just ten years after missionary work began, there were 1,000 native Christians.