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Report
of
THE JAPAN MISSION
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.A.

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HOKKAIDO STATION.

THE FAR NORTH

Hokkaido Station of the Japan Presbyterian Mission is the most northern Presbyterian Foreign Mission Station in the world, and Dr. and Mrs. Pierson are the most northern missionaries, with Mr. and Mrs. Whitener, in Asahigawa, close seconds, with their field stretching to the most northern limits of foreign missionary work. In this far north the after-effects of the war have hit hard, and everywhere there is depression. Dr. Pierson writes that throughout his section are scattered deserted holdings, wrecked businesses, and houses to rent, from which the occupants have fled. Half of the houses of ill-fame in Nokkeushi—of which there were more than twenty—have almost gone out of business. The got-rich-quick [*sic*] young man is not traveling around now-a-days with geisha in second-class cars. The farmers have been specially hit hard. Many of them did not dig their potatoes last year because there was no market. People are less reckless, if not actually serious. The

churches, too, have accepted their own share of the general depression in the right spirit, as God's call to renewed repentance and endeavor.

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Mrs. Pierson writes as her "final conclusions after thirty-one years in Japan, twenty-six in Hokkaido" :—

" 1. Need of great searching of heart with regard to self-support. Strange that this should be so weak on a field where the will to control the work, whether done by the Mission or by the Japanese church, is so strong.

" 2. Great value and success of Sunday-school work, limited only by a dire lack, in our country churches, of good teachers. Strange that, if it is true our Girls' Schools are chiefly to make Christians and develop Christian character, so comparatively few of our Mission School graduates are ready to take up Sunday-school or church work when they return to their country homes !

" 3. Work for women seems to be most successful along the lines of weekly or monthly meetings that are systematic Bible lessons, but always with the evangelistic aim and appeal. During the last year the teaching of foreign embroidery was introduced into the regular women's meetings at five places with remarkably good effect on the attendance, which rose from six to twenty and thirty.

" 4. Great need of rescue work for the thousands of young girls in Japan who are sold, chiefly by their parents, into lives of shame and misery. No regular missionary, either evangelistic or educational, has the time or strength to undertake this work systematically, but individual appeals for help should be heeded as they arrive. We should ' go after that which is lost until we find it.' Two such lost ones in our wilderness were found and brought home, where they are still rejoicing."

Dr. and Mrs. Pierson have done signal work this year in the matter of rescue work. One girl was rescued from Obihiro by physical strength in a battle with the ruffians from the evil quarters. They worked, waited and prayed all night, and at last were able to

get away with the girl about daybreak. This act of supreme heroism called from the daily newspapers of the Hokkaido a round of applause, and its effect will be for the strengthening of the Christian cause in general and the cause of purity in particular. Such work as this requires unbounded confidence in God that he will perform His promises to help in times of need.

There is a great need for missionaries for this kind of work, as well as for direct evangelistic work and the corollary work of strengthening and heartening the evangelists and Christians in their very difficult tasks, subject as they are to almost constant subtle persecution and misunderstanding in one form or another. Of course there is still the crying need of those who are without a chance to hear the Gospel—almost, if not entirely, half of the people of Japan. “Where people are and evangelists are not is where missionaries should be.”

SAPPORO

Miss Smith writes that her most enjoyable bit of evangelistic work is her daily Bible-class in Northern Star Academy, but that the chapel services in Toyohira suburb, lead by the head teacher of Northern Star, who was not a Christian when he entered the school twenty years ago, are being better attended than last year, and that the Sunday-school in the same chapel, from October 1920 to April 1921, had an average attendance of 110. From April 1st, when the snow is gone from the fields, until October, when harvesting ends, the attendance in all Sunday-schools is less, the older children finding work in town or field ; the next younger, heeding “the call of the wild,” spend their weekly holiday climbing the mountain which stands so invitingly near.

