

[1914 title page]

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Index follows page 288

[pp. 56-57]

Stormswept Sapporo

Our school building was very old when bought; when part was rebuilt ten years ago the new gymnasium was given by the alumnae and

the old part was retained also as there was not money enough to build entirely new, yet the room was needed. Four or five years ago, when we were asked to state our needs with reference to the Kennedy gifts, we asked for ten thousand *yen* to rebuild this part of our school.

Previously Mr. Johnson had asked for two thousand five hundred *yen* for repairs absolutely necessary for safety and respectability. The foundation timbers all around the old building and under the floors are decayed and the paint is half gone from the building. The kitchen, bathroom, and laundry, also a one-story part of the old Government storehouse, are falling to pieces. Not only that, it stands on the north side of the school between two wings of the dormitory, and the snow in winter falling from the three roofs buries it, making all those rooms absolutely dark except as we keep digging out the windows.

Last week one corner of the old building, where it joins the chapel, was reported to be sinking and breaking the roof. . . . A carpenter raised the sunken part and put in new timber, but I saw that the end of the post which rested on the removed beam was decayed also, there was not a sound spot in it. The carpenter, who is a Christian man, said there was no danger, there would only be a general sinking of the whole building. But soon one of the teachers whose room is on the ground floor told me that the floor was slanting at quite an angle to the outer wall. The carpenter has repaired this place also and made all safe until spring.

It is hard to save money for repairs as the tuitions have fallen off and the price of food-stuffs has doubled again in the last two years. When the school began, twenty-five years ago, we paid from two and one-half to three *yen* for a bag of rice. Now we pay from nine to ten *yen* for a poorer grade, and everything else is in proportion. . . . But if there is no money for these needed repairs, what can be done? Only one thing—pray, which we are doing. Miss Monk and I would gladly

have done without a home and put the money into the school; we talked about it but it did not seem quite right, as the money was given for a missionary home and that was much needed, not for ourselves only but for those who are to follow us.

In addition to the cost of living being very, very much increased we have great suffering in the Hokkaido this year on account of the failure of crops. The weather has been so cool during the past summer that nothing has grown. Corn and grain have not filled out; fruit and vegetables are only half the usual size, and much of even this poor crop was spoiled by the typhoon and flood which swept over the island the end of August. It was like a cloudburst. The rain came down in torrents, causing the rivers everywhere to overflow. Our school fence blew down and the campus was covered with *debris* and water. A fishing village (Zenibako) where Miss Monk has a Sunday-school and does evangelistic work, lost twenty men, heads of families, and had many houses destroyed. And before that we thought the people could not be much poorer and still exist. It is pitiful to hear the people talk about the loss to farmers and to see the meagre supply in the shops. And it makes our hearts ache to think what may happen during the long, cold winter.

Sapporo.

(Miss) Sarah C. Smith.