

Northern Messenger

VOLUME XXXIX. No. 47

MONTREAL, NOVEMBER 18, 1904.

40 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid

The Hon. Kenkichi Kataoka.

When this eminent soldier, statesman and Christian passed on to a higher service, Japan lost one of the most remarkable men of this generation, but his memory and his influence are a priceless legacy to the Church and to the nation.

He was born in 1843, and had the advantage of being trained by father and grandfather, of whom the latter especially, being a man of great force of character, exercised strong influence over the lad Kenkichi.

At the age of twenty, both father and grandfather being dead, he was already head of his house, and soon became a government official and a commander of various military forces in his district.

The Rev. H. Loomis, in 'The Missionary Review of the World,' writing some time before his death, gave the following interesting account apropos of his first meeting with Mr. Kataoka:—

'Spending the Sabbath in Osaka some years ago, I went in the morning to worship at one of the Presbyterian churches.

—'After waiting some time beyond the regular hour for the services to begin, one of the officers of the church went forward and announced that, for some unknown reason, the preacher who had been expected had not come; but, he continued, "we have with us to-day Mr. Kenkichi Kataoka, and we shall be glad if he will speak to us."

'Mr. Kataoka then went forward, and in a quiet and modest way made a very helpful and interesting address. No one would have thought, from his humility and religious fervor, that this was the vice-president of the Liberal Party, and one of the most prominent political leaders in Japan, whose influence and reputation are not only national, but a credit to his country.

'He first came in contact with Christianity in 1871, when on a visit to the United States and Europe. The modesty, kindness, and faithfulness of the missionary who acted as interpreter and guide made a deep impression upon his mind. Also the effect of Christianity as seen in the homes, schools, and benevolent institutions in America. And when in England, he discovered that the larger part of the middle and upper classes, including such men as Mr. Gladstone, were sincere believers in Christianity, and their faith was in direct proportion to the nobility of their character. The result of his observations was that he came back to Japan filled with the idea that many and very important reforms were needed to secure the highest welfare of his countrymen, and with a true, patriotic, and self-sacrificing spirit he set about the introduction of a new and better state of things. In 1873, he and his friends started a political association, of which he was made the president, and through magazines, newspapers and lectures, he propagated his principles of reform. Missionaries and evangelists were welcomed to his province, and, together with some of his political friends, Mr. Kataoka began the study of Christianity. In May, 1885, he made a profession of his faith in Christ, and from the first took a decided and prominent position in religious matters.

'Some time after his conversion, he went to Tokyo with one of his friends, to petition the government for freedom of speech and of the press and other important objects. Just at that time there was a regulation passed by the government excluding all men from his province from the capital, except such as were permanent residents. Mr. Kataoka and his companion felt that the order was unjust, and refused to leave until they had accomplished the purpose of their visit. They were, therefore, arrested and imprisoned. This seemed at the time a most unfortunate affair, because Christians would consequently be accused of being unwilling to obey the laws of the country, and thus the work would suffer.

But God overruled it all for the best. These two men were permitted to have a Bible, and the time spent in prison was devoted to a careful and prayerful study of God's Holy Word. Others were instructed in its truths;



THE HON. KENKICHI KATAOKA.

and when Mr. Kataoka and his companion were released, they came out thanking God that this season of freedom from the cares and duties of ordinary life had brought them such a new and wonderful revelation of the riches of God's grace as revealed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From this time forth they testified, as never before, of the joy and comfort that they experienced in the study of the Scriptures and in daily communion with God.

'In the course of time, the Liberal Party became the most powerful political organization in the country. Mr. Kataoka was the vice-president for many years, and steadily grew in the respect and esteem of the people of all classes. He was a member of the House of Representatives at every session of the Diet from its first establishment, and a trusted and recognized leader. In three sessions he filled the office of president.

'There was some fear that in the important position which he was thus called to fill, he would be less zealous and faithful as a Christian. But the true and noble qualities of the man shone forth as never before. Like Daniel in the court of a Persian monarch, he did not deny his Lord, but in the face of every obsta-

cle, went boldly forward in the path of duty.'

He was known always and everywhere as an earnest Christian. He said that he never entered the hall of Parliament and took his seat to preside without bowing his head in silent prayer for God's presence and guidance.

For some time he opened his official residence in Tokyo on each successive Sabbath, for a Christian service, and sent cards personally inviting men of rank and influence in the capital to attend, securing as the speakers for these services the ablest and best in the city.

A few years ago when he was being sought after as the Speaker for the Lower House, his political friends wanted him to resign his official position as elder of the church where he was a member, urging that it was scarcely consistent with the dignity of so high a government office. His noble answer was: 'If I am to choose between them, I would rather be elder in the church than Speaker.' But he filled both offices with equal honor and ability.

Two years ago, though in spite of his own modest protests that he was unfit for such an office, he was made President of the Dashisha, the great Christian University of Japan. The Rev. J. H. Davis, referring to the occasion upon which Mr. Kataoka took the oath of office, says: 'We were all standing round the table, when he said, "I want to pray," and thereupon offered one of the most touching prayers to which I ever listened, and I think there was not a dry eye in the room.'

Mr. Kataoka's desire was to lay down in time his political offices and devote himself to the University, but it was ordered otherwise. After six months of ever increasing suffering, borne with all the strength of a ripe Christian character, he passed away on October 31, 1903, just a little over a year ago. Let us thank God for such a life, for such a death, and for a rich heritage of high example.

Fifty Years in India.

PIONEER MORAVIAN WORKERS IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS.

When Mr. Heyde left Germany in 1853 for India, little did his friends think that he would work there continuously for fifty years, but such was God's gracious plan for him. Mrs. Heyde joined him in 1860, and remained at work then without once visiting their native land, till 1903; Mr. Heyde has therefore broken most records of missionary service.

The Moravian Mission to Tibetans was founded in 1853, in which year one other missionary with Mr. Heyde arrived in India with the intention originally of establishing a mission in Mongolia. The first year was spent in Kotgarh—fifty miles from Simla—in order to prosecute the study of Urdu and Mongolian while maturing their plans for further progress into the regions beyond. In those days the Western Himalayas were little known. They had only recently (1849) come under British rule, and travelling among them was difficult. Having completed their preparations, and themselves attired in the red dress of the Lama or Buddhist priest, the missionaries proceeded on their journey through Kulu and Lahoul as far as Ladakh or Western