

MISSION FIELD.

The Social Side of Missionary Life.

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It is often said that we have not only come to preach Christianity, but to live it before these people, and this must be done by associating with them. The social duties of a missionary must begin in his own family. The Japanese are especially curious in regard to our home life, and if they see us considerate and agreeable there, it impresses them most favorably, all the more so perhaps, because of the frequent lack of such elements in their own homes.

Most of us find no difficulty in cultivating sociability in our homes, and yet it sometimes happens that we become absorbed in our work, or worried about it, and fall into the habit of eating our meals in silence or answering only in monosyllables. This gives the impression to our over-observing servants that we have had a family quarrel—a conclusion most deplorable.

Our children are cut off from the society of other children and are subjected to many evil influences, which seems to make it imperative for us to devote much of our time to their benefit. This should not apply to mothers only. Paternal parents should share the responsibility. They will find a romp with the children is very good exercise, and they may sometimes indulge in it with safety in place of a game of tennis or a spin on the wheel! Missionary mothers often feel that their children demand all their time and strength, and they are unable to undertake anything in the way of missionary work. This is undoubtedly true in some cases, but none of us can tell how much outside work we can do until we make the effort. It seems to me that the social influence of mothers in their own homes is greatly augmented when they take an active part in missionary work. Moreover it is such an entire change to go to a woman's meeting or Bible class that it is a kind of recreation, and we come home to our families feeling better spiritually, as well as physically. When we undertake any direct missionary effort, the reflex influence upon our own children is most beneficial. Their sympathies are easily enlisted and they become very much interested in our work, especially if we take pains to tell them interesting incidents.

Our social attitude towards our servants is worth consideration. If we show a real interest in their welfare we can easily gain their confidence and good will, which will be a great advantage to us in every way. If at any time there is danger of their misunderstanding our actions, it is well worth our while to make some explanation, especially on the subject of family discipline. It is emphatically true in Japan that what we do in the secrecy of our homes is known from the house-tops.

A crucial test of our ability to set forth the spirit of Christ, in social contact with the people, comes when taking a trip into the country or travelling on a coast steamer. One is excusable for not being in exuberant spirits on a little dirty tub of a steamer, where passengers are packed away like sardines in a box. The surroundings are not conducive to a pleasant state of mind. Neither does it help one's feelings if he happens to be aroused from a troubled nap by finding a man, in the row next above, is warming his bare feet under your pillow. But even under such annoying circumstances, let us remember that any show of selfishness or irritability detracts from our influence for good. I once knew of a Japanese who was travelling some distance on the same steamer with a lady. They had never seen each other before, but hearing that she was a missionary the Japanese determined to watch her, to see if Christianity really did make any difference in the lives of its followers. Most fortunately this young woman, unwittingly, bore the inspection well. She bore the discomfort of the journey in a pleasant spirit and showed a thoughtful interest in others, which won the admiration of her inspector, and, if I mistake not, the man was so impressed that he afterward became a Christian himself.

On another occasion when travelling on a very crowded car, a missionary of our own Board arose and gave his seat to a Japanese woman who would otherwise have been obliged to stand. It was interesting to watch the effect of that little act of courtesy upon our fellow passengers, and presently a well-dressed man came forward and begged our missionary to take his place.

Japanese callers are sometimes tedious. It requires a great deal of grace to lay aside the work we want to finish, and, instead, entertain a caller who seems unlimited in his hours of leisure. The more we are in danger of being annoyed at the length of our call, let us the more earnestly teach our guest of Christ, and if we can succeed in influencing him we shall never regret the time. One can spend a great deal of time in calling upon the Japanese, and I think it pays well. A great many informal calls can be made on a single afternoon, when one simply sits at the doorway

or a little visit. This avoids the bother of taking off shoes and also prevents the family from giving tea and cake. If Christians are absent from Sabbath services for several weeks, it is a good plan to call and inquire the cause. . . . It is astonishing what effect a dish of ice cream will have on almost any of the Japanese and I never know any ill to result from giving it. It is quite generally known in Kanazawa that we make ice cream for the sick, and requests sometimes come for it from entire strangers. Thus our circle of acquaintances is enlarged.

A music box gives a good deal of pleasure in a sick room. Last week, the widow of a former high government official, while calling here said with tears in her eyes that our music box had been the chief comfort of her husband during his last illness. Bound volumes of illustrated papers can do the same kind of missionary service, and if one keeps a few feather pillows to soften the beds of the dying, which we give in the name of Him who had not where to lay His head, may it not be one of the little deeds which we are promised shall not lose its reward? Let us show that we do not consider our "things" too nice to use in reaching the people. Let us include our possessions when we offer ourselves up as living sacrifices, which is our reasonable service.

I never knew a Japanese to be ill-humored or contrary after a pleasant visit at the supper table, and if one wishes to further plans that he fears may meet with opposition, I advise him to try giving a good meal first. If there be any one who, reasonably or otherwise, bears a grudge against you, his feelings will be wonderfully mollified by a dish of hot soup with "more to follow." I speak from experience. Hot soup is more comfortable to take than hot coals on the head! Many people of the official class will lose their prejudice against foreigners when they are brought into contact with us at our dinner table, and will be very friendly even when they cannot be persuaded to accept Christianity. Perhaps more of them are convinced of its truth than we know. Let us be given to hospitality and we shall have opportunity to sow our seed by all waters.

In all our social dealings with the Japanese, the one thing needful is a genuine interest in them and a sincere desire to do them good. Without this motive we shall fail to influence them, even if our language and pronunciation were faultless. We must make them feel we love them, if we would teach them to love Christ.

In conclusion I would remind you of the words given to us by St. Paul. "But to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."—*Woman's Work*.

Mission Notes.

Last week thirty Chinese boys, sons of prominent and wealthy residents of Canton, Hong Kong and other large cities of China, arrived in the city of New York in charge of Rev. Hule Kin, a minister of the Presbyterian Church. These boys have been sent for the purpose of being placed in school, and after their preliminary education they will enter college. Large numbers of others are to follow these and, it is said, the government of China will spend millions of money to carry out her plans in this direction and to bring her youth into contact with the arts, the sciences and the influences of this country.

The Lepser Asylum of the London Missionary Society at Almora, India, is doing a noble work, and recent letters from that place, given in the *Chronicle*, speak of the death of the patriarch of the asylum, Jai Bhan. He was eighty-seven years of age and on entering the asylum was a Brahman, but he turned to Christ in full purpose of heart and bore his sufferings patiently and had great joy in the expectation of entering the heavenly home. Having full use of his faculties till within a few weeks of his death, he used them all in his Master's service. The scene at his burial was very touching. The inmates with their mutilated leprosy hands sought to do everything in their power to show their love for the aged saint. The account is given also of the recent conversion in the asylum of a lad fourteen years of age, who before he became a leper had heard a woman tell her fellow-villagers of what Jesus Christ had done for the sufferers at the asylum. When attacked by the disease he sought admission to the institution and at once found in Christ a Saviour who gives him joy in the expectation that his soul, which now dwells in a body terribly scarred and crippled, shall soon dwell in perfect purity in the presence of the King.

We grow able to do and bear that which it is needful we should do and bear. I have no fear for the Christian man who keeps to the path of duty. Straining up the steep hill, his heart will grow up to it in proportion to its steepness.