

fragrant as the flowers in May, even on the part of the house mother, whose hands and whose rooms were full enough without me, but whose heart is big enough to hold a Presbyterian (Written before Mrs Waddell's sudden death at Belfast—"gone home," indeed, in a sense of which husband and wife did not think when they parted for a little while. After all, these partings are at longest only for "a little while,"—but may God comfort all sad hearts in present loneliness.) There was a garden at the back, a garden in which the pheasants called when earthquakes were on the wing, and in which the children played, remote from the native companionship to which, alas! they could not be entrusted.

It was the bleak December, but every morning, through the dark and chilly air, I would hear, while still snug between the sheets, the voices of the missionary and his pundit conning some Japanese classic in the adjoining room. It added a new charm to my little bed to share thus vicariously in the study of a language whose difficulties grow in proportion to your knowledge of it. You speak it fluently after the end of six months, are slightly acquainted with it at the end of half-a-dozen years, and are ready to own your entire ignorance of it after you have studied it for a lifetime. Mr. Waddell is still the ardent student, though in Japan he is recognized as a master of the native language—a *sinologue* they would call him in China. His discourses are more easily understood, indeed, by the common people than are those of some of their esoteric native pastors. He is a debator unrivalled in the Churches, and an orator who can sway a native audience at his will.

It was the late Dr. Williamson who, in 1872, first practically called the attention of the National Bible Society of Scotland to the opportunity in Japan. Mr. Robert Lilley was sent out by us in 1876, and, as it happened, was the first Bible Society agent to settle in the country, the other societies quickly following. The work has made great way since then. The entire Scriptures have been completely translated in an admirable version; and, though every foreign missionary were driven from the Island Empire to-morrow, there would remain, in a vernacular Bible, "the greatest missionary of all." To no other people have the Holy Scriptures been given, in so brief a time, in such variety and completeness. When Mr. Lilley began his labours each Gospel, printed on wooden blocks in native fashion, cost a shilling. Now the whole New Testament is produced for less than fourpence, and a handsome octavo Bible, with maps and references, for half-a-crown.

There was naturally no word for "colporteur" in the old dictionaries of Japan. The thing was unknown, and the word waited the arrival of the Bible Society. Mr. Lilley made one of many syllables—somewhat to this effect, "sei-sho-wo-uri-aruka-hito." I was told, when I aired all this vernacular at Yokohama, that my Japanese was defective, but I have always found a Scottish audience appreciate it, especially when the meaning is expounded as "The man-that-goes-about-to-sell-the-Holy-Book." There are now a hundred colporteurs, Christian men, going about all over the land, not to give away, but to sell the Holy Book. Let us be glad of this, and glad that the Book finds thousands of buyers, and some hearts at least in which the good seed germinates and brings forth fruit. Our own Society, in the nine years before the union of the Bible Societies, issued in Japan 483,528 copies of parts of Scripture.

Many incidents are related of individual men converted by a stray copy coming into their hands, and of Churches founded, not by preacher or evangelist, but by the native colporteur and the Divine Book. I may give one story, for the truth of which there is good evidence.

A colporteur had found his way, accompanied by a native pastor, into the prison of Shidzuoku. The prisoners heard the message gladly. Some bought a penny Gospel; some scraped together thirty-five cents for a Testament. One who bought the larger book was laid hold of by its wondrous words. It was found of him, and he did eat it, and it became the joy and the rejoicing of his heart. He was a notable prisoner—a jail-bird of long standing. But under the teaching of the Word, and of the men of the Book, his very look changed, and his behaviour. The officers had no more trouble with him. After a considerable time of testing, the governor made up his mind that his prisoner had become a new man, and procured him a free pardon. So the angel of the Lord still finds men out in prison, and fetters fall, and iron gates open before him of their own accord. Our friend could not go to the house of the mother of John Mark on his release—that is not found in Shidzuoku—but he did the next best—he went to the mission-house, and there rehearsed what the Lord had done for him—turning a prisoner of the Emperor into one of Christ's free men.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

#### THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

The Christian outlook in Japan is, by all accounts, somewhat brighter than it was. There is not the same ardent spirit of enquiry, or ready acceptance of foreign doctrine, by which earlier years were characterized, but the later unfriendliness, not to say dislike, is passing away. The progress made by the Church ten years ago is not maintained, but there is progress, and in some places marked progress. If the world is less willing to be moved, the Churches have

closed up their ranks, differences have been healed, organizations have improved, liberality developed, and a new departure is hopefully anticipated.

