

We find, at all events, no uncertainty in most of their popular teaching, and verily they have their reward.

It is the very thorough-going, earnest preaching—considered as a Church paper—of the *Bells*, that has given it that degree of success to which, unhappily for the accountability of its promoters, it has attained.

The Crater of Daybut.

THE evening of a summer day. A wild scene it is among mountains: we are standing on the edge of a huge crater, the bed of an extinct volcano. Yet not so wholly extinct but that far below us, a mile away, down in the very centre of the gorge, there is a jet of smoke, which, as evening darkens into night, will, like the pillar of cloud that went before the Israelites, kindle into fire. See how the peaks, all round, toss themselves up in the wildest confusion; those two, sharp, needle-like points to the left, that bluff, storm-looking precipice,—in the centre of which one little white cloud has anchored itself,—straight before us, and then to the right, and towering far above us, that conical mountain, over the shoulder of which winds a narrow mule-path, cut out by years of labour, through the solid rock. And notice how beyond it, where it falls back from its neighbour mountain, and gives a vista of the horizon, a building of white marble has caught the now almost level rays of the sun, and lights up the hill which it crowns.

That is the temple of the god Daybut, for we are in Japan: and a great day to-morrow will be (so they think) for the worshippers of the idol. Then these mountains, now so lonely, then all the edge or rim of the crater,—and it must measure four or five miles across,—will be thronged,—will be alive with worshippers. For this volcano is sacred to Daybut; and it is held that whoever should be foolhardy enough to descend into it and to cross it, would pay for his sacrilege, not only with his own life, but with the destruction of the whole empire. For the priests of Daybut affirm that then the foundations of fire which lurk beneath it would be broken up, the chain of mountains, as far as the eye can reach, would be shattered in pieces, and the whole kingdom of Meaco be overwhelmed with a deluge of flame. So they preach, and so their hearers believe. To-morrow then, there will be a concourse of people from all parts of the empire: not only from great Nippon, the chief of the Japanese Islands, but from the outlying portions of the empire, from Sitkof, from Kiousiou, yes, and from those distant rocks against which the waves of the Pacific are waging continual war, Firando, and Timoura, and Osima. They say the Emperor will not be here himself: he is so busied with

his new erections in the Capital, that he will be content with an embassy to the god. But I do hear that the Christians,—for there have been Christians in Japan for these forty years,—are in expectation of some great event. Father Froes, the Missionary of Meaco (he will be a martyr at a future time, being frozen to death for the Name of Christ), will be here: and the report goes, that this prerogative of Daybut will not pass altogether unquestioned. For more than one valiant heart among those who follow—as the common expression goes—the “Law of the Portuguese,” are determined to vindicate for themselves the honour of the God of the Christians, Maker of Heaven and Earth, and to teach the whole Empire that the strength of the hills is His also.

Now let the sun set behind the western range. You may catch—so high is the ground on which we are standing,—a narrow strip of silver; it is the inland sea between Nippon and Sitkof: On those shores the standard of the Cross was first planted; they have already sent multitudes of martyrs to glory: before the conflict is ended, and the Church crushed out in Japan, they will send thousands more. And, as the night thickens, we may catch to the north a great glare, as from a mighty city. That shows where, in Meaco, the Emperor Tayeosama is entertaining half the priests of his empire, at a banquet in honor of Daybut: and every one of the six thousand temples in the Capital is illuminated in honour of the festival. That glare will last all through the night, and then in the morning, by thousands and tens of thousands, the pilgrims to this volcano will pour forth.

Let the night have passed. Let the sun have just risen over the eastern mountains: and see how the whole scene is changed. Multitudes thronging and pressing on all sides, and girding in the crater with a living chain. From this knoll we shall have the best view of the whole. Here they have set up the standard of the Green Dragon, which shows that the principal men of the day have chosen this for their own position. Here, too, is a pulpit of sandal wood, from whence the most celebrated and most learned Bonze of the Empire—his name is Morindono,—will preach of the greatness and glory of Daybut. Here he can best be heard, perhaps by some two or three thousand spectators: but, at intervals, through the whole circle of the multitude, other pulpits are reared up, from which other Bonzes of inferior name will each address his own congregation. Crowded as they are through such a vast extent, it is not wonderful that the numbers should be variously reckoned; but he that rates them at the fewest sets them down at a hundred and fifty thousand, and there are not wanting those who are ready to wager that they amount to more than double that sum. I see that Father Froes has kept