

THE JESUITS AMONGST THE JAPANESE.

[NOTE.—The war now in progress between China and Japan gives an additional interest to the following experiences of the Jesuit Fathers in Japan in the sixteenth century. It is the continuation of Mr. Bent's article in The Antiquary the first part of which appeared in the last number of the RECORD.]

Some letters written by Father Luigi Frois, the head of the Jesuit mission in Japan, in 1585, to the Father General of the Jesuits in Rome, throw light on early missionary enterprise in that country. They illustrate, too, the state of Japan towards the close of the sixteenth century both socially and politically, just twenty years after the energetic Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the Indies, first preached Christianity in the chief town of the Japanese kingdom of Saxuma. Furthermore, they illustrate the untiring energy of those Jesuit missionaries who braved almost every danger, and penetrated into the heart of a country which now, after a further lapse of three hundred years, is only beginning to be opened out.

The Portuguese silk merchants took them there, glad to give them a free passage, for the Jesuits did much towards opening the channels of commerce, learning, as they did, the habits and language of the country, and identifying themselves with the natives.

Intellectually speaking, Father Frois sums up the Japanese of his days thus: "The race is very capable, and full of intellect. There is a wonderful aptitude amongst the young for learning our science and discipline, experience of which has been had in the schools of Latin and also of Philosophy, started by the Jesuit Fathers here. The artisans are not so rough and ready as ours, but of good judgment and well educated, observing the same courtesies amongst themselves, as if they had been born and bred in courts."

In another letter Father Frois illustrates this ability amongst the young Japanese, for in two days some pupils learnt "the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria, the Creed and Salve Regina in Latin, the Commandments, Confessions and other prayers in their native tongue, and the first to be able to say them all was a girl of seven years old, whom, when she had learnt them, taught them to the others."

The work in Japan was pushed on by the Jesuits with wonderful energy, as may be seen from the following account:

"In the college of Funai this year (1583) has been started the study of Philosophy, never before heard of in Japan; also a school of the Humanities. The Fathers of the college, as well as the scholars, are constantly being called out for confessions, preachings, baptisms, etc. They are forever occupied in translating into Japanese spiritual books, the catechism, Lives of the Saints, etc."

This College of Funai was the centre of the missionary work in Japan. From here they sent forth native converts in all directions to pave the way for future work; and King Francis of Bongo—a convert who had taken the name of Francis on his conversion—was their great support. As he grew weakly and old he used regularly to attend the House of Probation and the College of Funai, "as if," says Father Frois, "he had been the father of us all."

King Francis was desirous of being buried in a retired spot outside his city called Anecuni, where he had built a chapel, and had ordered all the idols in the immediate vicinity to be collected together and burnt. He likewise exhorted the Bonzi, or native priests of that neighborhood, to embrace the new faith, which many of them did. But, at the same time, many refused to do so, and hid their idols in secret places. At this place—Anecuni—Father Frois tells us the Bonzi of Bongo had brought a great treasure of theirs as to a quiet retreat spot. It was a wooden case containing a box of beautiful workmanship, which contained the nine books of the laws of Xaca, all written in letters of gold with many ornaments, and beautifully bound. "These were written two hundred and seventy years ago, but they still appear new, so well have they been kept." The Jesuits got hold of these books, and one of them, Father Frois tells us, they were going to send as a present to the Father-General at home.

About the Bonzi Father Frois tells us a great deal more in his letters. There were some in the kingdom of Saxuma, called Canusis, married priests skilled in incantations and necromancy. Father Luigi, a Jesuit, went to visit them, and said, "My friends, if you have power to cast out the demons, as you say, into whomsoever you wish, cast them into me; and if your sacrifices and incantations are of no avail, then will you confess that your laws are false."

This plan appeared agreeable to the Bonzi, and Father Luigi, armed only with a cross, sat down in their midst. Around him they placed their satanic instruments, rubbed their hands with kind of grain, went into a thousand contortions, put serpents on their necks, and so continuously invoked the demon in a loud voice that they lost their voices. Father Luigi chided them after the manner of Elijah, telling them not to give up, but to shriek louder, for already he began to feel a pain in the tips of his hair, whereupon they reposed themselves for a little while, and then recommenced their incantations with increased vigour.

