

[1908 title page]

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[pp. 125]

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OUR girls' school at Sapporo, Japan, was powerfully moved, a few months ago, by the preaching of Mr. Kimura, an evangelist, and more than eighty pupils gave their names as determined to become Christians. Of these one-fourth had relations with the Presbyterian Church, but half of them were from families with no Christian connection.

[p. 178]

Public Exercises in Some of Our Leading Schools

MISS ISABELLE MAE WARD of Japan, who has taught both at Osaka and Sapporo :

Since my first experience at a Girls' School Commencement in Japan, nearly six years ago, it has grown upon me that it is one of the most important of school functions. Parents and friends then as at no other time see what the girls are capable of doing, measure their growth and feel that, through those girls, they have a part in the school. From this, school interest arises in the homes, and I could tell of definite cases where homes have been opened to the visiting list of the missionary only after parents had attended the graduating exercises. In the parental eye, the foreign teacher bears a new relation to the pupil, after the ceremony has been witnessed which conferred a diploma upon the daughter. Those also who come from curiosity, to compare the mission school with the public school, are often impressed with the subtle differences, and curiosity changes to interest and interest to patronage.

As for the Japanese girl herself, it is much the same as with graduates in America, only that, as her life has more newly emerged from seclusion, the relative importance of school life is greater to her than it can be with us. While justice demands that the scholarship of a school be well exhibited, I feel strongly that there should be enough out-loud revelation of Christian principles in our public programmes to show the visitor that we are not ashamed of our embassy for Christ. The Japanese admire enthusiasm and firmness of purpose, and it is by far the best plan to openly show what our school is intended to do, and to show it in the proportion which is maintained in actual every-day routine. In short, the programme should show the life and teaching in each department of the school, and, in no way, do I believe in veiling the fact that we advocate the practice of Christian principles as the keystone of a complete education.

In the North Star School at Sapporo, we have had two parts in our Commencement programmes: First, prayer, Bible reading, hymns, a Scripture recitation of some length given in concert by *the whole school*, and an address by the Japanese principal. This man is a most earnest and tactful Christian and a lawyer of some reputation. His tactful appeals in behalf of Christ have been effectual in winning not a few to His service. The concert Scripture recitation is very impressive and the drill for it occupies a few

minutes daily for several weeks, so it has a lasting effect upon the girls. The singing of selected hymns, as well as songs, is attractive to the music-loving Japanese and visitors have asked afterward for hymn-books.

Part II of the programme exhibits the literary, the manual and the musical sides of the education which is imparted in North Star School. The exercises close with Doxology and Benediction.

Such a public occasion affords an opportunity to exhibit the work of all departments and to make the school understood as no amount of advertising can. A worthy public closing gives the school a good name, an air of importance in its own neighborhood, starts the public to talking, and brings us inquiries. The pride of its great things is very important to the neighborhood in Japan. I have been surprised many times to see how proud some of our Sapporo people are (otherwise entirely uninterested in Christianity) of our North Star Girls' School. They regard it as one of *their* institutions and I have been asked more than once for invitations to closing exercises. In my opinion, we ought as soon as possible to make our Commencement more public than hitherto, for the more outsiders we invite, the more interest grows and the greater the gains to evangelistic work.

[p. 212]

Two thousand and nine hundred bouquets, each with a text attached, were sent to the hospitals of Sapporo, last year, by the Hokusei Jo Gakko. This school received the distinction of a letter of censure for having placed God above the Emperor. His Majesty's birthday having fallen upon Sunday, they postponed the celebration until the next day.