Another Sunday-school, started with eighteen children in another suburb of Sapporo, has now an attendance of thirty-six. Miss Smith also sends supplies to a Sunday-school in Karafuto, Sagalien. It is conducted by a graduate of Northern Star Academy whose husband built a chapel and gave an organ for her work. There being a few Christians in this town of about ten thousand people, and no Christian church or evangelist, they are very anxious to have regular services in the chapel and will pay expenses and

furnish a parsonage if a suitable evangelist can be sent them. Mr. Whitener plans to visit them this summer.

Since Miss Monk left on furlough last fall Miss Evans has been Acting Principal of Hokusei Jo Gakko (Northern Star Girls' School). From May to May there have been thirty-eight baptisms, including one teacher, and two more girls and one teacher joined an Independent Church in Sapporo which does not administer baptism.

Of the twenty graduates of this year, all but two are baptised Christians. It has been a disappointment that only three of the class have gone to Higher Schools. Two have gone into a bank, one has become a helper in the Otaru Presbyterian Kindergarten, and at least two are primary school teachers. One of the primary school teachers writes that there is one other Christian, and three who know about Christianity, so they are going to have meetings together twice a week. Two more girls are continuing their study here, and the rest are at home.

The present seniors are few in number, but the quality is good, and they already are having a good influence over the younger girls.

The Shintokwai, a school society which has seniors for officers and representatives from each of the other classes, has taken a few more steps this year toward the self-government idea. The different committees have worked well, especially the religious committee. It has helped the Christian seniors who lead in turn at the weekly school prayer-meeting to make those meetings helpful and interesting. The committee for overseeing the manners and neatness of the girls, and the one for overseeing the school cleaning are gradually waking up to their responsibilities. Once a term a letter box is hung up in the hall. Any girl in the school may put suggestions for the improvement of school life and their society into it, and these enlightening, if not always practical, suggestions are read at the next officers' meeting. Then the ones decided upon there as being really useful are brought before the school.

The Hokkaido girls are often more vigorous, and consequently rougher, than those in the south. They are of pioneer stock, good-hearted and strong-minded. Most of them love the out-of-doors.

This winter coasting down two six-foot snow banks, made by the students, furnished daily exercise and pleasure. Although [*sic*] the Government high school has taken up skiing on its own campus, the annual sleigh ride to the mountains for skiing and tobogganing is still a unique feature of Hokusei out-door life.

SCHOOL PROBLEMS

This spring four teachers, two of them part-time teachers, left, and three certified teachers were secured in their places. At the last minute, after the country has been combed for both a science and a music teacher, they were found in Sapporo. A splendid science teacher, the father of one of our girls, who has been teaching in Manchuria, has made his home here and divides his time between Hokusei and another private institution. One is a Methodist Christian and teaches domestic science and gymnastics.

In March, out of the two hundred and fifty requests to enter the school, one hundred and eighty-seven finally took the entrance examination. The school could accommodate only one hundred of them, and the hundred highest in marks came in. The Educational Department here wishes very much that the [*sic*] Hokusei could take in an entering class of one hundred and fifty, because every year hundreds are turned away from the Sapporo schools. The whole island looks toward Sapporo as its educational center and also as the safest place, morally, to send its sons and daughters. The present enrollment of the school is 290, eighty of whom are in the dormitory.

Hokusei looks forward to a good year. Situated in the center of the city, she is cramped for room. Every available space here is used up. She hopes, however, that by next summer, she may be able to move toward the mountains on the outskirts of the city, where she can expand, breathe and skii [*sic*] to her heart's content.

Miss Davidson's time has been given entirely to school activities this year, and so she has nothing to report but the pleasure of daily contact with all the girls of the school, except those of the first year. Her teaching is entirely in English, and includes reading, spelling, conversation, composition, grammar and ancient history.

She has found it a relief to have the weekly trip to the Zenibako Sunday-school taken over by Miss Curtis, yet this one distinctly evangelistic effort has been missed. She writes of a Sunday school in Sapporo which she visited on the afternoon of Easter Day. This Sunday-school was of special interest for two reasons: First, it is composed almost entirely of children of university professors, instead of the unkempt street children to whom she has become accustomed. Second, although the Sunday-school was started by Miss Evans about a year ago, the work has been carried on, almost without supervision, by a Japanese teacher and seniors of the Northern Star Girls' School.