The romance of Japanese Missions is fading, but it has left both the Missions and the men stronger than before. We shall not see, as was foretold by a fervid American at the Missionary Conference of 1888, a national Japanese Church fully manned, and celebrating the departure of the last missionary father in 1900; but we already see the lines laid down on which a national Japanese Church, in the best sense of the words, may be built up—not with brick and mortar, but in living Christian men and women, till it fill the land. It will not be a Scottish, an English, or an American Church,—not a copy exaggerated or reduced of this "ecclesiasticism" or that. It will bear the impress of the national thought and way of doing things; and some of us will probably shake our heads over it, while we have heads to shake—but if it be founded on the Rock, not the gates of hell shall prevail against it.

It is not without sadness that I come to the end of these reminiscences, and think of my first visit as my last. I would fain see again the white crown of Fuji rise like a new creation out of the western wave, or whirl in my old jinrickisha along the busy streets of Tokyo, or explore the gorgeous temples and solemn groves of Nikko, or share in the missionary hospitalities, or join in the simple worship of those who, with glad surprise, have here tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. The worry of the business that took me there is forgotten, with all the discomforts and disappointments of the way. I almost believe I could relish the smell of the "daikon" and enjoy the miseries of a native inn, if this must be the price of another visit. But, at least, the memory remains; and the new interest and sympathy with which you follow the daily story of a nation's life, and anticipate its development.

Best of all is the thought that, though I shall never again find myself on the way to Japan, Japan itself is on the way to become a Christian country. The Psalms of David and the Sermon on the Mount—one golden period of which Edwin Arnold said the other day in Japan itself he would not barter for all the wealth of all the Vedes—nay, the whole Divine message, of which these are but a fragment, has been translated into the tongue of the common people, and made their heritage for ever. In spite of national jealousies and treaty restrictions, the Gospel is making progress. The heaven is there and must leave the lump. It is the lower middle class who make the Church, and it is the lower middle class that will make the nation. "Christian" is no longer synonymous with "outcast." The proportion of converts to the general population is less than one in a thousand, but in the first national Diet one member in thirty was a Christian and more than one of these was called to posts of special responsibility and honour in the Legislature of his country. And the Church is growing from within as well as from without. A period of perplexity and discussion is giving place to a more assured faith, which begins to prove itself in works of love and mercy.

Let us have these fellow islanders more frequently in our thought and prayer. What will all this striving commerce, this new civilization, this modern thought do for them if they let go the Gospel of the grace of God? The active mission work of our Church amongst them is dwindling slowly down, and some day will doubtless pass wholly to others. But let us not forget those whom we tried to help when fewer hands than now were stretched out to do them service. For centuries Japan has called herself, and been known to other countries as, the Land of the Rising Sun,—the first to catch the glad ray that chases the darkness across the great Pacific. Now the Sun of Righteousness Himself is rising on her, with healing in His wings, not to set in night, but to lead her ever onward towards the perfect day.—William J. Sloan, Glasgow, in the United Presbyterian Magazine.

#### OUR ELDERS.

MR. EDITOR,—How is it that every now and then some one seems moved to wholesale condemnation of our elders? In a late issue of your paper "Manager" makes the following sweeping statements. "Sessions as at present constituted are a positive hindrance to the prosperity of congregations. It is no secret that Presbyterians everywhere recognize this to be the case. The majority of our Sessions are composed of men who rest contented in the knowledge that they have what is called the spiritual oversight of congregations," etc. (The italics are mine.) On first reading such attacks, one is inclined to come to the conclusion that the author of them is very soreheaded because he is not an elder. But further reflection brings more charitable thoughts; and the excuse is made that local defect has led him to imagine that the brother in mind is a fit type of the eldership. Taking the latter view, permit me to assure "Manager," and others who are like minded, that my experience as a Sabbath-school worker, a manager, and, finally, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, has led me to conclusions the contrary to those at which he has arrived. No one claims that as a body they have attained unto perfection, but my experience leads me to say that our eldership is composed of the best available material, and is doing grand work for the Master. Turning to the Assembly's reports on Sabbath Schools and the State of Religion for the present year, I find that my experience is not unique. The former says: "2,270 elders are engaged in 1,138 schools. Allowing for unreported schools, we may safely say that 2,900, or 48 per cent., of the total eldership stand in the ranks of our Sabbath-school workers." When it is remembered that quite a number of the elders are unable to engage in this work on account of old age, and of being located (as many are in the country) far from where schools are held, it must be admitted that 48 is a fair per cent. The latter report says: "In regard to the work done by the elders of the Church, there is a most satisfactory consensus of opinion from almost every quarter. They are attending to the duties of their office with commendable diligence. In two districts only is there a complaint

