

Christianity in the Orient

WHILE this year at Yokohama they are celebrating the semi-centennial of Protestant missions in Japan, Dr. Otis Cary sends forth his history¹ of the work

¹A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN. *By Otis Cary.* 2 Vols., pp. 780. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. \$5 net.

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done by men and women of the three great branches of the Christian Church in 400 years, from 1549 to 1909. It is pleasing to meet with so scholarly a treatment of the Roman Catholic missions (1549-1620), the results and influences of which never wholly died out. One of the first sights in the far interior of Japan, seen by the reviewer in 1870, was that of a company of sixty men, women and children in the red robes of the criminal and roped together much like a coffle of slaves, being taken under guard to a prison in the crater of an extinct volcano in the far north. Thus isolated from their fellow creatures, they were fed on rice and water, until the eyes of the Japanese statesmen were opened in America and Europe, and the protests of the envoys of Christian Powers were heard. Later, when the arm of persecution was lifted, Verbeck's instant appeal to the Foreign Office stayed the oppression. Today, these same people, or their descendants, walk in their own way, peaceably following their Master, unmolested by any, while the treatment of Russian prisoners of war in Japan surprised the world.

After three centuries and a half, the haze of romance hangs over the exact facts, but Dr. Cary is a critical scholar and has cautiously made difference between the original canvas of reality and the embroidery worked upon it. In every case he seems to have examined the traditions, consulted the most recent investigators and weighed the latest evidence. Hence we have a narration which bears the stamp of finality. No one, least of all Dr. Cary, would find in this work the genius of a Macaulay or a Motley and certainly not that of a Froude, but the first necessity of history, that of trustworthiness, is here.

The first attempt to carry the gospel to Japan was made by Christopher Columbus, but later and successfully by Xavier. Seemingly extinguished in persecution and hidden, as in catacombs, for nearly 250 years, the Church rose, phoenix-like, to brilliant resurrection in 1858, so that in the twentieth century it has expanded and is fulfilling a noble task in the uplifting of the Japanese. The Catholic population in 1908 num-

bered 70,000 souls, but their great work done in the training of children and the healing of the sick is hardly more than hinted at. In the transition of the nation from a status wholly agricultural to one complex, with maritime, industrial and manufacturing enterprises both at home and abroad, the Catholics suffer far worse than the Protestants. Tho in entering Japan they had the advantage of continuity of labor, they lose many of their converts in the modern movements of population to cities and foreign lands.

A vast literature in several languages has made the Roman story comparatively familiar, but that of the Greek Catholic Church mission, or, to speak more scientifically, the work of the Russian bishop, Nicolai, in Japan, is to Americans almost wholly new. Ceaselessly active in his ministrations in Tokyo in 1873, as we remember well, Nicolai is still busy presiding over a Christian community numbering 30,000. When in 1904-05 73,000 Russian prisoners in Japan needed consolation, the native Japanese ministers of the Holy Orthodox Church led their worship, wrote for them their letters home and taught the illiterate *mujiks* how to read and write their own Russian vernacular! This, besides making a brilliant chapter in the history of war, shows some results of the Hague Conferences. Shortly after the Russian Consulate was established at Hakodate, in 1859, Nicolai made the overland journey from St. Petersburg and began the mastery of that language, which he has used with such astonishing skill and power. One of his teachers was Joseph Neesima. In Tokyo he has built with funds from Russia what is regarded as the finest edifice in Japan, the white marble Cathedral of the Resurrection, where 400 male singers chant the service and show what the Japanese voice is capable of. During the war Nicolai remained in Tokyo, to his own credit and that of the Japanese Government, in perfect safety. With the historian, we believe that the lessening of foreign aid (from Russia, since the war) will prove a blessing in disguise.

More familiar is the story of Reformed Christianity in Japan, almost every phase of which comes under criti-

cal review. Even things painful are not shirked, for of much of what has been accomplished Dr. Cary has been witness and part. With excessive modesty, he underrates, rather than exaggerates, not only the good done directly to Japan, but the inexpressible debt of the Japanese nation to the American missionaries. Maps and index add their value to this standard work of reference.

*By the Great Wall*² is the story of the beautiful life of a woman missionary in interior China, from the days of sailing ships to the Boxer outbreak. The book is eminently readable, because it has in it great adventure, great psychology, wit, fire, fun, fact, fancy and pathos.

Grown to a portly volume of over 600 pages, this seventh annual issue of *The Christian Movement in Japan*³ is directory, encyclopedia, history and yearbook combined. The names of its editors, who are veterans in work, Ernest W. Clement and Galen M. Fisher, guarantee the accuracy of a book indispensable to the student of Japanese Christianity of today.

The veteran Dr. De Forest's book,⁴ "a work as delicate as it is important," comes to us in a revised edition. To praise it would be to paint the lily. It is full of grit, grace, tact and power.

Of all the books on Korea, the body of this one by Mr. Gale,⁵ despite his learning as lexicographer and translator, has the most red blood in it. It pulses on every page. It is written by a man whose heart overflows thru his pen from the well of deep experiences. Edited with skill, and ideal for purposes of study, it is the best presentation of Christian Korea in our language.

²BY THE GREAT WALL. By *Isabella Riggs Williams*. 8vo., pp. 400. New York: Fleming H. Revell Co. \$1.50 net.

³THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT IN JAPAN. Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House. 50 cents.

⁴SUNRISE IN THE SUNRISE KINGDOM. By *J. H. De Forest*. Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada. 50 cents.

⁵KOREA IN TRANSITION. By *James S. Gale*. New York: Young People's Missionary Movement of the United States and Canada. 50 cents.