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CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

Some unsophisticated subscriber writes to the "Press" for information about Christianity in Japan, and its prospects. The great mind which presides over the department of religious information there is not to be drawn as to all it knows or all it does not know—which seems to be a great deal. It gives this oracular answer:

"Christianity, so the missionaries in that country say, is gradually gaining a hold upon the people of Japan, but whether it will ever be the religion of that country is a question which the future alone can answer.

Then the "Press" goes a little into history.

"Christianity ranks third among the religions of the 'Land of the Rising Sun.'" All its churches are enrolled by the Government and are protected by law. In 1900 there were 723 Protestant missionaries in the country, 570 native preachers and helpers, 416 churches, 42,273 enrolled members and 14 theological and other schools, with 5,011 students and pupils. The Roman Catholics had 106 European missionaries, 117 church edifices, 251 congregations and 54,602 adherents. The Greek Church had 438 native workers, 297 churches, 25,698 followers and schools with 19,055 pupils.

"Dr. Sato, president of the Government Agricultural College at Sapporo, is a Christian. The late Hon. K. Kataoka, president of the Japanese House of Representatives was also president of the Young Men's Christian Association. He has been succeeded by Professor Shimomura, also an earnest Christian. Hon. T. Ando, formerly Consul to Hawaii, is also a Christian. These are the only Japanese Christians who are or have been, associated with the Government we can think of at this moment."

It might easily be inferred from this innocent looking statement that in Japan there was no past for the Christian Church, as well as that in the writer's view, Protestantism was the chief element to be considered when Christianity is the immediate subject. The guileless person who asked for information got as much as he might by consulting Poor Richard's Almanac. For him it was a matter of no consequence, as it is to the "Press" mind, if it be aware of the fact, that nearly four hundred years ago the light of faith was carried to Japan by one of the greatest apostles Christianity ever produced—St. Francis Xavier—and attracted thousands and thousands of converts by the potency of its charms. For him it is supposed to be a matter of no consequence that the light was subsequently stamped out by a persecution more horrible, perhaps, in its inhuman barbarities than those of Nero and Diocletian. We take from the admirable work of Rev. Dr. Casartelli (published by the San Francisco Truth Society) a few passages describing the rise and persecution of the Church in Japan long before the word Protestant was heard spoken in the far east.

"Every one knows that St. Francis Xavier was never destined to reach the shores of China, and that he died an outcast on the little island of San Chan, at the mouth of Canton River, on December 2, 1552, like Moses in sight of the Promised Land.

"The following half century marks an epoch of marvellous prosperity in the Japanese missions. Numerous Jesuit fathers and lay brothers were sent over, as Francis had desired to carry on the work so auspiciously begun. Within thirty years it is calculated that over 200,000 Japanese, including several bonzes, had been converted, and the princes of Omura, Bungo and Arima were among these neophytes. Nagasaki was the chief focus of Christian life. By 1567 it was said that the population of that city was almost entirely Catholic. The virtual ruler of Japan at this

time was Nobunage, the celebrated minister and commandant of the forces. This able minister was distinctly favorable to the Christians during all his administration of nine years (1573-1582). All this time the Jesuit fathers had been pushing forward their apostolic work, and had met with marvellous success. In Kyoto and Yamaguchi, in Osaka and Sakoi as well as in Kyushu, they had founded flourishing churches, established colleges for the formation of a native clergy, opened hospitals and asylums and extended their influence far and wide. The latter part of Nobunage's supremacy, was perhaps the era of their greatest prosperity. At this time Chamberlain estimates the number of Japanese Christians at not less than 600,000.

"The fervor, zeal and devotion of these new Christians were worthy of the early days of Christianity. The Holy See was very soon able to rejoice in the addition to the fold of legions of devoted children. Gregory XIII. deputed Father Alesandro Valignani, S.J., with gifts to the converted Japanese princes and they in their turn in 1582 despatched a solemn embassy to Rome, consisting of two young princes and two counsellors, who were accompanied by Father Valignani and another Jesuit.

So much for the statement concerning Japanese Christians connected with the Government. The first wave of persecution began in the year 1617. It was continued down to 1624. When it broke out the Church had 1,800,000 members; when it ended the Church was declared to be extinct. But it was not. It lived on, despite the most fiendish efforts to kill it outright.

"One may search the grim history of early Christian martyrology," writes the author of "The Conquests of the Cross" published by Messrs. Cassell, "without finding anything to surpass the heroism of the Roman Catholic martyrs of Japan. Burnt on stakes made of crosses, torn limb from limb, buried alive, they yet refused to recant." "It has never been surpassed," says Mr. D. Murray, of this persecution, "for cruelty and brutality on the part of the persecutors, or for courage and constancy on the part of those who suffered." Mr. Gubbins, in the Japanese Asiatic Society's "Transactions," after detailing some of the more barbarous tortures inflicted, adds: "Let it not be supposed that we have drawn on the Jesuit accounts solely for this information. An examination of the Japanese records will show that the case is not overstated."

"Statistics alone are capable of giving an idea of the terrible character of the persecution. It is reckoned that over 1,000 religious of the four orders—Jesuits, Franciscans, Dominicans and Augustinians—shed their blood for the faith during its course, whilst the number of native Japanese lay folk who perished exceeded 200,000!