made in regard to their neglect of duty, one from the Presbytery of Brockville and another from the Synod of Toronto and Kingston, which, while speaking in the highest praise of the service rendered by elders generally, adds: 'Yet we hear of some who bear this honoured name without giving evidence of its true meaning in life and work. Our report calls for reform, and asks: Can we not get all our Sessions to work? Set each elder his district, and thus develop unused talent.' " Instead of condemning wholesale, would it not be better to encourage these brethren in their work? How? By showing them that you highly honour them for their work's sake; by upholding them in every effort to advance God's kingdom; by consulting with them in regard to the spiritual interests of the congregation; by inviting them to your home and then treating them as those who have to give an account as spiritual shepherds; by furnishing such information as will enable them to reclaim the erring, strengthen the weak, and comfort the afflicted, by pouring out your heart in prayer for a baptism of the Holy Spirit. They surely have enough to do to contend against those that are without. M.

August 10.

#### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CENSUS RETURNS AND THE ASSEMBLY'S RETURNS OF PRESBYTERIANS IN THE DOMINION.

MR. EDITOR, That there should be 230,000 Presbyterians in the country that the Church knows nothing about, is a fact that will cause a good deal of enquiry. I would offer the following remarks upon it:—

I. The Church estimate is indirect. We get at it by multiplying the number of families reported by five, and adding the number of single persons. This is a very loose method, and full of loop holes. Five may be too low a multiple. The single persons may not be very carefully reported. Looking over the returns I find the column for single persons one with as many blanks as almost any other; no other statistical column shows so many. It cannot, therefore, be relied on as a means of giving us accurate knowledge about our people.

Then there is a wide divergence among Sessions as to how families shall be counted. Some count only those in which there are members. For example, one congregation, with a church seating 800 and a membership of 236, reports only 80 families, and no single persons at all. That is a city congregation, where there are generally a number of single persons not connected with the families. Eighty multiplied by five gives 400. Surely these are not all the Presbyterians, old and young, connected with that charge, which raises about \$1,600 for the Schemes, and nearly \$6,600 for all purposes. Perhaps in that case double the number would be nearer the actual fact.

Some Sessions, because they are taxed for certain church purposes per family or judged eligible or ineligible for aid from the augmentation fund, according to their contributions per family, are tempted to report only those families as Presbyterian and belonging to them that give reasonable support. Comparatively few Sessions, I believe, aim at giving in the report of their families all the Presbyterians in their neighbourhood. The families not known to the treasurer, and not seen often in the church, are not very likely to be enrolled.

II. In looking over the returns presented to last Assembly, I find not a very large proportion of blanks in the column per families, yet I believe enough, after deducting the "delayed returns," and the returns from the Presbytery of Newfoundland, to account for 18,000 to 20,000 of the missing 230,000.

Still, after we make all allowances that are called for by these features of the case, and after allowing for Presbyterians of all sorts who did not come into the union, there must still be a large number of unknown Presbyterians unknown to the Sessions of our Church, and this is a fact that ought to awaken interest and call forth effort.

What can be done? I believe our Sessions would act in the matter if a practical plan were suggested. Here is a plan that I have tried with good results:—

The assessors of the several municipalities, throughout Ontario at any rate, write the names of all the ratepayers and householders in the municipality, and with the name the religious denomination to which the person and his family claim to belong. They even divide the household, telling how many belong to each denomination, if there are different religions represented. Now, if the pastor or a member of Session could get access to the assessor's book, it would only be the work of a couple of hours to find out the unknown Presbyterians in the neighbourhood. Having got their names, and their street and number, it will be easy to visit the missing Presbyterians and find out something about them. And opportunities will at once be afforded for using means to draw them into the fold.

I believe there are few congregations (in towns and cities anyway) that would not find surprises, and work opened for them at their very doors, if some such plan as I have suggested were acted upon. And the result, if it is undertaken in a proper spirit and in a judicious way, will be not only beneficial to our newly-found namesakes, but also to our Church as a whole. It will wipe out speedily, I believe, some of the reproach that lies upon us as it is published abroad that one-fourth of all the Presbyterians in the Dominion of Canada are unknown to the Sessions of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

H. GRACEY.

Gananoque, August 8, 1892.