

Religious Notes.

The Hon. Eki Hioki, Japan's chargé d'affaires at Washington, at a recent banquet in Boston, Massachusetts, spoke very decidedly in favor of religious teaching in Japan. The following quotation in his remarkable speech is taken from a report in the 'Christian Herald.' Mr. Hioki said: 'We of Japan believe in the efficacy of religion; it is with us a creed of no less than a rule of life; and it is because we appreciate its sanctity, and the importance that religion plays in the foundation of character, in making men steadfast in the hour of trial, and courageous in the day of adversity, that we, following the priceless example of your own republic, exercise no interference in religion. By the 28th article of the constitution of Japan the freedom of religious belief is guaranteed. A man's religion is a matter between himself and his conscience, and he may worship his God in his own way, secure in the knowledge that his faith will be respected. Japan has never been a land of religious conflict, or religious persecution. We have no wrongs to revenge; we have no past, with its historical burden, to menace the future.'

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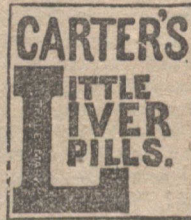
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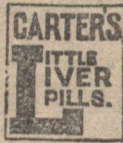
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The most learned and most dominant elements of Japan are quite ready to receive the message of Christianity with an unbiased mind, and to examine it with critical and impartial consideration.

The Japanese mind is an inquiring mind; it insists upon knowing the why and the wherefore. The messengers of a new faith must be men not only versed in their faith, but also men of broad and tolerant views; men who are familiar with the great questions of the day; men who can attune themselves to new voices and new thoughts; men who can bring the doctrines of Christianity into harmonious relation with the development of history, and show its influence upon modern culture. The modern missionary does not need to go forth with scrip or staff. He stands in no fear of bodily harm; neither contemptuously nor reviling shall be his portion. He must be not only a teacher of the Word, but guide, philosopher, and friend as well. To such, I am sure, Japan will extend not alone the hand of respect, but also of friendship: willing to give deferential and attentive ear; not rejecting lightly, but embracing eagerly, if it shall satisfy that spiritual craving that is the common heritage of humanity; that finds its expression in the east no less than in the west.'

John G. Wooley, the enthusiastic temperance advocate, has recently returned to the United States from a great world tour, in which he made a special study of the liquor evil as it exists in many lands. He has come to the conclusion that the use of liquor is decreasing among what is called the middle classes, but increasing with the idle rich and the idle poor. He thinks New Zealand has, on the whole, the most satisfactory laws dealing with the matter of liquor drinking. Its local option measure he considers very good. The entire absence of the bar in Japan seems to have impressed him very much.

The English Bible Society has supported 900 colporteurs, who sold during the year nearly two and a quarter million volumes. It also supported 670 native Christian Bible-women employed in connection with about forty different missionary organizations in the East, and it helped to maintain 100 European Bible-women, most of whom are working in London back-streets. An excellent example of the scale on which the Society conducts its business was evidenced at the last monthly meeting of the committee, when orders to be placed with various printing firms were sanctioned, amounting to no less than 653,000 volumes.

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Rebuked.

The following incident, related by a mother, well illustrates how even a child may be taught so as to miss spiritual food: 'Isn't you going to give me my little bit of Bible?' asked our astonished four-year-old child the last time we overslept, and had to hurry off without explaining to her the one verse of Scripture I teach her every day. I don't mean to oversleep again!

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