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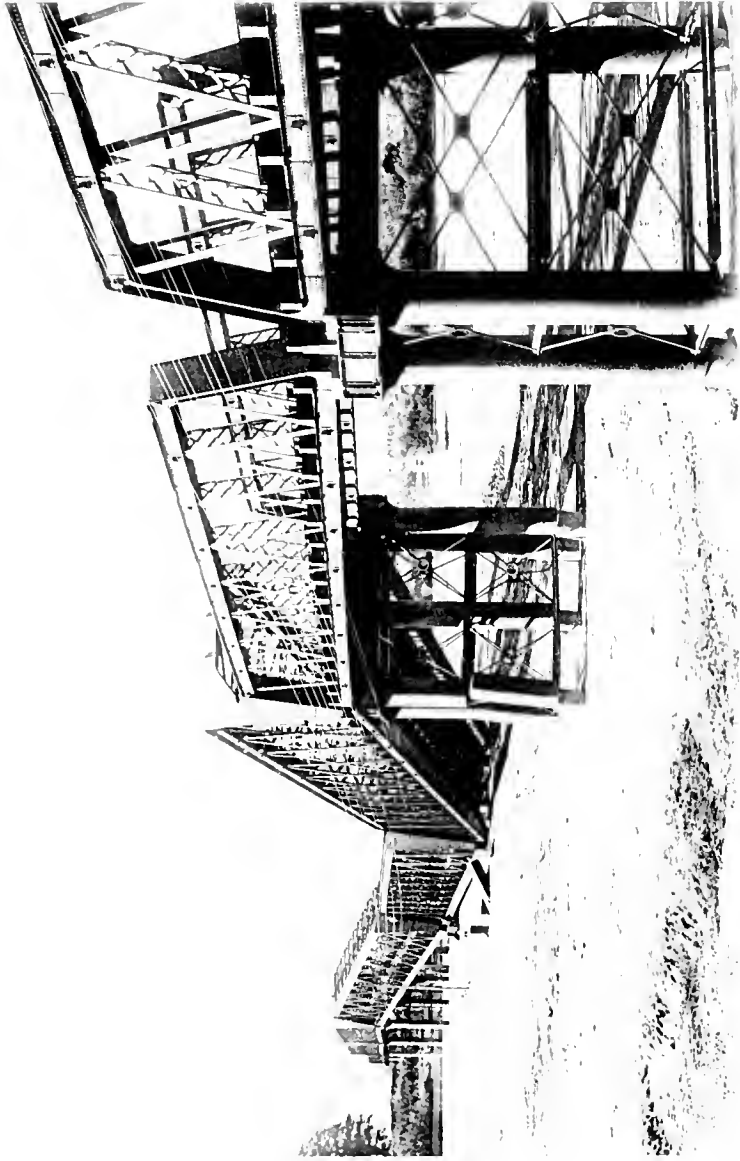




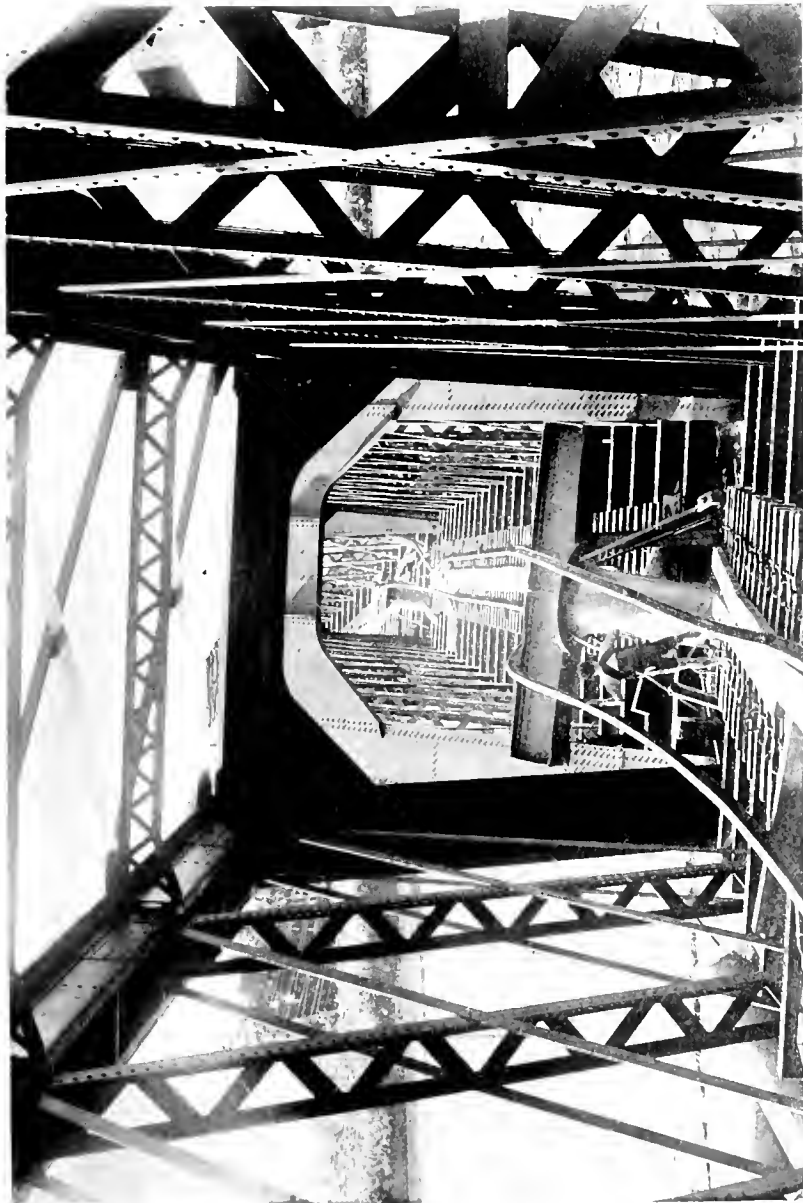




LETTERS FROM THE LAND  
OF THE RISING SUN.



THE NAGARAGWA BRIDGE AFTER THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE—SIDE VIEW.



THE SAME—END VIEW.



# LETTERS

FROM THE

## LAND OF THE RISING SUN.

*Being a Selection from Correspondence contributed to  
"THE TIMES" between the Years 1886 and 1892, and re-  
produced with the permission of the Proprietors of that  
Journal.*

BY HENRY SPENCER PALMER, F.R.A.S.,  
MAJOR GENERAL, RETIRED LIST, ROYAL ENGINEERS.

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WITH SEVENTY-SIX ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE.

This volume contains a series of letters written by the late Major-General H. S. PALMER, R.E., during his residence in Tokyo, for *The Times* newspaper. They were collected for publication in book form a few weeks before his last illness, and appear here exactly as they were written, his own scheme of arrangement and plan of illustration being also carefully followed. Perhaps it should be added that the political letters have been excluded and the descriptive alone retained, by the Author's choice.

F. BRINKLEY.

Tokyo, November 20th, 1894.



## LETTER I.

### *LIFE AT A JAPANESE SPA.*

IKAO, 20th August, 1886.

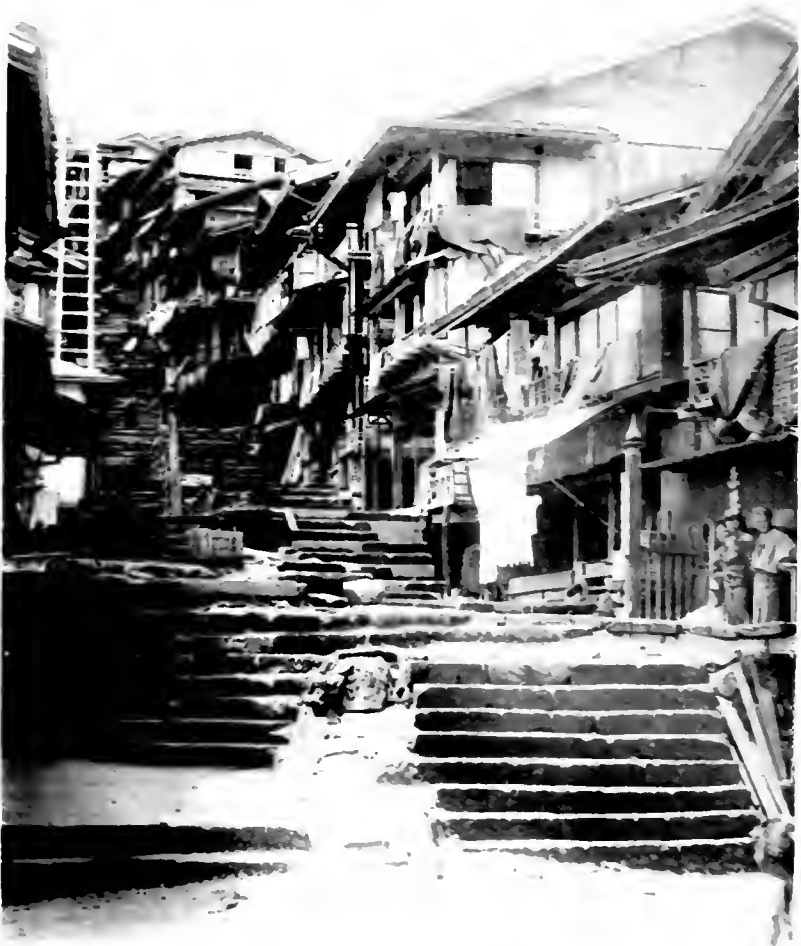
Competition, allied with steam and steel, is fast operating to lessen the enormous distance which separates Japan from Europe. Already, with ordinary luck, the traveller who does not tarry may reach Tokyo from London *via* San Francisco in thirty days. Soon he will be able to do so in twenty-five or twenty-six days, by way of Montreal and Port Moody. Hitherto, the wonders and beauties of this pleasant land have been virtually monopolized, as far as foreigners are concerned, by a thin stream of travellers, mainly of the globe-trotting class. But the day cannot be far off when they will be brought fairly within the reach of any vacation tourist able to spare three or four months for exploiting a country that offers attractions of the highest order as a holiday resort. Japan, indeed, has the enviable reputation of inspiring love at first sight in the heart of every comer. Nor is this a mere passing sentiment. It grows steadily as acquaintance ripens. As well with those who remain for years as with those whose stay lasts but for a month or two, there is a something about the country and its people that never fails to win lasting and even affectionate regard.