Suddenly the devil seized upon the host with whom Father Luigi was staying, a quiet inoffensive man, who, when he found that he had been treated in this fashion, rushed upon the Bonzi and belabored them with his stick;

whereat Father Luigi laughed immoderately, so that the Bonzi were filled with shame and confusion, but said that if Father Luigi would tarry amongst them a little longer they would send for a Bonzo who was even better at incantations than they were, and to whom every demon was obedient, and then he would see if their art was efficacious or not.

Father Luigi remained yet many days in those parts, but the Bonzi lost all credit, and consequently left the Church and did not return again.

We have many curious stories told us in these letters of miracles and conversions wrought by the Jesuits to confound the Bonzi and their false creed, the efficacy with which portions of the true cross cured diseases, and so forth; but these things are of little value compared to the relation of episodes in Japanese history which occurred at this time, and of which the writer was an eye-witness. There can have been no cause for giving false reports on these points, and the simplicity of the narrative testifies to its genuineness.

The history of the rise and fall of a Prince called Nobunanga is related in very full detail by Father Frois. Nobunanga began life as prince of half a kingdom called Voari, and early developed great military valour and talent. He was greatly opposed to the priestly power as exercised by the Bonzi, and overthrew their temples and idols in his dominion. Moreover, he was kindly disposed to the Jesuits, as people who had come from far, and gave them leave to preach and build churches; "but, nevertheless," adds Father Frois, "his arrogance prevented him from being convinced by our doctrines." By means of his military skill, Nobunanga so rapidly increased his dominions, that he soon became the most potent lord in all Japan, and with his power his arrogance increased, so that, like a second Nebuchadnezzar, he aspired to be adored as God. For this purpose he built a temple on a mountain near to Anzuci, and over it put up the following inscription:

"In the great kingdom of Japan, on this mountain fortress of Anzuci, which even from afar gives joy and contentment to those who approach it, Nobunanga, lord of all Japan, has built this temple, and called it Sochengi. The rewards which all who adore it with reverence and devotion will have, are as follows: Firstly, the rich shall always increase their riches; the poor, the base and miserable shall grow in comfort. Those who have no offspring or successors to propagate their race, shall have descendants forthwith, and shall enjoy a very long life with great peace and repose. They shall even reach eighty years. They shall immediately be healed of any disease, and shall have the fulfilment of their desires with health and tranquillity. Every month they shall celebrate a solemn feast in memory of the day of my birth, which feast shall be concluded by a visit to this temple; and all who shall do this with faith shall obtain all their desires; but the perverse, both in this life and the next, shall go to perdition."

From all the other temples of Japan Nobunanga brought the most celebrated idols, and put them up in Sochengi, and issued a decree that on the fifth month of the year 1582, on the anniversary of his birth, everyone, high and low, rich and poor, should come and worship a stone which he had set up higher than any of the other idols in the temple, and on this day a large concourse of people assembled to worship.

"But," says Father Frois, "God did not allow Nobunanga to remain long in peace." He shortly afterwards sent an army to go against the King of Cainocuni, and after conquering him, to bring the homage of three other kings back to him at his fortress in Anzuci, where he was busily engaged in extending his city, and giving the principal posts to vassals who built the finest houses. One of these, by name Faxiba, spent no less than 15,000 scudi in bringing stones; and when his army returned victorious, Nobunanga was at the zenith of his power.

At length he determined to terminate a war which he had been waging for four or five years with Mori, King of Amanguei. If he conquered again in this war he would be lord paramount of all the sixty-six kingdoms into which Japan was divided. He then purposed to cross over to China, and leave his seven sons to rule in Japan whilst he was pursuing his victories westwards. Faxiba was appointed general of this armament, and after a short absence he wrote for reinforcements to enable him to crush the enemy and to bring back the head of King Mori to Nobunanga.

