

generations by the yearly ceremony of tramping upon the cross. The Secretary of State, Mr. Marcy, had instructed the consul-general "to do his best by all judicious measures and kind influence to obtain full toleration of the Christian religion and protection of all missionaries who should go there to propagate it." Mr. Harris was in full sympathy with these instructions, and succeeded in convincing the Japanese negotiators that the Jesuit system which interfered with state affairs as formerly practiced was not the Christianity he represented. Success having crowned his efforts, on the first Sabbath of August, 1858, he invited the naval officers and resident foreigners to assemble for worship at the consular residence, formerly an idol temple, which was the *first Christian service publicly held* on shore in Japan for more than two centuries. It was an appropriate expression of gratitude to God for further opening the way for Christian missions.

A fitter man than Dr. Hepburn for the peculiar service required in this new field could not have been found. Consecrated to the mission cause in early manhood, with six years experience among Chinese, skillful and successful in professional practice, with a quiet manner and unfaltering faith, and with a companion of like spirit, he entered upon this field as the sower of the first handful of gospel seed, and remains there still to aid in gathering its wonderful harvest. Very little could be done for a time in the way of direct missionary work. A new language was to be learned, and suspicious and jealousies overcome by deeds of kindness and service such as the good physician knows how to render. Months and years were required to win his way into public confidence. From the first a watch was set upon his every movement. Of his two men servants one, the most useful, was known by him to be a government spy, and everything done in his house was reported. But there was no effort at concealment, and this openness and frankness were his safeguard. On one occasion after his rented temple had been cleansed of its idols and rooms fitted for occupancy, while unpacking

and arranging his goods he received a visit from the official, who made a demand for his Chinese books, which he refused to deliver up, and would have appealed to the United States consul, but the demand was not pressed. While making their inspection a picture of the crucifixion was found, which some friend in New York had sent Mrs. Hepburn. This discovery was thought at first a mishap, but instead of confiscating the contraband picture, to the surprise of its owners, the men were curious to know the significance of the two thieves, who they were, etc., which led to an explanation of the whole transaction why Jesus was crucified, what brought him into the world, and why Christians worshipped him. This was the *first Christian sermon* ever preached by an American missionary to a Japanese audience.

It will be understood that the toleration of Christianity as secured by treaty for foreigners did not include permission to propagate it or exempt natives from the death penalty for professing it. Hence the search of Chinese books and the system of espionage were among the methods used in its restraint. "The opening of Japan," said one of our naval officers at the time, "is an opening where gospel truth may enter wedge-like." And our missionary found a very narrow cleavage for his wedge, and great caution necessary in driving it. After two years, Dr. Hepburn, in full confidence of the future, advised that a single man be sent out to join him, study the language and be prepared for aggressive work when the way should be more fully open. He continued to minister to the physical wants of all classes, opened a dispensary for the poor which official suspicion and interference led him after a time to close, made successful operations in surgery, and was consulted in difficult cases by native doctors from Yedo. While thus engaged and co-operating with missionary brethren of other societies in the distribution of Chinese Christian books and tracts and making translations into the native language, he was also preparing his *Japanese and English Dictionary*, which was published in 1867. Discretion in present