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HOKKAIDO. EVANGELISTIC.

“ The Hokkaido Station is an island as large as New York State,” writes Mrs. Pierson. It is nearly a quarter of the empire of Japan. Its population however is less than that of Tokyo, being only a little over 1,500,000. The Protestant population in the island is about 3,000. Presbyterian work began in 1884. The Presbytery reports 821 adult Christians, 4 self-supporting churches, 14 chapels, Presbyterian work in 34 places, in 8 of the 10 provinces of the island.

Mr. Johnson reports of a gratifying condition in the out-stations under his care and the independent church in Sapporo growing steadily. He writes of personal work in the hospital for the poor in Sapporo as follows:

On the first day of the year we went to the hospital and made the acquaintance of the superintendent from whom I received permission to hold services among the patients. The interest soon grew until the superintendent had one of the larger rooms cleaned up for the meetings. For a long time we had a regular attendance of 14 at the weekly meeting, but some have been dismissed, others have died, so that the present number is about 6 or 7.

Mr. Pierson writes:

The Hokkaido grows rapidly in accessible area. Three railways are being pushed so that soon we shall have easy approach from our central Ishikari plain to Kitami, and through Teshio to the sea. These new highways reveal new fields for effort and increase our confusion of face, for we have done little else hitherto than spy out some of the land. Our clocks run faster, our years grow shorter, our task becomes wider, and we hail with gratitude the movement so to apportion the territory that the Island may be evenly evangelized.

The four chief places in Northern Hokkaido are Nayoro in Teshio, Gakuden and Nokkenshi [*sic*] in Kitami, and Kushiro in Kushiro. These are all country district churches and occupy centres of population and points of departure. The magnitude of our effort may be imagined geographically by translating the Island in terms of the State of New York, with which it agrees in area and climate. I have then four men: one on the St. Lawrence, one in Rochester, one in Buffalo, and one in Saratoga. Mr. Johnson has three, one in Albany, one in Orange Co., and one in New York City. Historically we are where New York State was in, say the thirties ; and morally I sometimes fear where the world was in the age of Abraham.

Our men work well : they stand up against a society busy by day in works of construction, and busy by night in works of construction, and busy by night in works of destruction, whose consciences meanwhile are uneasy and seeking a way of peace.

Mrs. Pierson writes as follows of a condemned criminal's conversion :

Mr. Sakamoto, at Mr. Pierson's request, visited a remarkable criminal in the Hakodate prison, who was converted about 6 months ago solely by reading a copy of the New Testament. Since then he has been in close correspondence with Mr. Pierson who baptized him in June, and his letters read almost like inspired and apostolic epistles. Now that he has been condemned to death he is allowed to correspond freely, and he no longer wears the penal red

kimono, but has assumed his own dress. Mr. Sakamoto writes : After a few moments N. stood before me, wearing a fine black silk outer garment with his crest. He has a round full face, a strong constitution, and large black eyes. He bent his head in reverence to me. I addressed him briefly on Matt. 10:28-31—‘ Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul,’ and exhorted him to endure to the end. After my prayer he was much moved, and he prayed too, choking, with his face down on the table ; but when he rose up from his prayer, his countenance seemed very cheerful. I think he will face death with peace, through our mighty and gracious Lord.”

Mr. Pierson made 36 country trips during the year, making a total of 67 visits at 46 different towns or villages. Mrs. Pierson took part with him in many of these tours and labors. She took a leading part also in a signature-collecting campaign for a petition for the abolition of the Licensed System.

We collected 2,282 signatures in all. It was very hard work physically, and we could not have undertaken it or carried it through if it had not been for the Daily Prayer-meeting in which the movement was born.

Mrs. Pierson gives a most graphic account of a North Hokkaido trip in winter :

Altogether we traveled 225 miles by sleigh in ten days and 200 miles by railway in three. We held 48 meetings in 22 places in 25 days, attended by 2,025 people, of whom 319 joined the Pocket Testament League, 143 partook of the Lord’s Supper, and 17 were baptized.