Nobunanga got together an additional army of thirty thousand men to send to Faxiba, and put it under the command of a certain man called Achei—of low birth, but a skilled architect—whom he had created Prince of Tamba, and to whom he had given all the revenues of the Bonzi's University of Faimana. This was the man who wrought the ruin of Nobunanga, and schemed to make himself lord of Japan. Instead of going to join Faxiba he went to his own fortress of Tamba with his army, disclosed his plans to a few trusted friends, and taking into account the defenceless state in which Nobunanga had been left, it was determined to march back at once and attack him in Meaco, where he was living in an old monastery which had belonged to the Bonzi, and close to which the Jesuits had a church.

Nobunanga was here surprised as he was washing his hands. He hurried on their approach to his own room, and as some affirmed fell on his sword, after the manner of Japanese nobles; or, as

others said, he was burnt in the flames of the monastery.

The soldiers of Achei then marched through the town, cut off the heads of all whom they considered to be partisans of Nobunanga, and carried them to their chiefs, who collected them in a great heap. And the Jesuits who had been so kindly treated by Nobunanga fell into a great dread, for another general of Nobunanga's, Anzuci by name, tried to play the same game as Achei; and in the horrors of this civil war the Jesuits counselled together and decided to flee to an island in a neighboring lake, the owner of which pretended to be their friend, whilst he actually was in league with the boatmen to spoil and kill the Fathers. They set off, carrying with them their silver candlesticks, chalices, vestments, and whatever articles of value they possessed. They dressed themselves as Japanese to avoid detection, and when they reached the island they paid the boatmen so handsomely that they were allowed to take their valuables with them, and on an early opportunity they sent them all off to the mountains by the hands of a faithful Japanese; and a Christian who spoke favorably of them to Achei caused them to be well treated by the conqueror and left in safety on the island.

Achei meanwhile was dominant in Meaco, and after opening the treasure-houses of Nobunanga, and appropriating all his wealth, he prepared a magnificent funeral for the body of the man whose death he had caused; and while he was in the fortress of Sacomoto, the Jesuit Fathers left their island retreat, and came to him and placed themselves under his protection. "We were kindly received," says Father Frois, "because Achei wished to gain over a general to his side who professed Christianity"; and Father Organtino, conformed himself to circumstances, and replied with assenting words, but at the same time let the brethren know that under no consideration whatsoever should they league themselves with such a tyrant.

Achei gave them an escort to conduct them back to Meaco under the guidance of a squire, to whom Father Organtino gave an Indian umbrella, and many thanks, when they reached home safely again, and found that they had lost nothing.

The peace of Meaco was soon disturbed again. One of Nobunanga's sons, Sanxeci by name, succeeded in getting possession of the capital of the palace and of his father's body, for the burial of which he prepared by cutting off the heads of all that were suspected of having joined the revolt. "Obsequies," says Father Frois, "full of pestilential odours, as it was in the middle of summer, and worthy of that tyrant. So horrible was the odour that when the wind was in a certain direction we could not remain in our church."

This wholesale decapitation lasted for a long while and in many places. Two days afterwards Father Organtino and another Father, having occasion to go to the palace, saw some men bringing an offering or more than thirty heads strung on a cord, as if they had been the heads of so many sheep or dogs, "the miserable people believing that in this manner they would gain the esteem of the conqueror."

The body and head of the rebel Achei were also brought, and "the following miserable end had he who aspired to upsetting the government of all Japan, for Divine justice only accorded him twelve days of life after his horrible conspiracy. His head was first of all presented as an offering to the ashes of Nobunanga; and then, by order of Sanxeci was joined to the trunk, and the entire body was crucified outside the city."

Sanxeci did not long enjoy his triumph, for on hearing of the state of affairs, the General Faxiba, who was fighting against King Mori, abandoned the war and returned with his army to put in his claim for the kingdom. He first attacked Sacomoto, where Achei and his generals had deposited their wives and their valuables. On Faxiba's approach the wretches inside the fortress first of all threw all their treasures out of the windows into the sea, and then shut themselves up in the highest tower. The women and children were killed; and the men fell on their swords, and were burnt in the flames of the tower. "You could not count," says Father Frois, "the number of nobles and others who died in those eight days throughout the kingdom, some by their own hands, others by the hands of assassins. Father Joseph, five days after the victory, in the evening counted as many as five hundred corpses floating down a river."