The Church would have better results to show than it can now, under a mild and enlightened regime, were it not for the disturbing presence of the sectarian missionaries. The spectacle of so-called Christians divided among themselves and unable to offer any definite doctrine makes the pagan Japanese turn away in contempt from Christianity. But dark as the outlook is, by reason of this terrible drawback, there is a silver lining in the cloud. Father Casartelli quotes from the "Compte Rendu des Travaux" for 1894:

"The number of Catholics in 1894 was 48,889, a not very large growth of 4,384 since 1891. During the twelve months the number of adult pagans converted and baptized had been 2,460; the number of children of Christian parents baptized (representing the natural growth of the Church), 1,250. Works of education and charity show a gratifying increase. Special mention is made of the two excellent leper asylums of Gotemba and Kumamoto. Leprosy is still a terrible scourge of the Japanese

archipelago, and very heartrending are the accounts published from time to time by our Catholic missionaries, especially Fathers Vigroux and Corre, in the pages of "Illustrated Catholic Missions" of the wretched and abandoned victims of this fell disorder. The work among the lepers will doubtless bring with it many spiritual blessings on our missionary work, and must produce a great effect on the native mind."

The hour is dark, but it is also dark before dawn. Christianity was in Japan ere Protestantism had taken shape in Europe; and it may, in God's providence, in His own good time, be there also when Protestantism is no more.—Catholic Standard and Times.

JESTS AND JINGLES

(Catholic Standard and Times)

HE SHOULD KNOW

"Ugh!" growled Mr. Phamley, "the conceited young cad!"

"Why, father," exclaimed his daughter, "how can you speak of him in that way? There's no one so modest and unassuming as he is."

"Indeed? What do you know about it?"

"Why, he told me so himself."

NO MORE WORK

Hicks: "I suppose Dremner is still pottering along at his inventions."

Wicks: "Well, he has actually perfected a great labor-saving scheme at last."

Hicks: "You don't say?"

Wicks: "Yes; he's going to marry Miss Roxley."

WE ALL REMEMBER

Though Memory often spurns its debts Of hate, it never smothers

Some kindly debts, for who forgets His kindnesses to others?

PROOF POSITIVE

He: "No, I never met her, but she must be very charming."

She: "Who told you that?"

He: "Nobody, but all you other girls admit that she'd be all right if she wasn't so horribly conceited."

IN THE SAME CLASS

"Now, there's Jim Pincher; he's a regular Russell Sage."

"Nonsense! His income doesn't amount to more than \$1,500 a year."

"That may be, but he saves every cent of it."

FROM BAD TO WORSE

"Yes, my wife used to get nervous at night every time she heard a noise down-stairs, but I told her if burglars ever got into the house they wouldn't make any noise."

"I supposed that calmed her."

"Not much. Now she gets nervous every time she doesn't hear a noise."

DA FAMILY MAN

I ain, gon' gatta mad so queeck

Like w'at I use' to do.

I gon' geeve up dees ogly treeck

Of speakin' swear words, too.

An' now w'en com'sa bada keed

For cal me Dago—wal,

I ain' gon' do like w'at I deed

An' tal heem 'gotohal!'

Eef som' one com' for makin' fool

Weeth me I show dem how

I jus' can smile an' keepa cool—

I gon' be good man now.

I am too prouda man to-day

For wanta swear an' fight,

An' I no care w'at bad keeds say

For makin' me excite.

So eef som'body com' an' try

For makin' fool weeth me

I justa gon' be dignif'

Like fam'ly man should be.

Las' night da doctor bring my wife

A baby girl. Dat's how

I am so proud. You bat my life,

I gou' be good man now!

T. A. DALY.

INTOLERANCE IN SPAIN —AND ELSEWHERE

According to Spanish law Protestants in Spain have complete liberty of worship, but there are certain restrictions as to publicity. Protestant church buildings, for instance are not allowed to pretend that they are Catholic churches by displaying crosses on their exterior. Time was when such an arrangement would have seemed no hardship on Protestants, since even here in this country, where they had full sway for many a year, such a thing as a cross upon one of their meeting houses would have seemed "Romish," and therefore abominable. But times have changed; and so we find certain Protestants in Spain insisting upon having crosses on the outside of their chapel in the same manner as the Catholic churches have them. The Spanish authorities naturally want the crosses removed. This has raised a storm among certain Eng-

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lish and American Protestants of the stripe of those who compose the Protestant Alliance—men who are always hungering for trouble with Rome, and who chronically feel like that old-time Irish fighter who was "blue-mouldy for the want of a beating."

The "Northwestern Christian Advocate" says of the affair:—

"Some American Roman Catholics continually talk about the bigotry of Protestants, but no Protestant country has ever given such an exhibition of bigotry as this."

Well, let us see. The "Catholic Times" of London, answering the question of an indignant Protestant, by what right the Spanish Government acts thus towards Protestants, says:—

"By the same right that the British Government orders that no Catholic shall occupy the throne, nor become Lord Chancellor of England or Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. By the same right, too, that the British Constitution calls all Catholics idolaters and blasphemers, and insults believers in the doctrine of transubstantiation. By the same right, too, that British law forbids legacies for Masses for deceased persons, and calls prayers for the dead a superstitious usage." This answer is to the point. It calls to mind some little facts which may be enlightening to the Editor of the "Northwestern Christian Advocate," and may cause him to reflect on the wisdom of the old adage: "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."

At any rate Catholics do not attempt to deceive Protestants on this point, whereas in Manila, Porto Rico and similar places, and even here in the United States, may be found Protestants to openly advocate the drawing of Catholics to Protestant Churches by various devices—adopting Catholic vestments, titles, ceremonies, practices, devotions, etc.—to confuse and mislead the simple-minded and ignorant. Is not this lying.—Sacred Heart Review.

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