Much has been written, in many books, concerning the characteristics of Japanese cities and life therein. Every one has read over and over again about the parks, gardens, and fortresses; the tea-houses and hotels; the jinrikisha-riding and river excursions; the sights and sounds of the streets; the tempting curio-shops, with their wealth of art-products; the theatres, conjurers, tumblers, and wrestlers; the temples, all-glorious without and unspeakably glorious within; the national festivals and fairs; the dainty and exquisitely dressed little *geisha* who minister at dinners and suppers *à la Japonaise*; and the many other items which enter into the round of existence in Japan's capital and provincial towns. We have also heard a good deal of the ordinary features of travel along the main highways, and even along some of the "unbeaten tracks." But very little has yet been told about those delightful spas and highland health-resorts, long and well beloved by the Japanese, which are yearly becoming better known and better liked by foreign residents and travellers. The greater part of Japan's territory is essentially volcanic. Professor Milne counts up a hundred and twenty-nine mountains scattered over the empire which are distinctly of volcanic origin, and fifty-one of which are still active and giving off steam. The same indefatigable authority has lately collected and published the records of as many as two hundred and thirty-three eruptions. It is no wonder, then, that hot springs abound in several parts of the country. Some are found in the lowlands, but a much greater number in the mountains and hills. Now, as opium to a Chinese, or mint-juleps to a Virginian, so is hot-water bathing to a Japanese. The luxury of the daily hot bath is, indeed, almost as necessary to him as his dinner. And when the hot water is of Nature's heating, when it rises ceaselessly and in goodly



volume from the depths of the earth, in some cool, elevated region blessed with salubrious air and attractive scenery, and when, especially, it possesses valuable medicinal or healing properties—then you have the ideal conditions of a Japanese summer watering-place. To such spots—and there are many of them—the better classes of Japanese swarm at this season, glad to escape from the trammels of town life, from the blazing heat of the plains, and from cities which, alas! are nowadays only too often ravaged by cholera in its direst form.

Notable among these spots is Ikao. Any one in search of the novel and picturesque, of quiet seclusion from the world's worry and unrest, and of an almost Arcadian existence in a soft, balmy climate and amid enchanting scenery, would be very queerly constituted if he failed to find contentment at Ikao. Up in the highlands of the province of Joshu, a small, compact assemblage of long, low-roofed Japanese buildings, wide-eaved and wide-verandahed, clings to the abrupt face of a lovely nook in the north-east escarpment of the Haruna mountain group. A narrow picturesque street, or rather flight of rude steps, to be likened only for steepness to the most breakneck alleys of Malta or Hongkong, climbs directly up the acclivity, and ends at an unpretending temple dedicated to the Shinto god Onamuji-no-Mikoto. Provision and sweetmeat shops, tea-houses, public baths, and stalls for the sale of local curios line the little thoroughfare. At each stage of the ascent lanes lead off right and left to the dozen or two of large two-storied hotels which form the main feature of the place. These, built on artificial terraces, rise tier upon tier so quickly that the roof of one is barely higher than the ground floor of the next above it. Thus, from its upper story always, and often from its lower, each commands a



IKAO : THE MAIN STREET.

goodly view of the fair landscape that is spread below. Behind rise bold, rounded masses of mountains, covered to their summits with the richest verdure. Far beneath on the right, in the depths of a precipitous and beautiful ravine, a noisy torrent, foaming over a rust-coloured bed, carries down to the plain the waters of the mineral spring which first sees the light a little behind and above the village. This—a mere handful of a place, yet capable at a pinch of accommodating between 2,000 and 3,000 guests in its short summer season—is Ikao, now fast becoming one of the most popular spas in Japan.

Until recently, Ikao was but little known, and frequented only by the holiday folk of the neighbouring region. But the virtues of its water, both for drinking and bathing, and the advantages of its situation, were brought into prominent notice a few years ago by the distinguished German physician, Dr. E. Baelz, who fills the chair of Medicine in the University of Japan; and, as three-fourths of the seventy miles which separate it from Tokyo can now be traversed by rail, the whole journey thence is easily compassed in a day. To the hot-water loving and Nature loving denizens of the vast capital a chance like this was welcome as showers in spring. Here the town-wearied official or citizen can taste for a while the sweets of the old easy-going life which preceded foreign intercourse, and which in the busier haunts is now slipping out of sight with dreamlike rapidity. Here, during the lazy warmth of the summer days, he can lounge through existence in all the happy luxury of airy rooms, 2,700 feet above the sea, and yet airier costume, oft-repeated bathing and water-drinking, a good deal of eating and sleeping, and entire freedom from work, worry, and mosquitoes—and all this in a lovely re-

treat which still retains its old simplicity, with scarce a symptom of modern improvement. He can walk or romp with his children, gossip with his friends, and play "go" or Chinese chess with them to his heart's content. He can drink innumerable little cups of tea and *saké*, smoke untold pipes (three or four whiffs apiece) of the mildest of tobacco, and, if it please him, beguile the time with musical and dancing entertainments by infant prodigies, middle-aged experts whose only charm is in their skill, or the livelier and more enchanting *geisha*. There is no room on this crowded site for even as much as the little patch of trimly-kept garden which is a stereotyped feature in the town home of a Japanese. But a garden of man's making would have no charm for him here. For, is not the whole outlook one vast and exquisite garden of Nature's own handiwork, replete with those scenic features the faithful reproduction of which, in miniature, is at once the aim and delight of the artist-gardener of Japan? From the verandah of his hotel at Ikao he can survey a glorious panorama of mountain and valley, hill and plain, the uplands clad with dense forest and open green expanses of waving grass, the low country richly cultivated, and dotted with copses, villages, and hamlets. Before him the extinct volcano Akagi-san and a host of other peaks tower to heights of 5,000 and 6,000 feet. Far below, in the plain, he can trace for many a mile the silver thread of the winding Tonegawa, on its way to the Gulf of Yedo. Beyond, in the remoter distance, loom the gigantic masses of the Nikko range, overhanging those solemn forest aisles where stately cryptomeria wave over the honoured shrines of the Shoguns Iyeyasu and Iyemitsu, of pious and immortal memory. And over the whole landscape broods that delicate crystalline atmosphere which assuredly justifies

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Japan's title to be called the Land of the Rising Sun. But, if the Japanese thus well enjoys the *dolce far niente* at his inn, he at the same time shows a laudable keenness to explore the beauties which nature and art have furnished for his delectation, with no niggard hands, in the neighbourhood of Ikao. From the higher of the airy heights which rise behind the village he can be sure of a goodly prospect over a vast expanse of Central Japan, including the Kwanto, or great plain of Tokyo. For more adventurous spirits, athirst to behold the wonders of a live volcano, the smoking crater of the mighty Asama-yama offers the temptation of a three or four days' excursion. Or, at Haruna and Midzusawa, each within a moderate walk through the fairest of fair Japanese hill scenery, are to be seen rare examples of those ancient tree-embowered temples and shrines, always erected on the choicest natural sites, whose fine proportions, exquisite details, and lavish art decoration so surprise and delight the traveller in many parts of the empire. To the Japanese, on any of these excursions, there is real luxury in the wealth of foliage, the play of sunlight, and the splendid combinations of form and colour which meet him at every turn. He loves the music of the glad streams that rush down every ravine, the roar and thunder of the cascades which here and there dash over the cliffs to meet them, or the still beauty of some glassy lake half-hidden in the depths of the hills. He rejoices in the sweet, fresh country air, breathing, as it often does, the perfume of flowers, conspicuous among which at this season is the magnificent *Lilium auratum*, that here almost whitens the surface of the grassy upland plains and slopes. And wherever he goes he may be pretty sure of finding, at spots which command the best views, cool, shady little tea-houses or kiosks, where he may rest and re-