The victorious army under Faxiba passed on after the sack of Sacomoto to other fortresses held by partisans of Achei or Sanxeci. They spared no one in their march, and Father Frois estimates the number of those who fell during those few days of civil war at more than ten thousand souls. He concludes the letter with his account of this episode in Japanese history, as follows:

"In this miserable and unhappy manner perished a man who thought that not only in this world but in heaven there was no greater Lord than himself. And Achei—his companion in pride, and afterwards his scourge—was killed by the hands of two peasants without even being able to cut open his own belly, which this benighted race consider the only honorable way to die. Altogether it cannot be denied that Nobunanga had good parts in him; but at last it was his arrogance which ruined him."

In another letter Father Frois tells us a good deal about the contest between the successors of Nobunanga, and the final triumph of Faxiba. Xibata, another general, who had married a sister of Nobunanga's, set up his claim to the kingdom, but was beaten everywhere by Faxiba, until he was obliged to retire to a mountain fortress, and was then surrounded. He addressed his followers who remained faithful, reminding them that in conformity with the Japanese custom he was about to cut open his belly, and that his body must be consumed in the flames of his castle before it was seen and disgraced by the enemy; he exhorted his followers to flee and save themselves whilst there was yet time; but with one accord they decided to perish with him, together with their wives and their children. Before dying, they instructed their servants to bring in tables with food and musical instruments; and then they all set to work to eat, drink, and sing as if they were celebrating a triumph or a royal dance, and the enemy outside were astonished that instead of the clash of arms they heard nothing but the sound of music and revelry.

Meanwhile the servants placed straw and combustibles below, and they shut the windows and the doors, and when the signal was given that all was ready, Xibata set the example by rushing on his wife, whom he had married only a few months before, and killing her. All his followers did likewise, killing their wives, sons, and daughters, and then they fell on their own swords amidst the flames. Only one old woman was allowed to escape alive, that she might relate to the enemy all she had seen of this triumphant death.

J. THEODORE BENT.

SHE WILL BE TRUE TO HER TIM.

Kittie Doyle, late of the Irish Village at the World's Fair and now of Dublin, Ireland, can become the wife of a wealthy Kentuckian if she only says the word. Everybody who visited the Irish Village—and that means nearly every one who went to the Fair,—will remember Kitty Doyle—Kittie of the ripe lips and the conquering eyes, who spent the time in smashing hearts and selling bits of bog oak; bog oak fashioned into round towers and harps and miniature shillelahs.

Kittie's eyes were always making mischief and her tongue was ever ready with a gibe or a joke. She flung flashing jeers with enough wit in them to save her from being called impolite at those who dallied at her counter to inspect but not to buy, and she showered compliments, sparkling with fun, on those who fell before her glances and her blarney, and emptied their pockets for the bits of bog oak. All the other girls in the Village noticed the attention paid to Kittie.

Miss Kittie's receipts were enormous, and Mrs. White, the manager of the village, often wondered at it, but she stopped wondering when she listened to Kittie's banter and looked into Kittie's eyes.

Toward the end of the Fair Kittie's receipts fell off. This was the more noteworthy in view of the fact that the receipts in all the other departments increased. One day it was observed that Kittie was receiving marked attentions from "Mr. Kelly, of Kentucky"—"a State's attorney in Kentucky," she added by way of explanation, but with undoubted pride as well.

"So that's the trouble, is it?" asked Mrs. White, when Kittie and herself were alone.

"The truth of it is, he has fairly bewildered me," said Kittie. "He is handsome and rich, and the touch of the brogue that he has yet with him shows that he is no stranger; that he knows what the smell of the turf is. But what I'm bothered about more than anything else, more than my neglect of the bog oak counter even, is, what'll I do with Tim Tierney?"

Then Kittie began to cry. When she dried her eyes she told Mrs. White who Tim Tierney was. He was one of the bravest boys in Dublin and made Kittie promise him when she was leaving that she wouldn't allow "any of those yankee jackeens put the comother on her."

Mrs. White advised Kittie to stick to Tim.

"In the name of God, I will," she said.

