

*Good morning* <sup>16/5/2</sup>

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THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

JAPAN, THE SUNRISE KINGDOM.

God gave to the United States the privilege of unlocking the doors of this island empire, after they had been bolted and barred for centuries. In the middle of the sixteenth century Francis Xavier, the "apostle of the Indies," visited the Sunrise Kingdom, and conversions to the Papal Church were reported in vast numbers, even Japanese nobles and princes being among the converts. In 1582 the Catholic converts sent an embassy to Rome bearing letters and presents to the Pope in token of their allegiance to the supreme Pontiff. Their return was the signal for new conquests over the natives, and in two years 12,000 more were said to have been baptized. The haughty disdain with which the Portuguese merchants treated the Japanese, their lordly assumptions and arrogance awakened distrust on the part of the natives. Portugal and Spain were at that time united; and a Spaniard, when asked by Taiko Sama how his king (Philip II.) had managed to possess himself of half the world, replied: "He sends priests to win the people; he then sends troops to join the native Christians, and the conquest is easy." Such an unwise answer acted like a wind to fan the fires of distrust already kindled. In 1587 Taiko decreed the banishment of the missionaries; the edict was renewed by his successor in 1596, and the next year twenty-three priests were put to death in one day at Nagasaki. The Roman converts, instead of seeking to conciliate, defied the Government and attacked the religion of the islands, destroying both fanes and idols. Persecution kindled her fires, and in 1612 and 1614 many converts were put to

death, and their churches and schools laid in ruins, and their foreign faith was anathematized as treason both against their gods and the Government. Again, in 1622, a fearful massacre of native Christians took place; and when, fifteen years later, a conspiracy was detected between the Japanese, Portuguese and Roman Catholics to overthrow the imperial throne, and erect the Papal See upon its ruins persecuting violence swung to its last extreme. Edicts forbade the Japanese, on any pretext to quit the country, or any Christian, or even the Christian's God Himself, to set foot on the islands.

The exact form of this ancient edict is worth preserving: "So long as the sun shall warm the earth, let no Christian be so bold as to come to Japan; and let all know that the King of Spain himself, or the Christian's God, or the great God of all, if He violate this command, shall pay for it with His head."

By the close of 1639 the Portuguese were expelled, and their trade was transferred to the Dutch, who, as their enemies and the enemies of Roman Catholicism, were tolerated. In 1640 the native Christians openly rebelled, seized a fort, and were only subdued by the aid of the Dutch. When their stronghold fell, thousands within its walls were indiscriminately slaughtered; and henceforth Japan would have no intercourse with foreigners, and even the Dutch were confined to the island of Desima.

The ports of Japan remained shut even against vessels of commerce, until the middle of the present century. In 1852, in consequence of complaints as to the treatment of American seamen wrecked on the Japanese coast, the United States sent Commodore M. C. Perry with an expedition to demand protection for American ships and their crews and secure a treaty for purposes of trade.

In 1853, on the Lord's Day, he, with seven ships-of-war, cast anchor in the bay of Yeddo. Spreading the American flag over the capstan of his vessel, from an open Bible he read the 100th Psalm, and then, with his crew, sang Kethe's version:

All people that on earth do dwell, etc.

It was the signal of a peaceful conquest, without firing a gun or shedding a drop of blood. Commodore Perry delivered a letter from the President of the United States to the Emperor; and on March 31, 1854, negotiations were concluded and the treaty signed, followed by similar treaties with Britain, Russia and Holland.

During these thirty-five years the progress of Japan toward the civilization of the Occident has been without precedent or parallel. Between thirty and forty millions of people within the average lifetime of a generation have changed in everything. Intellectually, socially, politically, religiously; in government, education and religion; in individual life and family life; in trade and manners; in army and navy, finance and political economy they are scarcely recognizable. A young Japanese convert, a student in Johns-Hopkins University, said lately in Bethany Church, Philadelphia, that "nothing is left as it was thirty years ago except the natural scenery;" that "the Light of Asia is fading and waning; but while it is at its sunset, the Light of the World is rising on that island empire."

The Mikado is showing himself one of the most progressive sovereigns in the world, and the people do not lag behind. In building ships and machinery; in projecting lines of railway and telegraph; in establishing schools and universities; in cultivating mind and soil; in postal system and political economy; in banishing feudalism and disestablishing Buddhism; and in a hundred other radical changes and giant strides, Japan is astonishing mankind. If it be true that the newspaper is an index of civilization, Japan thirty years ago had not one; now she has more than Russia and Spain combined or all Asia besides.

Meanwhile Japan is going everywhere. The sea, no longer her "bulwark" is now her "pathway," and at every European capital are Japanese representatives. Caste distinctions are giving way to democratic ideas, and the old cumbersome alphabet to Roman characters; there are new coinage, new tax system, new social life. In 1881 the total of literary publications was about 5,000, and in one year the total increase of pupils in schools was 200,000.

At the beginning of the year 1886 the old ministry with its privy council gave place to the modern "cabinet," and the Mikado decreed the intelligent reorganizing of the whole administration. The new Cabinet embraces eleven new departments: The President and Premier, the Minister of Foreign affairs, and the head of the Department of Education are believed to be the most progressive men in the

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