KAGO, FOR MOUNTAIN TRAVEL.

fresh himself with tea or *saké*, and be fanned and waited on by brisk, comely Japanese damsels. Groups of such happy tourists are daily to be seen rambling over the hills and glens around Ikao. Perhaps, if the excursion be a long one, one or two ladies of the party have indulged themselves with *kago*—a kind of bamboo tray, slung on a pole and carried by coolies—which, in a region that no wheeled vehicle can penetrate and where side-saddles are unknown, furnish their only possible, albeit most tiresome, means of conveyance. But the rest, men and women, boys and girls, lightly and always tastefully clad, tramp gaily along, their loins well girt and nether limbs well gaitered, staffs in their hands, and feet shod with the admirable Japanese rice-straw sandals which are the best of all foot-garniture for mountain work. If the day be bright, some of them will be shaded by orange-tinted paper parasols, which form delici-

ous bits of colour in the landscape. Happiness, contentment, and good temper are stamped on every countenance—the impress of their sunshiny natures, and aptly harmonizing with the spirit of the place. Except at moments given to hushed admiration of some fresh beauty in the view or rare product of forest or field, they keep up a constant flow of chat and laughter. Towards night they return, tired it may be, but always cheery, laden with flowers and perhaps little purchased trifles for friends at home characteristic of the scenes they have visited, to enjoy with ever fresh delight the luxuries of hot water, cool bathing-ropes, and much gossip over the day's adventures.

Being charged with iron and sulphate of soda, and hence serving as a specific for some stomachic disorders that are common among the upper and middle classes in Japan, the water of Ikao is much prized for its medicinal properties, which are also efficacious in certain ailments of the daughters of Eve. But, after all, it is the bathing that chiefly attracts three-fourths of those who come here. If you explore the little town you find an all-pervading presence of hot water. Its steam is everywhere. Go where you will you hear its rush and trickle, and the splashing and chatter of happy bathers immersed to their chins in a rusty fluid at the high temperature—only pleasantly warm to a Japanese—of 117 degrees Fahrenheit. Wooden or bamboo pipes lead it all over the place, and supply a constant stream through every bath. Each large hotel has several such baths—roomy wooden tanks three or four feet deep. Here the sexes bathe separately. But in the public baths men and women of the lower orders often bathe together, in half-open sheds at the street side, yet with a degree of modesty and decorum, and a quiet unconcern



IKAO HOTELS.



about one another's presence or the stray glances of passers-by, which are absolutely incomprehensible to those who have not witnessed the habit as still practised in a few parts of Japan. "Cleanliness before all other things" seems, however, to be a cardinal maxim with the Japanese. You see this in the everlasting scrubbing, pumice-stoning, and tubbing in the bath-houses, which from dawn till far into the night know hardly a moment's rest. You see it also in the scrupulous cleanliness of their houses, and in their careful provision for light and ventilation, all of which are so grievously wanting in the unsavoury dwellings of the Flowery Land. Here, even the most crowded second-class inn, where the guests may sometimes be counted at literally one per mat of six feet by three feet, can show spotless—would that we could say flealess—floors and walls, while an abundance of air and light is obtained by the simple expedient of sliding back or removing the paper-glazed partitions at the front and rear.

Foreign visitors to Ikao may now count on finding fairly comfortable quarters in one or two clean and cheap hotels, with bedsteads and other furniture, foreign cooking and a tolerable *menu*. With these accessories, with the luxurious baths which, when the water is a little cooled, Europeans soon learn to appreciate, with many attractions of scenery and climate, as well as a host of novelties that are to be seen nowhere but in Japan, and best of all at a Japanese spa—the man who fails to be pleased with life at Ikao can have no one but himself to blame. Something of its chief characteristics has been told above. But it would need columns to do more than mention the tea-houses, curio-shops, and kiosks; the story-tellers, strolling musicians, jugglers, mountebanks, and quacks; the clever old



JAPANESE ARCHERS.

*moji-yaki*, who handles his hot liquid streams of sweetstuff with such persuasive skill that they are quickly fashioned, as by magic, into the most amazing baskets, tortoises, and other quaint shapes, before the very eyes of the delighted children who are his patrons; of the archery-ground, where you can indulge in target practice with the formidable bows and arrows of old Japanese warfare; and of other novelties and diversions—all as distinctively Japanese as is the landscape itself—in which the visitor, whatever his age or country, may find simple enjoyment without stint at Ikao.

To some foreigners, enfeebled by long residence in the East, the medicinal value of the water is a great attraction; and, whether he drinks the water or no, what new-comer ever tires of the short walk to the Yumoto, or hot spring's source, in the glen behind the village? There is no

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“pump-room” here—only a dusky sylvan dell, a rustic bench or two, a square hole in the rock beneath which the steaming water flows, and a single bamboo dipper for those who drink. But the morning or evening walk thither is delightful, in the cool shade of a lovely ravine, rich with greenery, enlivened by the murmur of falling water and the shrill whirr of cicadas, and brightened by the most picturesque and happy of human throngs. On this neutral ground you meet representatives of nearly all classes of Japanese society, from the plain shopkeeper or professional man of the capital to the blue-blooded scions of an aristocracy so ancient that no member of it begins to think his family worthy to be called an old one until he can trace a clear descent for six or seven centuries at least. There are *Daimyos* of the old *régime*, Ministers and Secretaries of the new—possibly, also, a Prince or Princess of the Imperial family. There are the greater and lesser nobles of the feudal era, most of them now enrolled in the lately-created peerage; and former *samurai*, of all degrees, who mainly compose the large official class of modern Japan. Many are accompanied by their wives—those gentle, devoted, well-bred, and essentially feminine women who brighten Japanese homes, and who, you rejoice to see, are no longer disfigured as of old by blackened teeth, but can, and do, smile on you in all their native comeliness. The prevailing dress of both sexes, if it be morning, is the *yukata*, or modest cotton bathing-robe, of all hues and patterns, bound at the waist by a girdle of silk, satin, or crape. Here, however, comes a Buddhist priest, all shaven and shorn, in his silk robe and cool mantle of delicate gauze, fanning himself with holy but needless fervour. Next, a high Foreign Office dignitary, looking, as he well may do, a good deal bewildered about the Treaties, and clad



A BUDDHIST PRIEST.

in the quiet silk and crape garments of ordinary life, with the crest of his house woven in white on the back and sleeves of the uppermost one. Then, perhaps, you come upon a pair of young dandies, in all the pride of foreign clothes, stand-up collars, tight gloves, and dainty canes and shoes. But they are a mistake here, where, excepting themselves and the foreign-style socks, shoes, and straw hats, now pretty common among the men, you have little or nothing to remind you that you are not in Old Japan. Next, oh happy contrast! a flutter of fans, a patchwork of vivid colours, a ripple of laughter, and you are face to face with a gay troop of Japanese Hebes, rosy-lipped and dark-eyed, with beautiful teeth, clear complexions of all shades from ivory-white to nut-brown, willowy forms, finely-pencilled eyebrows, and rich masses of black hair, tastefully braided and set off by some bright flower or coral ornament, with a





JAPANESE CHILDREN.

neat binding of blue or crimson crape. Mirth, guilelessness, and—if there be anything in physiognomy—a large capacity for love, beam from the faces of those most killing Japanese belles. And their dresses are a study. While Japanese parents and adult folk generally content themselves with colours of almost Quaker-like sobriety, the nation seems to have lavished a world of artistic taste and skill on the raiment of its girls and children. Be the colours bright or dull, the patterns bold or tame, the fabrics coarse or fine, the contrasts sharp or soft, you find that in artistic arrangement, grace, and beauty, the whole effect is always charming. As for the children, they swarm, they are delightful, and they present veritable nosegays of colour. If at first they look a little old-fashioned, in costumes which as to cut are merely reproductions in miniature of those of their parents, you soon find out that in reality they

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are very children of children. When you know them better you also find that, with all the attractions and virtues of children, they have very few of their faults. Long before Herbert Spencer taught the Western world how children should be reared, Japanese parents had of their own motion adopted most of the very principles of training which he inculcates. The result is the Japanese child of to-day. Great changes have passed over Japan during the last thirty years. Great changes still lie before her. But, come what may, let us at least hope that in disposition, manners, grace, and dress, Japanese children and young girls may remain, essentially, as they are.





## LETTER II.

### *ASAMA-YAMA: A JAPANESE VOLCANO.*

IKAO, 30th August, 1886.