She sang a song that told Mr. Kelly pretty plainly of her change of heart. She wrote a letter that night to Tim Tierney and in three weeks after she was on her way to Dublin.

A man giving the name of William Dawson, of Detroit, visited Mrs. White's store the other day and inquired for Kittie Doyle. He had been visiting in Kentucky, he said, and had been commissioned by Mr. Kelly to find Kittie Doyle. Mrs. White gave him Kittie's address. She is not yet Mrs. Tierney, and Kelly may get her. Mr. Dawson would not give any further particulars about his Kentucky friend than to say that he left Ireland when he was ten years old, that he is a prominent and wealthy lawyer and that he is going to Ireland next month "to see the cabin his father was born in."

"To see Kittie Doyle," says Mrs. White.

For several months, I was troubled with a persistent humor on my head which gave me considerable annoyance, until it occurred to me to try Ayer's Hair Vigor. Before using one bottle, the humor was healed.—T. T. Adams, General Merchant, Turberville, Va.

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LOOK WITHIN. Earnest Words on the Needs of Meditation to Ensure Eternal Happiness.

Is it true that this life is only given to us to prepare? Yes, it is a settled belief by all people that this life is a season of preparation. Then, why not prepare? It seems like madness to neglect this preparation. How long have we to prepare? Aye, there is the rub! We never can know. We do know how few were the days of some. We know how unprepared were others. Some die in their sleep. Are we ready for such a death? Are you prepared? No; but you intend to be? Vain hope, bitter delusion. Hell is full of such good intentions. "Now is the acceptable time," said St. Paul. Commence right now.

THINK OF THE DANGER. If you meditated on that journey you soon must take; each day bringing you nearer to the day of departure, you would change your life at once. You would say, "now I have begun." Your days are numbered. Your next sickness may take you away. Your days are few — you can count them at most in a minute.

Your days are numbered; your very hairs are counted; a certain number of sunsets are for you; a given number of seconds. Death approaches a step nearer every second. That last second might have borne off a prayer to heaven, but you have to learn to value the almost infinite uses of a second. The second is gone forever. No power could bring it back. How many have you lost? If you felt the force of this question you would swoon right where you stand.

A TRAIN OF EVILS.

Following each and every sin is a train of accidents, misfortunes, evils, and moral shipwrecks, that received birth from his crimes, and these will reproduce their evil effects, long after his bones shall have turned to dust. The evil that a man does lives after him and the cry of vengeance against his wrong will arise, albeit a whitened sepulchre may deceitfully flatter his memory long after he is weighed in the balance. Vain creatures of this world, why will ye not pause and think of the danger that surrounds you?

WHAT MEDITATION LEADS TO. Meditation leads us to think of our sins, and the necessity of sorrow and repentance; it leads us to think of all that God has done for us, and teaches us to be thankful; it leads us to think of the infinite perfections of God, and inspires us to love him. Strange how few love that glorious Being! It is because they do not meditate.

MEDITATION ENJOINED.

The Lord, speaking of His precepts (Deut. 6), says: "Thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising; and thou shalt write them in the entry and on the doors of thy house." You must think of God sitting or walking, sleeping or rising. The Lord has said it. In the psalm of Asaph (76) we read: "I thought upon the days of old, and I had in my mind the eternal years, and I meditated in the night with my own heart and I was exercised and I swept my spirit and I said: 'Now I have begun.' The young, the beautiful, the happy never meditate except on the vanities of life. Is it right or wise that men and women should wait to be old before they turn to God, offering instead of the first fruits, the dregs of a misspent life?"

God said to Moses (Leviticus xix. 2): "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy." We should be holy are cold and indifferent. Religion that is only for profession; merely a Sunday suit to put on and off as occasion demands. Out of a hundred, there are ninety-five that are cold and indifferent. Examine and perhaps you will find this too flattering an estimate. If one could be found in the whole valley that might be justly counted as holy, every one, I am sure, would visit this marvel, and yet the Lord expects holiness in all.—Phillip O'Neill in Catholic Mirror.

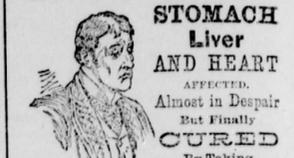
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