

my employ to teach these young Japanese girls, I will allow you to teach Christianity secretly, but you must say nothing about it." The answer he received was: "I cannot accept your offer. I came here to teach the Gospel openly." A third time he came, urging: "If you will only come to me as a teacher, you can teach the girls morality, art, science, literature, and Christianity." Then the proposal was gladly accepted.

The Mitsen Bank in Tokio is a government bank. The young Japanese, who are shrewd, capable, and intelligent, make excellent clerks; but it was found impossible to keep them honest. In this predicament, one of the bank officials, with great candor and solicitude, consulted the missionaries. He frankly admitted that he did not believe in any religion. "But," he added, "your religion does something that ours cannot do—it makes men honest. Now, we wish our employees to be carefully instructed in Christian principles, so that they may learn to perform their duties with integrity."

The present government is friendly, and affords every protection to missionaries. It regards the Christianization of Japan as inevitable, as a part of the adoption of western civilization. During the last thirty-five years the progress of Japan has been without precedent or parallel. The Mikado is showing himself one of the most progressive rulers in the world, and his people do not lag behind. Intellectually, socially, politically, and religiously, the Japanese have changed. In government and education; in individual and family life; in army and navy; finance and political economy, they are scarcely recognizable. A young Japanese convert, a student at the Johns Hopkins University, said: "Nothing is left as it was thirty years ago, except the natural scenery."

Caste distinctions are giving way to democratic ideas; the old cumbersome alphabet to Roman characters; the calendar of Christian nations has replaced the pagan; the national "fifth day" has given way "to one day of seven" as a day of rest. A strong current of opinion is setting in towards Christianity. The influence of Buddhism is fading, Shintoism is waning, the Japanese as a people are drifting from the old religions, and far-seeing men are beginning to recognize that something is necessary in their place. Through the medium of daily and other papers (of which Japan has a plentiful supply), a large amount of Christian truth has found its way among the whole population; some of these papers, indeed, advocate the adoption of Christian ideas merely for political reasons. We have quite revolutionized the ideas of young Japan, but our civilization has brought many evils attendant upon it in numerous forms of unbelief. There are now to be found among the Japanese a

large proportion of men of atheistic and agnostic tendencies.

A native Japanese (the Rev. S. Kurahara, a graduate of Auburn Theological Seminary) mentions four difficulties requiring consideration in dealing with the present aspect of mission work in Japan:

(1) The indifference of the upper classes to religion.

(2) The hold of Buddhism as an ethical system.

(3) The necessity of an alliance of political and governmental matters with the future religion, whatever it may be.

(4) The present activity of sceptical scientists and philosophers in influencing the awakening mind of the people.

There are many circumstances which render the work most encouraging. There is a mass of darkness, but the darkness is moving. It is a great advantage that from the uppermost island of Japan to the southernmost point there is but one language, without any dialectic distinction of any consequence. Another encouraging feature is the unity of spirit displayed by all the followers of Christ in this mission; all the Protestant denominations working together with the greatest cordiality and unanimity. Then the Japanese is not prejudiced; he is perfectly willing to receive new ideas. He is insatiate in curiosity. They will come three and four times a day, urging a continuance of the teacher's speech. All Christian meetings are exceedingly well attended. One missionary at Seudai began to preach at four o'clock in the afternoon, and when he was exhausted his native helper continued the exhortation until nine o'clock at night, all the time surrounded by a keenly interested audience. It is from the indifference of the foreign community that the missionaries receive their greatest discouragement.

Japan, casting away hoary superstitions and effete faiths, and in imminent danger of adopting something worse than she has left behind, awaits our aid. All the machinery of modern progress can be made available to further our spiritual interests and enterprises. Christianity is on trial. If the result in that country is failure, it will be useless to attempt to carry the Gospel to China, Corea, or Africa. God has opened Japan, removed hostile laws and popular prejudices. This emphatic call means consecration on our part, fresh devotion to the service; it is left to us to carry on the enterprise with promptitude and energy; to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the 37,000,000 of Japan. The work demands the heroism of endeavor and endurance, self-sacrifice and self-oblivion; the transfiguring halo with which love invests ordinary duties; the spirituality which refines all the grossness of materialism, and can yield an influence far-reaching and deathless. Let the Church, following the