Of Japan's numerous volcanic peaks, some active, some inactive, others apparently extinct for ever, one of the greatest and most famous is Mount Asama, in the province of Shinshu. While in height, grandeur, and grace of outline, and in the veneration with which it is regarded by the Japanese people, the lordly Fujisan stands a head and shoulders above every rival, there is a second order of eminences, comprising some half-dozen peaks of from 8,000 to 10,000 feet in altitude, among which Asama-yama, though not the highest, holds perhaps the chief place, as being the loftiest of the fifty-one active volcanoes in the Empire. The fires of Fuji are, for the time at least, virtually dead. But in Asama-yama's dark and cloud-capped ridge there is, as an old native account says, "a fire always burning;" and the records of its eruptions are among the most harrowing and terrible in the whole history of volcanoes. An opportunity which was lately afforded me of visiting this celebrated mountain in the company of a chosen friend, and of returning hither by way of Kusatsu—the most unique watering-place in all Japan, if not in all the world—was too tempting to be thrown away. And cer-



FUJISAN.

tainly, among the varied experiences of a wandering life in many parts of the globe, I can recall no excursion that embraced so much of things wonderful, beautiful, and uncommon, within the short compass of four or five days' travel.

Our first afternoon's march lay over the lovely heights of Mount Haruna, and past the time-hallowed Shinto temple of the same name, which is situated in a sequestered and romantically beautiful glen on the southern slope of the mountain. Noon of the second day found us toiling up the weary zigzag of the Shizuma Pass, the summit of which, 4,800 feet above the sea, commands in clear weather a magnificent view of Asama-yama, and of the wooded and grassy uplands that spread around its base. It had been dull since morning, with a steady drizzle, and long before reaching the top of the pass we had fairly entered the zone



IJARUNA TEMPLE.

of cloud, and abandoned all hope of better weather. Suddenly, however, while we were yet resting on the summit, there was a play of light below. Then the fog began to lift, break, and roll away, and, one by one, the peaks, small and great, near and far, shed their garments of mist, until at length the whole glorious landscape of mountain and park-like dale, moor and forest, sharp-cut crags, and grassy plains bright with flowers, lay before us, glowing in the brilliant light of the midday sun. Asama-yama alone was denied to us. We were dead to leeward. We could see far up on his brown and naked shoulders; but the crater-peak remained doggedly hidden behind the vapour-cloud of its own creation. In front of us, five or six miles away, where the highest stretch of moorland meets the foot of the volcano, could be just descried the spot at which we were to pass the night. A wretched place enough this afterwards proved to be—a mere barn, flea-ridden and smoke-begrimed, yet honoured by the high-sounding title of the *Wakasare-no-chaya*. But what more of comfort could be fairly expected in a wild region some five thousand feet above the sea, and in the ticklish neighbourhood of a live volcano, ready at the shortest notice to belch forth overwhelming ruin and destruction upon everything, animate and inanimate, within a radius of miles? Growling, at any rate, was useless in such a place. Then, at sundown, came rain, to reconcile us to our rude quarters. And while the Japanese "boy" who served in the triple capacity of dragoon, valet, and cook to the expedition was getting ready the supper we had brought with us, we were glad to turn once more to the interesting details that Professor Milne has collated about the Big Mountain, as the country folks of the district call it, which towers four thousand feet above the *Wakasare-no-chaya*.

“It is not known,” say the Japanese, “when Asamayama began to burn.” The earliest outburst mentioned in their annals took place just twelve centuries ago, since which time twenty-one, or perhaps more correctly twenty, eruptions have been recorded, down to the latest in 1870, which, however, was of trifling magnitude. Of the whole series, four or five stand out conspicuously in the narratives that have been preserved. The first of these, which is also the first of the series, happened in the year 683; and though the record is, as might be expected of that period, extremely bald, there is sufficient mention of its destructive effects to indicate an unusual degree of violence. In 1532 there was a fearful outburst, during which large rocks and stones, one of the former having a diameter of forty-two feet, were violently ejected to distances as great as five miles. Ashes fell in places distant more than seventy miles, and lava-streams, mingling with heavy rain and lava-melted snow which lay on the ground to a depth of six or seven feet, wrought havoc that it took years to efface. In 1703, and again in 1711, came eruptions of exceptional magnitude. Parts of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were epochs of marked activity. Especially during the last twenty years of the eighteenth century abnormal volcanic energy was displayed in many districts of Japan, as well as in other countries. In 1783 occurred the remarkable lava-flow at Skaptar Yokul, in Iceland, and in the summer of the same year took place the last and most memorable of the great eruptions of Asamayama, than which there are few more terrible in seismic records. On that occasion, after a period of unusual tranquillity, active eruption began on the 25th of June, and only reached its climax during the first week in August, from which time it rapidly declined. When at its height,

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says a Japanese historian, "the noise it made was like that of a thousand thunders. To the very foot the whole mountain seemed to be on fire, and from the midst of the smoke lightning flashed in every direction. The scene was fearful. The burning was furious and shook the earth; and screens in houses twenty-five miles distant were shaken and slipped out of their grooves." Lava, stones, mud, and cinders devastated the surrounding region, covering the ground to a depth of from two to five feet. In Tokyo, eighty miles away, fine ashes fell to a depth of more than two inches. Whole valleys were filled with *ejectamenta*, rivers diverted, and villages to the number of fifty-eight buried or burned; and pitchy darkness, even at noonday, with lightning and frightful thunder, prevailed in the leeward districts, so that in places as many as forty miles distant "night and day were equally dark, and no one knew when it was daybreak." Sudden and terrible death came to hundreds of the peasantry; and upon the ruined survivors fell soon afterwards the further horrors of starvation and riot. On the north side of the mountain a prodigious lava-stream descended for a distance of thirty-eight miles, the first thirty of which were accomplished in sixteen hours. Throes of earthquake constantly shook the land. Flights of huge stones, some of them from fifty feet to more than a hundred feet in diameter, were shot into the air, and "dropped as abundantly as the leaves of trees." In Tokyo, besides great darkness, there were shaking and roaring, both of which were also experienced in provinces as many as a hundred and eighty miles away. Half Japan, in short, was more or less agitated by this terrible convulsion; and, in the words of a Japanese narrator, "the various events which happened at this time could not be described by the pen, nor could they be told with the tongue." Smiling verdure now covers the erstwhile scorched and blackened



ASAMA-YAMA.

landscape round Asama-yama's base. But the still steaming crater, the old lava-stream, which looks for all the world like a huge black serpent on the bare face of the mountain, and the enormous blocks and masses of lava and other *ejectamenta* that cover the whole country side, serve, amid countless lesser signs, to remind the traveller of those terrible summer days and nights of 1783. No one, indeed, can see the monster rocks, weighing tens of thousands of tons, which were ejected on that occasion, and which now strew the plains on the southern slope, without a feeling of astonishment that Asama-yama did not burst bodily and collapse in the mighty efforts that brought them forth.

We were up long before dawn next morning, as full of energy as could be expected of men who had passed a well-nigh sleepless night, tormented by legions of fleas, half suffocated by the smoke of a wood fire, and enlivened by the chatter of our host and hostess and certain pilgrims who had arrived late in the evening. Sleep with those good people can have been no object. For, after keeping up a brisk conversation till close on midnight, by two o'clock they were out of bed again and at it as hard as ever. To these lonely folk in volcano-land gossip apparently has as great a charm as that of hot-water bathing to the visitors at Ikao, where it is no uncommon experience to find a Japanese who awakes in the dead of night suddenly arise, step over his sleeping family, and betake himself to the bath, to indulge for the next half-hour in a blissful simmering. With the first streak of daylight we were under way, headed by a guide from the tea-house, who had hard enough work at first to make out the narrow overgrown trail, through high grass and brushwood, lava blocks and fallen timber, that led for a mile or so to the



immediate foot of the volcano. An hour's ascending carried us above the clouds and up to the uttermost limit of vegetation, just in time to see the sun's earliest rays salute the crown of Asama-yama, faintly seen through light wisps of driving mist three thousand feet above us. Henceforward, progress, though not difficult, was laborious to a degree—up a naked brown saddle-back ridge, inclined at a slope which averages nearly one in two. The path, marked out by small cairns, climbed in short zigzags over gritty cinders, for the most part fairly well packed, but here and there loose enough to add sensibly to the fatigue of the ascent, and test severely the heart and lungs. At length, however, the summit was reached, two-and-a-half hours after leaving the tea-house, and we were free to enjoy the full fruits of our toil. For some time past a sharp struggle had been going on between sun and cloud, only to end in a pretty equal compromise. For, while the earth beneath us was now wholly unmasked to the west of the meridian, and bathed in the golden glory of the morning sun, the rest of the circle was occupied by a billowy ocean of softly rolling clouds of extraordinary beauty, three thousand feet below our standpoint, the highest peaks alone here and there raising their heads, dark, distant, lonely and half-drowned, above the glossy surface. In the clear half-hour, we looked down upon a vast expanse of Central Japan, which, viewed from this airy height, seemed little else but a sea of mountains. Seventy miles off, in the south, rose the craggy peak of

