


## ONE OF OUR MISSIONARIES,

MISS PRESTON, JAPAN.

BOUT seven years ago Miss Emeline Augusta Preston, the subject of this sketch, offered herself to the Woman's Missionary Society for Mission work, and was accepted. Since that time we have all become more or less intimately acquainted with her, through her letters, which have appeared, from time to time, in the leaflet and other publications.

As I am writing of a young lady I do not feel at liberty to begin in the good orthodox fashion, of stating the day and year of her birth, but here my disability ceases. Her father and mother I know, and I can even go farther back and say that I have met her grandmother, a dear old lady in her eighty-ninth year, who, though very frail, has all the spirit and independence of youth. From her, I think, Miss Preston must have inherited some of the sturdy self-reliance which makes her so quick to plan, and so prompt to execute. During her furlough I visited her, at her father's home, and saw how great a sacrifice, to both parents and child, was involved in this missionary enterprise. There were times when it seemed to the loving daughter that she could hardly leave her home again, and her somewhat failing parents, even to return to her loved work on the foreign field. But the decision was not left with her. With rare unselfishness, both father and mother speeded her on her way, for, as the mother said in my hearing, "She has spent five years in Japan, and has acquired the language, she has therefore a greater chance of usefulness than ever before. Any one can attend to our needs, but every one cannot do her work in Japan." But while she spoke tears were in her eyes, and there was a break in her voice as she added, "But we miss her more and more as the time goes on."

When we think of our missionaries, and pray for them, let us not forget that all the heroes are not on the foreign field. Many a lonely fireside may testify to the noble self-sacrifice of those who have given their dearest to the Lord's work. God bless the fathers and mothers of our missionaries, and in the time of ingathering grant them a share in the reward.

Miss Preston's father is in the Methodist ministry, and the daughter of whom I am writing was born during his pastorate in Toronto west circuit, which I may say in passing, at that time embraced Richmond, Elm and Queen St. churches. She was converted at the early age of eight years, and joined the church soon after. From the first she began to engage in what we might call mere distinctively Christian work, holding little meetings amongst other children, collecting for missionaries, and anything else that her hands found to do. As she grew up she began to prepare herself for

teaching, completing her studies in the city of Brantford. After securing her certificate, she was engaged as teacher in a rural district school. There again she found a door open for work. There was no Sunday school in the neighborhood, and she fell into the practice of devoting her Sunday afternoons to the children in the house where she boarded. Soon others began to join them, and before long the modest little class began to assume the proportions of a school, and they were obliged to remove to the church, where ever since there has been a flourishing school.

Shortly after this Miss Preston heard, and was deeply moved by an address given by Mrs. Mesmore, previous to her departure for India. While she was still under its influence, an earnest appeal was made for workers for Japan. After giving the matter every consideration, she wrote to her parents asking permission to offer herself for the work, which was immediately granted. Her offer was accepted by the Society, and she began to prepare for her departure. In the circumstances of her going there was much to try her faith in her call to the work. A much loved sister, who had long been an invalid, began to show symptoms of more acute suffering, and an illness which, it was supposed, would prove both lingering and painful began to develop itself. Many friends tried to discourage her in her intention, but she did not waver. At that time there was another unmarried sister in the home, and she did not feel herself necessary to its comfort. And so she went forth to her new field of labor, leaving behind her the dear loved faces, one of whom she should never see again until this mortal shall put on immortality.

It costs something to be a missionary of the cross. No wonder the seed bearer "goeth forth" sometimes, "and weepeth, bearing precious seed."

Of Miss Preston's work in Japan our letters and reports keep us well informed. She and her co-worker, Miss Cartmell, taking charge of school work and evangelistic work in the city of Kofu. They are the only "foreigners" in a city of some thousands, and consequently are objects of some curiosity. There are at present some thirty-eight pupils in the school. Many of these girls are anxious for Christian baptism, but in many cases their parents interfere to prevent them taking such a step. However a large proportion of them are Christians in all but name, and a rapid growth in Christian experience is noticeable in many cases.

Our report gives us some idea of their work, if one can measure Christian work by figures. It tells of one hundred and seventy-eight meetings held during the year, of six Sunday schools established, of one thousand three hundred and seventy seven visits paid, of a few baptisms, and many applications for baptism, and all this work planned and carried through by two Canadian ladies and two native women. We can judge of their labors by these statistics, but God only knows of the results of these labors.

I may close with Miss Preston's own summing up of the year's work, as found in the report.

"Altogether this has been a pleasant, happy year in the work; through all the changes God has guided and provided a way, and we would utter the "memory of His great goodness."

A. L. R.