We left Nayoro on Feb. 6, our two sleighs jingling merrily along, 10 feet of snow packed in the streets of that half-buried town, icicles 15 feet long dangling from the eaves.....It was cold, you see, but not out of doors, in the sunshine, wrapped up in a sleigh, but in the houses, at meetings, in bed, and above all during that agonizing process of dressing and undressing with the mercury 30 below zero Fahr., and only a few red coals in a futile brazier to remind you that there really is such a thing as fire somewhere in this cold world.....At our first meeting after Nayoro, in a small

hotel room, we placed three glowing braziers around us, to which were soon added our 25 or 30 hearers. At the end of that meeting we were prostrate, our heads bursting, our hearts beating like trip-hammers, and only a quick rush to the outer cold air saved us from being completely overcome by the fumes of charcoal. After that during meetings we just froze.....At another place, with the thermometer actually 30 below in the cowshed, and no heat of any kind whatever in the room, we nearly froze in our beds, and I would have shed tears with the cold while dressing next morning had not the thermometer forbidden.

At Mombetsu on the Kitami coast, Mr. and Mrs. Pierson, with local Christians, held two night meetings in a floorless theatre-barn, the meetings continuing from 6 p.m. to midnight on each occasion, with 3 hours of prayer with the Christians during the day intervening. The preaching the first night and the early part of the second had to struggle against violent interruptions and almost incredible disorder, but in the end a quiet hearing was given and at least one soul came under conviction. At midnight a man waited on the missionaries at their hotel and told how he had prayed during the meeting for the forgiveness of his sins and believed they were truly forgiven ; and 6 weeks later the same man wrote that he had received salvation through Jesus.....“I am getting daily nearer to the Lord Jesus Christ.”

HOKKAIDO. EDUCATIONAL.

There are only three mission schools in Hokkaido, and two of them are ours—the Sapporo Girls’ School in Miss Smith’s care, and the Otaru Girls’ school, in charge of Miss Rose. The schools are closely together geographically, Otaru being only 18 miles from Sapporo, but they have quite different distinct characters, aims, and constituencies.

Miss Smith writes :

Our school did not open as well this year as last, and not so well last as the year before. The falling off is in day scholars, for which there is a very natural cause. After the Department of Education advised, two years ago, that less attention should be given to the higher education of girls and more to sewing, cooking, and the like, not only the Buddhists,

but the government itself opened special schools for teaching these branches, adding a short course in reading and the sciences. These schools are filled to overflowing, while the government High Schools for girls as well as our own have fallen off in the number of entrance applications. We have added a similar course to our curriculum, but have had few applications for it thus far.

Last year (1910-11), we entered 139 students. Between 30 and 40 of these were baptized Christians, and nearly all of the remainder professed belief and desire ; while 21 were added to the different churches during the year. We had 60 in the boarding-hall, which is about the present number. Our “ Chemung-Kenny ” Annex is a great comfort and delight to us, with its fine well-lighted and ventilated sewing room.

The school furnishes 2 teachers for the church Sunday-school and an organist and 11 teachers for the 3 Sunday-schools connected with the evangelistic work of Miss Monk and myself. In these Sunday-schools the average attendance is about 205 each Sunday.

We have been most fortunate in having Mrs. Monk with us, as she has so willingly and helpfully shared in our labors and burdens. No words can express my grateful appreciation of her labors of love among us, her cheery sunshine, her wise counsels born of a rich experience, the benediction of her presence. We salute chosen in the Lord, Miss Monk’s mother and ours.

In the Otaru Girls’ School there are 45 pupils, 13 of them Christians, 11 having become Christians this year. A kindergarten is attached, with about 60 pupils.

Miss Rose writes:

Our school is a sort of “ Matrimonial Bureau,” and we cannot supply the demand for wives. Hokkaido is full of young men and we are glad to educate Christian wives for them.....We train our graduates in house-keeping and home-making, sewing, cooking, and other useful arts for women.