*"Great Fuziyama, aching to the sky."*

Northward, along the border of earth and cloud, lay the lively volcano Shirane-san, Asama-yama's younger sister, a bare score of miles away, pointed at us, as if to remind them



A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF CLOUT-LAN, O.

out of her veil of mist. On the west, the not very distant Sea of Japan was shut from view by the rugged granite range of Shinan-o-Hida, the mightiest and wildest chain in the Empire. All this was grand enough. But, do the bird's-eye prospects from great mountain tops fully come up to the expectations of even those travellers to whom such things are new? This is very doubtful. You get distance and vastness. You get all the joyousness of spirits due to your lofty elevation. You see spread out below and around you the giant vertebrae, ribs, and arteries of the land—snow and glaciers, lakes and rivers, and long ranks of lesser peaks sitting humbly at the feet of the monarch you have mastered. Perhaps, also, you catch the glimmer of some far-off ocean. Yet you lose most of the beauties of form, contrast, colour, and height which a less exalted standpoint commands; and you miss the details of cultivation, hamlets, wealth of

verdure, hills, and waterfalls, which assuredly arranged to complete and gladden a landscape. So, at least, we thought as, from our perch on the summit of Asamuyama, 8,500 feet above the sea, we surveyed a group of the fairest provinces of this earthly Eden which is called Japan. And, after all, the crater, not the view, was what we had come for. So to the crater we very soon addressed ourselves.

While climbing the last steep cone of the ascent, we had heard, very faint at first, but gradually becoming more audible in the still morning air as we advanced, the roar or rumble of the volcano. Arrived at the crater's edge, it was much louder and angrier, and at times almost alarming—not unlike the noise produced by a train's passage over a bridge under which you are standing. There was none of the shaking, however, that some have spoken of; but loud hissing and bubbling constantly proceeded from numberless vapour-jets on the inner face of the crater wall, from its rim downwards. The circumference of the crater, which is a rough oval in shape, was approximately estimated at 1,056 yards, by walking round the windward half of it—it was not practicable to pass through the vapours on the lee side,—which was accomplished in six minutes, at the rate of about three miles an hour. It is impossible, therefore, to accept the estimate of a German explorer, who set down the diameter at 1,100 yards, or that of the English mathematical professor who limited the diameter to 200 yards—divergence of data will illustrate the mental confusion to which some are liable when in the presence of dread natural phenomena. Whether regarded in plain or elevation, the crater-form is irregular. But it is very thoroughly defined, the slope being down sharply and with excessive steepness, particularly towards the north, where



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it is nearly vertical. Vast clouds of the most pungent sulphurous steam rise swiftly out of this dismal and mighty cauldron. Its depth no man can tell. All estimates hitherto made are the merest guesswork. A recent visitor claims to have seen on a moonlight night to its bottom, which looked like "a furnace filled with glowing coals," and which he supposed to be only about two hundred feet below him. But, not to speak of the extreme difficulty of accurate observation by night, or of the fact that neither this visitor nor any of his party were experts, other more skilled observers have declared to seeing down to considerably greater depths. By us, certainly, glimpses of the crater-wall were occasionally obtained at depths which a very moderate estimate would place at three hundred feet. At the same time, the gradual convergence of the cavity which was there apparent would seem to forbid acceptance of the enormous profundity for which some visitors have contended, and to suggest that the depth to the surface of molten matter can hardly much exceed five or six hundred feet. On crawling to the edge of the hideous abyss, peering into its depths, and occasionally catching a blast of the volcano's stifling breath, there is brought home to you, in some degree at least, a conception of the tremendous and hellish energies which from time to time furnish such convincing yet terrifying and disastrous proofs that this Earth of ours is "still in its vigour." The churning and groaning far below, the masses of fetid vapour ever being hurled up wrathfully from the gloomy and awful depths, and the riven, scorched, and honeycombed walls, exhaling clouds of suffocating steam from a thousand crevices and holes, readily suggest latent possibilities well calculated to appal the stoutest heart. Apparently the present crater is the youngest and innermost of three. Farther down on the



A JAPANESE PACK-HORSE.

south-west side are to be seen, along with numerous fissures of unfathomable depth, remains which point to the existence of two former craters, concentric and of large dimensions, and separated from one another by a considerable interval. Possibly the existing cone may have been formed during the great eruption in 1783.

Men who have reached the time of life which reminds them that knees have joints are little better able to run down a mountain than up it, especially when the slopes consist of cinders piled at angles of from thirty to thirty-five degrees above the horizon. Hence it happened that, though we had ascended to the crater in 150 minutes, we needed 100 minutes to accomplish our return to the Waka-sare-no-chaya. Half an hour later we were in, or rather on, the saddle; for he who would travel on horseback in

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the wilds of Japan must at times submit for hours to the refined torture of being well-nigh split apart on the broad span of a Japanese pack-saddle, unless he be bold enough to face the risk of riding sideways after the manner sometimes resorted to by the native packers. By nightfall we reached Kusatsu, some seventeen miles to the northward. But a description of that extraordinary place must be reserved for another letter.





### LETTER III.

#### *KUSATSU; A JAPANESE SANITARIUM.*

IKAO, 2nd September, 1886.

About a thousand years ago, as Japanese tradition runs, the peasants of the highland district which lies between the volcanoes Asama-yama and Shirane-san, in the province of Shinshu, discovered a rare group of hot mineral springs and streams in a small valley at the foot of the latter peak. Instinct, or possibly chance, led them to try the effects of those waters in cases of sickness, and experiment soon led to the discovery that they possessed wonderful healing properties. Some three centuries later, the illustrious and valiant Yoritomo—first of the Shoguns, and one of the greatest heroes of Japanese history—was hunting in the neighbourhood. He fell sick, heard of the waters, tried them, and recovered. From that time, Kusatsu, or “grassy ford,” as the place is named—doubtless from the grass-clad expanses of the neighbouring uplands—became celebrated. Its fame has, moreover, gone on increasing from generation to generation; and the list of diseases for which its waters are said by the Japanese to be sovereign specifics now includes more than thirty of the gravest ills that flesh is heir to. There is, of course, some exaggeration here. But the fact remains, and is attested

by foreign physicians of high repute, that the extraordinary efficacy of the Kusatsu springs, their number, variety of constitution, high temperatures, and exceptionally ample volume, and the wide range of maladies which yield to their healing influences, entitle them to rank as one of the most remarkable groups of their kind that the world has yet known.

Kusatsu—pronounced Kusatz—is now a goodly village, hidden away from the outer world in a hollow surrounded by temple-crowned and wooded eminences. Its chief and central feature is an open, steaming square, about a couple of acres in extent, in which are collected the majority of the celebrated warm waters, some rising as springs in the square itself, others led to it from neighbouring ravines. Scattered round the margin of this square stand a number of open or half-open sheds, containing the public bathing-tanks where hundreds of the sick and suffering poor of Japan undergo, several times a day, the severe ordeal of bathing in caustic, evil-smelling waters at almost intolerable temperatures. A multitude of conduits and pipes, led from the various sources, supply ever-running streams of steaming water to these tanks and to other less public baths in the close vicinity. The Stygian vapours, of whitish colour and strong sulphurous odour, which pervade the air, and the thick mineral deposits—green, yellow, or white—that are to be seen in every conduit, tank, and bath, vividly recall the sights and smells of the geyser regions of New Zealand or the Yellowstone. Packed closely round the square, covering the rest of the little hollow, and clustering on the hillsides, are the two hundred or so of houses which form the village. These, with their wide-angled roofs, shingle-covered and loaded with heavy stones, their ample



KUSATSU.

verandahs, dark framing, and white walls, resemble nothing so much as the neatest of Swiss mountain *chalets*. As at Ikao, the best of them are hotels, with a large capacity for guests. But, with this exception, there is hardly a point of similarity between the two spas, situated barely thirty miles apart. Kusatsu, indeed, is in all essential particulars the very anti-type of Ikao. At the latter place, as I described in a recent letter, all is brightness and beauty, amid which throngs of Japanese of the better classes, for the most part hale and hearty, devote themselves to the full enjoyment of holiday-life in the country *à la Japonaise*. At Kusatsu, in a dull hollow without a prospect, you meet none of these, but, in their place, an ailing, woebegone, and joyless crowd, almost wholly of the lower orders, who seek, by painful processes, to get rid of maladies which in many cases are of the most frightful kinds, and who have no more cheerful occupation than that of watching their own symptoms as the days and weeks go wearily by. At Ikao children and young folks are the light and life of the place. At Kusatsu they are phenomena very rarely seen. At Ikao bathing is indulged in at all hours as a luxury and a pastime, and with no more restraint than the fun at a carnival, rather than for the sake of any mild beneficial properties which the water may possess. At Kusatsu it is a solemn and bitter penance, submitted to at stated hours and under medical advice.

