

The Coming of the Spring.

There's something in the air That's new and sweet and rare— A scent of summer things, A whiff as if on wings.

There's some hing, too, that's new In the color of the blue That's in the morning sky, Before the sun is high.

And though on plain and hill 'Tis winter, winter still, There's something seems to say That winter's had its day.

And all this changing tinct, This whispering stir, and hint Of bud and bloom and wing, Is the coming of the spring.

And to-morrow or to-day The brooks will break away From their icy, frozen sleep, And run and laugh and leap.

And the next thing, in the woods, The catkins in their hoods Of fur and silk will stand, A sturdy little band.

And the tassels soft and fine Of the hazel will untwine, And the elder branches show Their buds against the snow.

So, silently but swift, Above the wintry drift, The long days gain and gain, Until, on hill and plain,

Once more and yet once more Returning as before, We see the bloom of birth Make young again the earth.

—Nova Perry.

A Strange Story.

Forty-six years ago, while Japan was still shut off from intercourse with the Western nations, there was born in a small town in one of the islands a little boy who was to lead a most remarkable life. The old and oft-repeated saying that "truth is stranger than fiction" found in his case a new illustration, for the most vivid imagination would not have portrayed a career so improbable as his.

Joseph Neesima, as we are told, while still a child, was much impressed by the sight of certain ships, perhaps those of Commodore Perry, which had sailed to Japan from the distant West. A sight so unusual set him to wondering what sort of people might own such ships as those.

Later on, he learned from a Chinese geography, which in some way fell into his hands, that God in the beginning created the heavens and the earth. He resolved to know more of this mighty God, even though at the cost of all he held dear. Accordingly he made his way to Hadokate, in the northern part of the empire, this being one of the two ports then open to foreigners, and there, while giving instruction in his native tongue, he planned to make his escape from the country.

Covered up by some vegetables or other stuff, he was carried aboard a vessel bound for China, and then, hidden in a closet, set sail at the risk of his life. Undiscovered he reached Shanghai, and there he was so fortunate as to meet a Christian captain commanding a vessel belonging to a Boston ship-owner, the late Hon. Alphens Hardy. How happy he must have felt when, under the care of this good captain, he embarked for America, and how much happier still when, having arrived in this country, he was befriended by Mr. Hardy himself!

That gentleman and his wife took the boy into their own beautiful home, treated him as a son, and helped him to obtain the Christian education he so ardently desired. He learned to call them "his American father and mother," and to bestow upon them his most grateful affection.

In 1865, the year of his arrival in Boston, he wrote the following prayer, which we find in the last number of the Missionary Herald: O God! if thou hast got eyes, please look upon me. O God! if thou hast got ears, please hear me. I wish heartily to read the Bible, and I wish to be civilized with the Bible.

JOSEPH NEESIMA.

Surely the Lord, who accepts from every nation those who fear him and work righteousness, put it into the heart of the young foreigner to write that prayer.

In the Old Testament we read that "the Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him," and in the New Testament we find the words of Christ, "He that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Young Neesima sought and found the pearl of great price, the salvation of his soul, and from henceforth it was his one ambition to help his countrymen to obtain the like precious gift. He went through a thorough course of training in preparation for his life-work, studying at Phillips Academy, Amherst College and Andover Theological Seminary. Then, refusing most tempting openings into political life in his native land, he resolutely turned his back upon worldly gain and promotion, and devoted himself to the founding of a school in which young Japanese might be trained up for the service of the

true God. It opened in two shabby rooms in Tokio, with seven students; he lived to see it a large institution, known as the "Doshisha," with a considerable number of buildings adapted to the wants of the nearly nine hundred students who are now reported as being there.

Think of the good that these nine hundred may do, not to speak of the many who have already been educated in the college, and you may form some idea of the value of this one consecrated life.

Neesima loved his scholars most heartily. On one occasion, when some of them had been doing very wrong, he told them that rather than punish them he would himself bear the penalty of their transgressions. In their presence he beat himself with a stout stick until it broke in his hands, and until they begged him to desist. One of them still treasures a fragment of the cane as a most precious memento of this remarkable teacher.

Besides love for his pupils, Neesima's affection for his father and mother should be mentioned. A strong desire for his father's conversion prompted him first to write from these American shores, and he afterwards kept up a regular correspondence as possible with his parents. After returning to Japan, he provided for them a comfortable home; and saw his father depart in peace to the unseen land. When the son himself was dying away from home last January, he refused, as long as he could, to summon his wife to his bedside, because he would not take her from the care of his aged mother.

Yet stronger than the love of country, pupils or kindred was Neesima's love of Christ. It was devotion to the service of the best of masters that made him what he was. It is the earnest, whole-souled, self-sacrificing Christian whose death from heart disease is now mourned both in Japan and America. It has been predicted that he will go down in history as one of the great men of Japan. The source of his strength is that which all may find who give themselves to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the old world and in the new there are souls to be won for him, and the young men and the young women are those who are needed for the work.

