

**THEY THAT SAT IN DARKNESS: AN  
ACCOUNT OF RESCUE WORK  
IN JAPAN IN THE WORDS OF  
THE REV. YOSHIMICHI SUGIURA**

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MEMBERS OF THE UNION AT THE BEGINNING OF ITS WORK

**THEY THAT SAT IN  
DARKNESS**

**An Account of Rescue Work in Japan  
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**THE  
REV. YOSHIMICHI SUGIURA**

**DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY  
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## PREFACE.

It was some thirty years ago, while a student at St. Paul's College, Tokyo, that I began to study the Bible with the guidance of the late Bishop G. M. Williams, and by his kind efforts and the great influence of his saintly character, that acted upon my miserable self thirsting only for the worldly fame and riches, I was converted and baptized by the Bishop, in December, 1881.

In those days the Christian influence in this country was very weak, and almost all the students even in this Christian college were much disgusted with the religious instructions. My friends in this city were constantly cautioning me not to believe the foreign religion but only to study English, as it was advantageous to learn it in such school taught by foreigners. When I was baptized, however, I had contrived how to surprise them by informing it. One Sunday evening, when the Bishop was going to preach in a chapel in Kanda, in which district many of my

such anti-Christian friends were staying, I called on them and persuaded them to come to the chapel to hear this great man's sermon once. Having got the Bishop's permission beforehand, I ascended to the pulpit to my friends' surprise, and preached first and told them that they were misunderstanding this true religion. By this unexpected conduct of mine, they had rather to give up their hope of me, while one of them got very angry with me and told others even that he would kill me.

Seeing such adverse circumstances of my country and that the volunteers for the mission work were very rare, I was deeply impressed with that it was really the most urgent matter to consider, and I thought it necessary to offer myself to Lord's service. But for many years I could not prepare myself for Holy orders on account of many hindrances. So I worked as a layman and converted my family and other people in my native town, Obama, in Fukui Prefecture, and a church was at last founded there. The church in Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture, was also founded as a consequence of my work, when I was in Osaka city, and a pastor was sent to it from the Presbyterian church.

At last, in 1888, I entered Trinity Divinity School, Tokyo, as I was hoping for many years. While I was a student there, Bishop Williams asked me to take care of the True Light Church. This church was formerly in his care and is indeed the first church he ever founded in Tokyo, thirty-seven years ago. But when many churches and chapels were built afterward in the city, many a member of this church began very naturally to leave it and attend those nearer and more convenient to them, so that in about 1890 the church was at its lowest ebb, and the Sunday attendance was seldom more than ten, and therefore its remaining members asked the Bishop to send me. I am working ever since for this same church.

As soon as I began my work in this church there occurred an event that aroused my sympathy with the poor people in this part of the city. In the afternoon of a Sunday in Lent, 1890, a member of my church took me by my request to a person who used to attend the church before. He was a blind man, and was very ill when I called on. His wife was a blind woman too, and was out for her work then. They were shampooers by trade, and