Sulphur, arsenic, copper, alumina, magnesia, and other substances enter in various forms and degrees into the composition of the warm waters of Kusatsu, each of which has its special virtues for different maladies, according to its temperature and constituents. A large number of scrofulous and rheumatic disorders, gout, ophthalmia (very

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common in Japan) and other eye diseases, *kakke*, a grave malady said to correspond with the "beri-beri" of Netherlands India, and many diseases of the joints, are treated with marked success at these admirable springs. Even lepers seem to derive some temporary benefit at Kusatsu—something that has the effect of hindering the progress of that incurable disease and assuaging its terrors. For there is a special bath devoted to the use of these poor creatures—a sight fit only for men with strong nerves and a taste for the horrible. But it is to the extraordinary efficacy of certain of its waters in one of the most fearful and inextinguishable of all human maladies—a scourge from which the Japanese are no more exempt than the rest of the erring sons of men—that Kusatsu mainly owes its great reputation in the Far East. When that reputation shall have extended, as it certainly will do sooner or later, to Western countries, it is fair to anticipate that patients from all parts of the globe will flock to the little sanitarium in the hills of Japan, which, by the common consent of skilled judges acquainted with the facts, holds out a promise of cure for cases of a sufficiently desperate nature to defy successful remedy elsewhere. That the treatment at Kusatsu, in such cases, is in a high degree drastic, may be conjectured from indications already given. Some of the baths, indeed, are nothing but highly diluted sulphuric acid. In these, at temperatures ranging up to about 150 degrees Fahrenheit, the unfortunate patients, when at the height of their course, have to soak, in torture, five or six times a day, for weeks in succession. Virus which, from neglect or inadequate treatment, has run riot for years in the system—even virus that has been inherited at birth—is gradually extracted by this severe course of bathing. Not, however, without vast suffering and incon-

venience, over which it is necessary to draw a veil. Suffice it to say that, at the end of his six or seven weeks' purgatory, the convalescent, yet still half-disabled, invalid is glad enough to get away to the soft, healing warm waters which Nature, ever kind, has provided for his more complete restoration at the little village of Sawatari, a few miles distant on the road to the capital. One course of the Kusatsu baths is usually sufficient for ordinary patients, but in grave cases thorough cure is only to be attained by a second or even a third course, in successive seasons. The wonderful success which attends the treatment seems to be due not only to the chemical composition of the springs, but to their abnormally high temperatures, which exceed those of all other similarly constituted waters, and, it must be added, to the rare courage with which the Japanese patients undergo during long periods the ordeal of oft-repeated bathing. As a matter of course, the baths are only taken under medical advice. No one would resort to them unless obliged, and to many they would be dangerous. To persons, for example, disposed to congestion of the brain, or having anything wrong with the heart or arteries, the high temperatures are prohibitive.

Of the severer baths at Kusatsu, the two most famous are the "Fever-bath," so called from its high normal temperature of about 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and the "Eagle," scarcely cooler, deriving its name from a fanciful legend of an eagle's cure. There are also the Gozano-yu, highly efficacious for ophthalmia, and said to have been used by Yoritomo; the "Waterfall-bath," from the douches with which it is provided; and several others—all of them at temperatures ranging from about 110 degrees to 150 degrees. Some of the springs and streams occasionally

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exhibit curious phenomena, varying their temperatures, flowing intermittently, disappearing altogether and being often replaced by others, receiving fresh affluents, losing them again, and behaving generally in the erratic and unprincipled manner that is to be expected in a seething volcanic soil. A study of these and other peculiarities of the waters, as well as of their composition and properties and the best modes of turning them to account, offers an inviting field to specialists, and has, indeed, already engaged the attention of one distinguished German expert, Dr. E. Baelz, of the Imperial University in Tokyo. The ordinary visitor, however, will certainly find his chief interest in the strange spectacle of the public bathing, which is the sight of sights at Kusatsu. That unparalleled but most dismal ceremony, carried out with military precision and regularity at three-hourly intervals, from about five o'clock in the morning until after dark, made a very strong impression on me, and I think cannot fail to do so on any spectator. If you draw near—as you may do without impropriety—to, let us say, the Netsu-no-yu, or fever-bath, at any of the hours fixed for bathing, you witness a sight that is certain to remain graven indelibly on the memory until your life's end. At the appointed time, a loud and long blast from a horn, audible everywhere in the village, summons the patients to their trying penance. Then, out of every hotel, tea-house, and alley, the sufferers, clad only in cotton bathing-robcs and sandals, find their way slowly to the various baths around and near the square. While they are thus collecting, a number of attendants, armed with short boards, agitate the water in the tanks, with a great noise and shouting, and with a vigour which has the effect of thoroughly mixing and at the same time slightly aerating and cooling it. To the Netsu-no-yu come,



BATHERS IN THE NETSU-NO-YU.



perhaps, thirty or forty sick men, and, alas! nearly as many women. All unrobe, quietly and decorously, and seat themselves on the wooden platforms which run round the tanks. Then, at a word of command from the chief attendant, they set to work simultaneously to souse their heads, and afterwards their bodies, with the scalding water, using dippers brought for the purpose. This process is very necessary, as a precaution against vertigo, and to raise the temperature of the body before attempting immersion. Other brief preparations, into which it is needless to enter, are then gone through by the more afflicted martyrs. "Are you ready?" cries the attendant—watch in hand, for this bathing in free sulphuric acid at 150 degrees is a ticklish business, in which seconds count. At the response "Ready" the signal is given, and the whole assembly proceed, slowly and painfully—many of them with agonized faces—to lower themselves into the half-boiling fluid until it is up to their chins. "Can you bear it?" is the next inquiry, answered by a melancholy and half-stifled "Yes" from every throat. "You have only to endure it for three minutes," says the master of the ceremonies, in a voice that is meant to be cheerful. Then, as each minute elapses, he calls the time, adding now and then words of encouragement to his flock, who are tortured by pain and smarting, yet have pluck enough still left in them to respond dismally to his exhortations. Faces brighten a bit, however, when, at the end of two-and-a-half minutes, he announces that but thirty seconds remain. Fifteen seconds later he gives the warning to prepare. At last the third minute expires, the final word is uttered, and with a gasp of relief the parboiled fraternity emerge from the tanks a good deal more briskly than they entered them—red as lobsters and sweating profusely at every pore. They mop the wet from their steaming bodies, slip into their

bathing-robcs, and disperse slowly and sadly homeward. Then peace and silence come over the scene, to dwell there until the next bugle-call.

Besides the virtues of its waters, Kusatsu has other features to reconcile it to the invalid who is constrained to stay there. Though the site of the village itself commands no view, and is pervaded by malodorous vapours of sulphur, its neighbourhood is one of great natural beauty. Walks or rides lead in all directions through Japanese hill-scenery of a most attractive type, commanding at every elevated point a fine prospect of the mighty Asama-yama, chief among the active volcanoes of Japan. Immediately above the village, another interesting live volcano, Shirane-san, rises some 3,000 feet, by an ascent so gradual that you may ride on horseback to the very crater's edge. As to the climate, it is—for the period from May to October which is the ordinary season at Kusatsu—all that the testiest invalid could desire. It is the climate of the mountains, healthful, breezy, and invigorating, neither too damp nor too dry, never distressingly warm by day even in the hottest August weather, and always cool at night. Cholera, occasionally the scourge of the torrid plains, finds no habitat in this salubrious spot, 3,500 feet above the sea, with its pure air, rapid drainage, and, strange to say, ample supply of delicious water. Mosquitoes are unknown, and other insect pests—down even to the fleas—are comparatively rare. It should be added that the ordeal of the public baths is only undergone by the poorer classes, separate baths, sufficiently private, being procurable by those who can afford a trifling payment. Yet, in spite of all that can be said in its favour, Kusatsu is hardly a place that any one would care to linger in unless obliged. It is a place to be seen once—a

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place that ought to be seen by all who have the opportunity, because it is so perfectly unique that there is none other like it in the known world. Types of things beautiful, things strange, and things sad and dreadful are there grouped in the rarest juxtaposition. But, unfortunately, the last largely predominate. They form nearly the whole inner life of the place. They are with you always; and there is no getting away from them except by flight, to which all visitors but those of the most ghoul-like disposition gladly betake themselves after a day or two's experience at Kusatsu, well convinced that to have seen it is enough.