The materials for this slight sketch have been gathered from recent periodicals, but we are promised a fitting biography, from the pen of Prof. A. S. Hardy, of Joseph Hardy Neesima. Let it be hoped that among those who read it there will be many to imitate him in so far as he followed Christ.—Christian Intelligencer.

Hardly Ever Without a Smile.

It was a sultry day in August, and a tired, over-heated woman had toiled all day in the little pent-up kitchen. At last the baking was all done and the last dish was washed and wiped, and she pressed one hand on her throbbing temples and sighed as she reached up to take the mop down from its hook to scrub the kitchen floor. Things had "gone wrong" all day, and she scolded and grumbled to herself while she pushed the heavy mop to and fro, back and forth or wrung out the thick cloth with aching fingers. She felt her lot was hard, to be baking and scrubbing and fainting all that day, while her neighbor just over the fence was lying at ease in her hammock under the trees and singing: "Oh, nobody knows the trouble I have!"

Presently a door was opened softly, and her little daughter picked her way with prudent steps where the floor had not been wet and climbed to a safe perch on the table. The mother mopped away, hoping she need not speak to her. "If I open my mouth I shall say something cross," she thought, and kept her lips shut tightly.

The little one watched her for a short time, bending her sunny head this way and that to study the downcast countenance, and finally she spoke.

"Mamma," said she, "I have hardly ever seen you without a smile on your face."

The mother turned away for a moment's rapid thought. Was it indeed true that she had made such an impression on that dear child's heart; and should she spoil it now? Should she not rather set herself thenceforth to keep a smiling face through all life's petty trials? How sweet to be remembered thus by all the children, and her husband, too, for pleasant looks and way!

"One time when you looked sorry was when I was so sick, and the other time was now," resumed the serious little voice; and the child leaned her cheek upon her hand and sighed.

The mop-handle dropped suddenly upon the floor, and two bare arms forgot their aches and pains and clasped the darling in a fond embrace. "Sing to me, Alice. Sing! 'Nobody knows the comfort I have,

while I finish this patch of dirty floor. There's one good thing about a little tuck-up kitchen, it doesn't take long to scrub it!"

So it came to pass out of that day of weary toil was learned a timely lesson of self-control and patience that never was forgotten. Two times of "looking sorry" were quite sufficient to live in the memory of her children.—American Messenger.

Tobacco—A Parable.

Then shall the kingdom of Satan be likened to a grain of tobacco seed; which, though exceedingly small, being cast into the ground grew, and became a great plant; and spread its leaves rank and broad, so that huge and vile worms formed a habitation thereon. And it came to pass, in the course of time, the son of a man looked upon it, and thought it beautiful to look upon, and much to be desired to make lads look big and manly. So they put forth their hands and did cleave thereof. And some it made sick, and others to vomit most filthily. And it farther came to pass that those who chewed it became weak and unmanly, and said we are enslaved and can't cease from chewing it. And the mouths of those that were enslaved became foul; and they were seized with a violent spitting; and they did spit, even in ladies' parlors, and in the house of the Lord of Hosts. And the saints of the Most High were greatly plagued thereby. And in the course of time it came to pass that others snuffed it; and they were taken suddenly with fits, and they did sneeze with a great and mighty sneeze, inasmuch that their eyes filled with tears, and they did look exceedingly silly. And yet others cunningly wrought the leaves thereof into rolls, and did set fire to the one end thereof, and did suck vehemently at the other end thereof, and did look very grave and call-like; and the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever.

And the cultivation thereof became a great and mighty business on the earth; and the merchant-men waxed rich by the commerce thereof. And it came to pass that the saints of the Most High defiled themselves therewith; even the poor who could not buy shoes, nor bread, nor books for their little ones, spent their money for it. And the Lord was greatly displeased therewith, and said: "Wherefore this waste; and why do these little ones lack bread and shoes and books? Turn now your fields into corn and wheat; and put this evil thing far from you; and be separate, and defile not yourselves any more; and I will bless you and cause my face to shine on you."

But with one accord they all exclaimed: "We cannot cease from chewing, snuffing, and puffing—we are slaves."—Christian Secretary.

I Speak My Mind.

"I speak my mind," said one. Yes, and you trod on a worm that did not turn. "I will speak my mind," says another. Yes, and the temper and self-will that have been nurtured, have found expression, and you call it candor, when yourself was gratified.

If there is a difference of opinion, you are always right, others are wrong. Much that is called plain speaking is the result of ignorance, egotism and self-esteem.

Argument is useless, feelings are hurt, and the wiser retire, rather than contend.

But the right must be defended, the innocent must be protected, the oppressed must have liberty, and man must look up and enjoy what God has given him.

Will those who so freely and often speak their minds allow others the same liberty? Not unless they voice their sentiments.

When the mind and heart are cultivated to discern the right and the wrong, a "righteous indignation" may be expressed in a right spirit.

The habit of denouncing things and persons that we know very little about is annoying to the listener, and cannot contribute to the comfort of the fault-finder. Like Job's friends, "All wisdom will die with them."