Miss Curtis writes :—

“ When the three teachers leap hastily off the train as it pauses at Zenibako every Saturday afternoon they are greeted by a chorus of shouts emerging from a line of towelled heads hanging over the picket fence. They are lead triumphantly down a short, narrow street, past a shattered cannon ball tossed upon the beach long ago, to the tiny three-roomed house of the village freight man whose daughter entered Hokusei this spring. Before they can remove their shoes and clogs, the two larger rooms, thrown into one, are packed with from fifty to sixty children seated impatiently on the matting. The opening song having been lustily and nasally rendered to the complete satisfaction of the entire assembly, the superintendent calls on one of the Japanese teachers for a word of prayer. This is usually prefaced by the reminder to the children that when we pray we bend our heads but slightly, not far enough to touch the floor—a worshipful attitude which, in the ‘ eternal masculine ’ section is more conducive to violent squirmings caused by alien fingers on bare soles than to any astonishing degree of reverence. Another favorite song, and the school is divided into two classes for Bible lessons.

“ During the long winter months, when the cold enforced much idleness in this rough little fishing village—blessed with the empty name of Money-box—there is usually a crowd of older women and girls hovering around the stove in the outer room, half kitchen and half entry. Miss Curtis, still lost in the wilderness of an unfamiliar language, has found it hard to wait idle for the close of each session,

but hopes that if another year should find her in the school she will be able to hold some sort of Bible-class for these older ones, many of whom already have the good foundation laid by years in that very Sunday-school.”

Miss Curtis writes enthusiastically of her first impressions of the Hokkaido. The wide streets shaded by great elms and the large number of foreign-style buildings made her feel as though she were at home. The long winter months proved cold enough to be bracing, but not severe enough for discomfort, while the snow and ice provided ample opportunity for winter sports to keep one feeling fit. On less than one year’s experience she does not feel that she can speak with authority, yet she cannot but feel a deep interest in the school because of its potential value. Situated strategically in the leading city of the rapidly growing island of Hokkaido—a city drawing to itself the best of these sturdy, progressive pioneers—the North Star is becoming increasingly a lode star for some of the most enterprising. The teaching of English “ as she is spoke ” in Japan has its difficulties, when attempted amid the fragrant odors of the chemical laboratory, with chorus practise in the dormitory dining-room, two phonetics classes across the hall, and a gymnastics class exercising beneath the very windows. In one more year the school will have outgrown even this poor equipment and will be forced to one of three expedients : It may cut down its entering class to fifty, contrary to its promise to take in one hundred, made when the school received government recognition ; it may tack on an extra class-room, which would give it but temporary relief because of its encroachment on an overcrowded compound ; or it must somehow raise \$25,000 gold, which, added to the proceeds from the sale of the present site, would provide an adequate plant.

NOTES

1. In the materials from this year’s Hokkaido Station Report not included here, one paragraph (pp. 17-18) from Katherine Whitener, a Presbyterian missionary in Hokkaido but not directly connected with Hokusei Jo Gakko, describes a relevant aspect of the current cultural climate.

Some Government Primary teachers came asking to be taught English. One of them said that a missionary had previously taught him from the Fourth Reader, but that he would be very glad to study the Bible, for he had bought a New Testament two years before, but found it rather difficult reading alone. There is always an open door for the teaching of the English Bible in Japan. It may be true that many come *only* for the English, but without a doubt the Lord uses this medium to gain entrance into many hearts.

2. This year's Hokkaido Station Report also contains (p. 21) the following description of the missionary and part-time Hokusei teacher Ruth Lake's work.

In the fall she took up her usual chorus work at Hokusei Jo Gakko. She was justly proud of the excellent work they did with the difficult Christmas program, which included an aria from Bach's "Christmas Oratorio," an anthem which she transposed and arranged for women's voices, and Farmer's "Gloria in Excelsis," which she also arranged and which they sang in English, concluding with Stainer's "Sevenfold Amen."