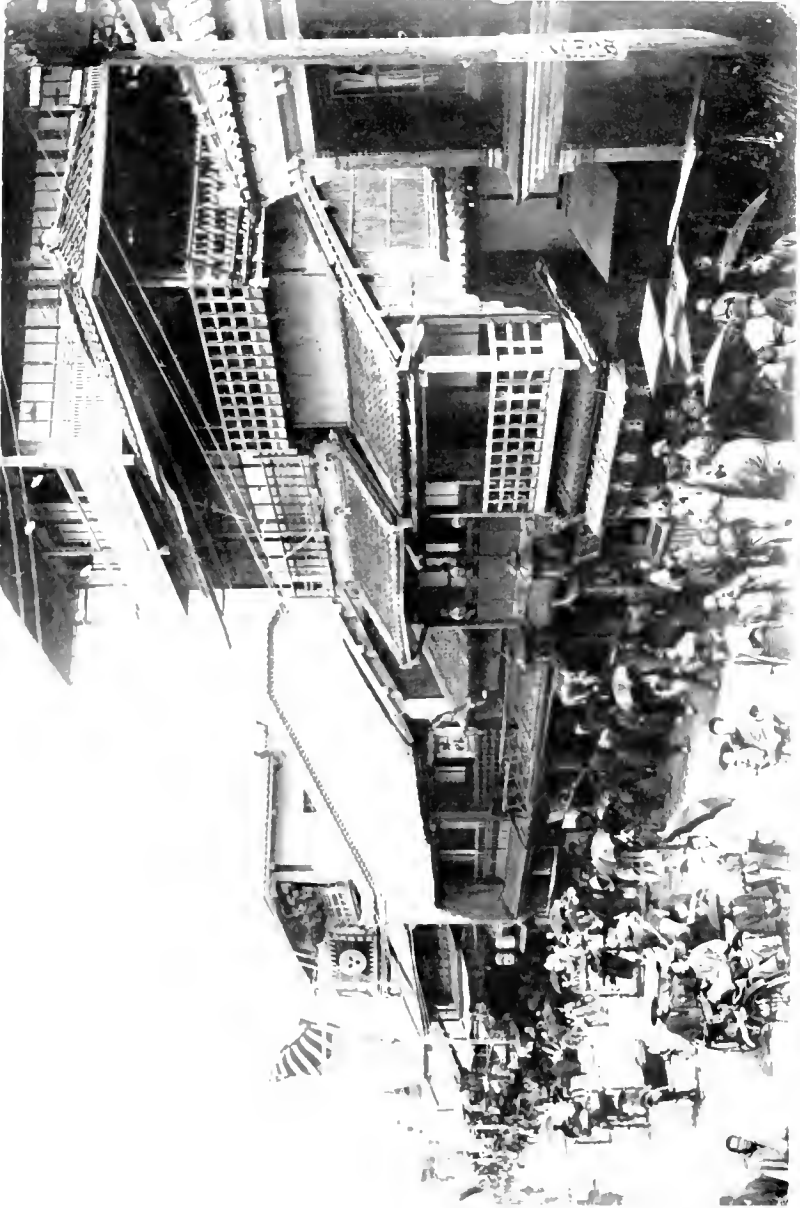


## LETTER IV.

### *THE MIYAKO ODORI; A JAPANESE BALLET.*

KYOTO, 5th February, 1887.

Kyoto, the western capital of Japan, is now *en fête*, and basking in the sunshine of Royalty. After an interval of a decade, the Emperor has again favoured with his presence the ancient city, so rich in historical association and in the natural beauty of its surroundings, in which his ancestors, the spiritual rulers of Japan, were born and lived and died during an unbroken period of nearly eleven hundred years. And again the spacious palace, remarkable rather for exquisite and refined simplicity than for characteristics of a more imposing kind, is filled with the stir and ceremonial of the Imperial Court. But, compared with the austere routine which existed as lately as twenty years ago, the circumstances now attending the Sovereign's presence in the home of his forefathers and of his own youth present a truly extraordinary contrast. In feudal times the palace was virtually the prison of the Emperor. Immured within its gates and never seen by his subjects, he lived a life of rigid and mysterious seclusion. Under the new order of things Japan's present Monarch goes freely over the city and neighbourhood, beholding and beheld by the people of all degrees. He visits schools, exhibitions, and temples,



A STREET IN KYOTO.

inspects public works and institutions, and reviews his troops and squadrons. He is, in short, even as other Sovereigns, a palpable and living reality, a ruler in deed as well as in name. In one respect, however, His Majesty's position is most happily unchanged. Neither time nor reform seems to have lessened in any appreciable degree those sentiments of loyalty and devotion with which the Japanese people at large have ever regarded the revered person of the Sovereign. In the hearts of the people he is still, as of old, verily the King of Kings. It is no wonder, then, that the city of the Sons of Heaven has put on full holiday garb to do honour to the occasion of a month's visit by the Imperial party, consisting of the Emperor and Empress, the Dowager Empress, and certain Princes of the Blood. The clean streets of the goodly old capital seem cleaner than ever. The national flag hangs from every house. Citizens, for the most part arrayed in their best, wear that air of simple easy-going recreation which comes so naturally to the pleasure-loving Japanese. Bright dresses of girls and children fill the streets with life and colour. The shop-fronts are at their gayest; decorations abound; and everywhere endless rows of many-coloured paper lanterns, of imposing size, embellish the long straight thoroughfares by day and produce the fairest of effects by night. Lastly, a Fine Arts Exhibition, for the display of old and new objects of art, has been opened in the castle grounds, and is in every respect worthy of a city and district long distinguished as the headquarters of the cleverest of the renowned potters, embroiderers, weavers, and other artist-artisans of Japan. It would have been strange if, among the preparations for the Imperial visit, there had not been included some special form of entertainment by the celebrated *Maiko*, or *dansuses*, of Kyoto. Stage-dancing in Japan is an institution of great

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antiquity. It may almost be said to date from the occasion, far back in the hoary past, when, according to Japanese mythology, the Sun-Goddess, regarded as the ancestress of the Imperial family, was tricked into peeping out of her cave-retreat by the noisy revels of the gods and the sprightly dancing of her beautiful sister-divinity Ama-no-Usume. That legendary dance, at all events, is regarded as the origin of Japanese theatrical representation. At first the dancing ceremonies, thus devised, were only practised as religious rites. The Kagura, an imitation of Ama-no-Usume's celebrated dance, and dating from the birth of the Shinto creed, may still be witnessed on festival days at any important Shinto shrine. But gradually this and other traditional performances were made to serve as models for dances of popular entertainment, the number of which is now considerable. Not to speak of many kinds of public exhibitions, no dinner or supper party in Japanese style is complete without its quota of bewitching and exquisitely dressed lasses, who wait upon the guests with the prettiest air imaginable, and afterwards entertain them with music, singing, and dancing. Except in the ancient *Ar Kiyogen*—still performed occasionally in refined society—or at hilarious supper-parties when ordinary restraints are abandoned, a Japanese, it is to be observed, never dances himself. I refer, of course, to the true custom of the country, as distinct from the taste for Western dancing which has lately sprung up among the higher classes in the capital and treaty ports. With befitting Oriental dignity, he prefers to have his dancing done for him, and, with the best of judgment, he gets it done by the prettiest girls in the land. Kyoto, as the Emperor's capital and the centre of aristocratic residence, was always famous, and is famous still, for the variety and excellence of its dances, as well as for the





MAIKO.

beauty, grace, and skill of the performers, whose accomplishments are a household word in Japan. No visitor should leave Kyoto without seeing a Maiko performance, Maiko being the local name for the younger class of *danseuses*, elsewhere generally called "Odoriko." The older "Geisha" class includes in its ranks musicians and singers, as well as dancers. For centuries the Western capital was the chief school of the dancing art, and produced its own high-class types, in which the object always aimed at was to preserve, amid all variety, the courtly elegance and dignity and beautiful apparel of the ancient styles. Such, for example, is the Shirabyoshi, a pure Kyoto dance, of considerable antiquity. And such, though of modern date, is the Miyako-Odori, or metropolitan dance, devised barely twenty years ago by a late director of the dancing society of Kyoto. A representation of this refined dance has just

been prepared for the stage with great care, in honour of the Emperor's visit; and I had an opportunity of witnessing its performance a few evenings ago. As with many another attractive spectacle in the old Japanese style, the days of the Miyako-Odori are probably numbered. Let me therefore attempt to crystallise it in the columns of *The Times*.