We often see what we don't like, and would have otherwise. But we cannot manage the world, and are only accountable for what we can do.

The duties that are close to us suffering that is around us, the evils that we may prevent or mitigate, these ought to claim attention. Then we shall have little time to waste, and few useless words will be spoken.—M. E. C.

Opening Doors for Women.

It is very interesting to me to see how God is providentially making room for us, in spite of the iron-clad prejudices of the churches. For instance, some seventeen years ago lady medical students were hissed

in clinic rooms in Philadelphia, and, if I remember rightly, mobbed. Then the call came from India for female medical missionaries, and Miss Swain went. The demand has sanctified the service in the eyes of the Church, and now the lady physician is as much honored as she was once despised. Now I notice in my missionary exchanges, and in late missionary literature, that the need of female evangelists for the foreign field is being recognized in conservative circles; not Quakers and Methodists, but Calvinists are saying: "The women of heathen lands must be reached by the ministry of their Christian sisters." And Dr. Thoburn in an article in one of our Church papers, goes so far as to say that the ordinances will have to be administered by women to the inmates of the zenanas for one generation at least. And so, you see, I am looking for this problem also to find its solution in the foreign field, and the heathen prejudice against woman's ministry to be relegated back to its cradle, or rather to the land from which it sprang, for its final blow. I believe the preaching of the Gospel by women missionaries will dispel the prejudice against woman's preaching in the home-Church, much as the services of the medical missionaries have altered the home sentiment about lady physicians.—From Miss Willard's "Woman in the Pulpit."

Cherish Your Girlhood.

Dear Girls, don't be so often wishing you were grown-up women that you will neglect your girlhood. In the rush and hurry of these fast times there is danger that you will reach and strain after "young ladyhood" too much.

Be girls a while yet; tender, joyous, loving, obedient and industrious. Womanhood, with its privileges and power, its burdens and its trials, will come soon enough. On this point has one said:

"Wait patiently, my children, through all the limit of your girlhood. Go not after womanhood; let it come to you. Keep out of public view. Cultivate refinement and modesty.

The cares and responsibilities of life will come soon enough. When they come you will meet them, I trust, as a true woman should. But oh, be not so unwise as to throw away your girlhood. Rob not yourself of this beautiful season, which, wisely spent, will brighten all your future life."

IF YOU WANT TO BE LOVED.—Don't repeat gossip, even if it does interest a crowd.

Don't go untidy on the plea that everybody knows you.

Don't be rude to your inferiors in social position.

Don't over or under-dress.

Don't express a positive opinion unless you perfectly understand what you are talking about.

Don't get in the habit of vulgarizing life by making light of the sentiment of it.

Don't jeer at anybody's religious belief.

Don't try to be anything else but a gentleman—and that means a woman who has consideration for the whole world and whose life is governed by the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would be done by."—Ladies Home Journal.

Don't forget to say "Good-morning!" And say it cheerfully and with a smile. It will do you good, and do your friends good. There's a kind inspiration in every "Good morning," heartily spoken, that helps to make hope fresher and work lighter. It seems really to make the morning good, and to be a prophecy of a good day to come after it. And if this be true of the "Good morning," it is so also of all kind, heartsome greetings. They cheer the discouraged, rest the tired one, and somehow make the wheels of life run more smoothly.

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The Directors have pleasure in presenting their Report of the transactions of the Company for the past year. An examination of the accompanying statements of accounts will show that the progress made has been rapid, solid and in every way satisfactory.

During the year we received 2,755 applications for life assurance amounting to \$4,102,710.55. Of these 2,504 for \$3,732,331.15 were accepted and policies issued thereon, the balance being declined or withdrawn. This total is \$706,226.99 in advance of the previous year and the passing of the four million line marks another mile post in the Company's history.

In the accident department, the applications were 1,363 for \$2,420,300.00, and the policies issued 1,347 for \$2,375,300.00. The combined applications of the two branches thus reached the handsome total of \$6,523,010.55.

The assurances in force at the close of the year were as follows:— LIFE..... 8,951.....\$13,337,983.08 ACCIDENT.....2,064..... 3,826,400.00

TOTAL.....11,015 \$17,164,383.08 The financial position of the Company is very gratifying. The income has increased until it now amounts to \$563,140.52, or nearly \$2,000 for every working day in the year. The death claims which fell in were \$5,538.49 less than in 1888, although in natural course they should have increased. An addition of more than a quarter of a million has been made to the assets, bringing their total up to \$2,233,322.72. The cash surplus has also advanced to \$219,036.64, or \$156,530.64 beyond all liabilities and capital stock. And last, but by no means least, is the fact which does not show on the surface, but to which we can testify, that the quality of the assets is exceptionally high. In view of this prosperous condition of affairs, there is no risk in predicting that the surplus to divide among Policy-holders at the end of the present quinquennium will be large and satisfactory.

Table with 2 columns: INCOME and DISBURSEMENTS. Includes items like Premiums, Annuity, Accident, Reassurances, Interest, Rents, Dividends on Capital, Death Claims, etc.

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