The theatre of the Kaburenjo, or chief training-school of the Kyoto Maiko, has all the simplicity of architecture and decoration that is characteristic of the majority of Japanese buildings. It is of plain unvarnished and unpainted wood, the most striking features being the usual ponderous roof, carried on single span of some fifty feet, and the high excellence of the carpenters' and joiners' work. Besides the main stage in front, there are two narrower stages, occupying the right and left sides of the building. On the fourth side, facing the main stage, is a large room-like box for the Imperial family and Court, and in front of it are two or three tiers of raised seats, plainly a modern innovation. The body of the auditorium, occupying the space between the side stages, is a flat, undivided matted area, in, or rather on, which the spectators sit in Japanese fashion, and solace themselves with their tiny pipes of fragrant tobacco and little cups of the never-failing tea. On entering, we find the stages concealed by curtains of white silk-crape, painted with pine, bamboo, and plum trees, the emblems of longevity, vigour, and fragrance. These are the only decorations. The lighting is of the simplest—footlights with candles for the stage, and hanging lamps and rows of candles for the rest of the interior. On the rise of the curtains, the scene in front represents a summer-house in the ground of the Emperor's palace, girt by a verandah with red-lacquered steps and railings and hung with bamboo

blinds. Right and left, on each side-stage, is a crimson dais, on which are seated eight girl-musicians, or *gūsha*, from about eighteen to twenty years of age, clothed in soft raiment of brilliant hues, and got up from head to foot in the highest style of Japanese art. The eight on the right are players of the *samisen*, a species of three-stringed guitar, the chords of which are struck with an ivory plectrum. Of those on the left, four play the *tsuzumi*, a small drum held in the air and struck with the hand, the other four performing alternately with the *taikei*, or flat drum, and bells of delicate tone. Music and singing are at once begun. These are of the quaint and, for the most part, somewhat dismal type peculiar to the higher lights of the musical art in Japan. It is difficult to convey an idea of them. For Western ears they have but little melody, and few inspiring strains. One must be a Japanese to appreciate them. Time and tune, however, are evidently well kept, and the performance is doubtless good of its kind. And, if you cannot admire the music, you can at least forgive it in contemplation of the players. After a short overture, the *Maiko* appear, entering at the extremities of the side-stages, right and left of the Imperial box, and moving in single file toward the main stage. The *maebine*, extremely slow, can only be described as a progress. It is not a march; neither is it a dance as we understand the term. Stately almost to solemnity, yet full of grace, it is a series of artistic posturings and pantomime, in time with the music, and accompanied by the slowest possible forward movement.

By this time all of the *dancers* have entered; there are sixteen on either side—young girls of from about fifteen to seventeen years old. In dress they are counterparts of the musicians—glow with scarlet, light-blue, white, and

gold, in robes of great length and voluminous folds, bound with girdles of truly prodigious dimensions. In spite, however, of the gorgeous colouring, there is nothing garish or distasteful to the eye. No canon of art or taste is offended. The secret lies in the fabric of the girls' garments—silk-crape, the delicate softness of which relieves the brilliancy of tints that might otherwise be displeasing. In person the Maiko are the prettiest little specimens of budding Japanese girlhood, rosy-lipped and black-eyed, with comely and delicate features, tiny hands and feet, and an air of graceful modesty and innocence rarely seen on any stage. As for their *coiffure*, it is a miracle of the Japanese hair-dresser's skill, and rich with adornments of flowers and coral. How much of their beauty these dainty little lasses may owe to art it might be unkind to enquire too closely. Kyoto is famed for its manufacture of *shiroi*, a white-lead cosmetic of rare virtue, and said to be used with a skill which Western ladies of fashion would give a good deal to possess. But surely there can be little need for it here, if we may judge from the whiteness of the Maiko's hands and of as much of her arms as is now and then revealed to us. There is also a Japanese rouge, of great merit, which uncharitable persons might suspect of having a share in the brilliancy of those "threads of scarlet," the Maiko's lips. Tiny razors, too, are even supposed by some malignant minds to play a part in the finely-pencilled eye-brows of Japanese belles. Kindly folk, however, prefer to put away all such churlish thoughts, and to rest content with the pretty picture that is now set before them—a reproduction in flesh and blood of the typical Japanese beauty of our fans and screens, with the all-important exception that the face of the artist's creation seldom does justice to the living original.

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Fans of course play a prominent part in the intricate gestures of the Maiko. Those carried now are large and circular, and richly bedecked with red and white flowers. With these, as with their heads, hands, limbs, and bodies, the files display to the full, on their slow progress up the theatre, that music of motion which so delights the eyes of the Japanese. Thus, turning, bowing, swaying, kneeling, and waving, always gracefully and in time with the music, the ranks at length meet on the front stage, pass one another, and retire again down the sides, at the end of which they turn, form into pairs, and regain the stage, one wing soon leaving it, while the other continues the dance before the footlights for a few minutes, when it also retires. All this while the music goes on, now sad and slow, anon in livelier strains, and is accompanied by the voices of the *samisen* players, chanting a hymn of happiness, prosperity, and peace, in which the reign of "our Lord the Sovereign" is likened, in highly flowery language, to the beauty and tranquillity of Nature "at this first blush of spring." Next, the bamboo blinds of the verandah are raised, revealing the first squadron of dancers postured in picturesque groups between a background of dead gold and the crimson lacquer of the verandah. These, descending to the stage, resume the dance. They have parted with their flower-girt fans, and each girl has a *tsuzumi* attached to her girdle, with which she accompanies the orchestra while dancing. To them, on their withdrawing, succeed the second squadron, who, with scarlet and white fans, go through a measure of singular grace and beauty, and at length retire to the verandah, which rises with them, bringing the first scene to a close. The second scene is laid in the famous gardens of Arashi-yama, in the suburbs of Kyoto, and appears as a fairy-land of flowering cherry-trees, lit by a galaxy

of minute star-like lamps. Here the whole *corps* gradually reassemble, and at length execute a final dance of the same type as before, after which they retire by the side stages, with the slow measured movements that marked their first entrance.

Thus, after about an hour's performance, ends the Miyako-Odori. It illustrates no tale or plot. It is only an elaborate measure of "woven paces and of waving hands," such as Vivien may have trodden "in the wild woods of Brocéliande." It has no objects but those of exhibiting colour, raiment, grace, and beauty with all the skill that Japanese art-taste can contrive, and of preserving the old classic style of dancing, and setting examples of the highest forms of strict feminine etiquette. If a foreigner is unable to enjoy to the full the poetry of motion which has such fascinations for the Japanese spectator, he at least cannot fail to appreciate a display not more remarkable for its æsthetic beauty and finish than for the fastidious delicacy and modesty which characterize it from beginning to end. In the latter respect the Western stage might derive a lesson worthy of imitation. No Lord Chamberlain, however lynx-eyed or hard-hearted, could find as much as a ghost of a pretext for interference here. But the visitor also feels himself impelled to ask, how long will these things be? How many years, or possibly decades, are likely to elapse before the chaste Miyako-Odori, with its refined and courtly style and squadrons of decorously-clad little Maiko, will give place to violent muscular achievements such as those with which troops of bounding, perspiring, and half-nude damsels charm the senses of theatre-goers in the West? Looking to the signs of the times, is it possible to hope that this and other emblems of Japan's ancient and refined civilization



GEISHA.

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can long survive the overwhelming tide of change and progress which is sweeping over the land? It is to be feared that all are doomed. We may, and most of us do, regret some of the inevitable consequences of this ruthless progress. We may, as many do, find fault with the impetuous hurry of this impulsive race. But, failing some great reaction which there is no reason to anticipate, Japan, having put her hand to the plough, will not turn back until her tremendous self-appointed task is done. Already loud complaints are heard that the Japanese people, not content with assimilating the best and most solid products of Occidental civilization, are displaying a giddy and unseemly haste to put on the pomps and vanities of the Western world, at the sacrifice of many things belonging to their own most interesting past which are admirable and more than well worth preserving. Hard words, not altogether undeserved, are being spoken in Europe as well as here on this subject, with special reference to the growing taste for the dress, jewelry, and ball-room dancing which are approved by the fashions of the Occident. On the other hand, Japanese leading men and some resident foreigners who are in a position to interpret truly the minds and objects of the people and their rulers and the mainsprings of national action, put the matter in a less unfavourable light. According to them, the Japanese justify the present movement on the ground that all these social reforms and new-fangled tastes are either necessary means to the great end in view or else its inevitable accompaniments; and that, this being the case, it is better to adopt them boldly at once than to avert or postpone them. The subject is a large and interesting one, and I may to return to it in a future letter.



## LETTER V.

*SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, 14th April, 1888.

In a recent letter, I referred to the movement lately set on foot in this country for reforming the dress of its women after Western styles. The subject has excited some attention in Europe, and not a little criticism. That harsh things should be said about it, especially by those who have been here, is not surprising. The general attractiveness of the Japanese fair sex, as to which there are hardly two opinions, is due in a more than ordinary degree to the becoming character of their raiment and the grace with which it is worn. Few Japanese women possess physical beauty of those lofty types which are the Western ideals. They are for the most part comely and engaging rather than handsome. Dark eyes and hair, pencilled eyebrows, well-set necks, and remarkably good teeth, together with bright, artless manners and a winning smile, serve to draw attention from irregularities of feature which will hardly bear critical scrutiny. It is the combination of physique, grace, dress, and manner that makes up the agreeable sum total of the average young girl or matron. As well in the brisk, bronze-checked serving-maid, with her homely but tasteful garments, her eyes of kindness, and her pretty ways, as in

the refined little lady of high degree, pale-skinned and gentle-mannered, in her rich, exquisitely neat dress of ceremony, the visitor and the resident alike recognize most pleasing specimens of womanhood. But they also recognize how much of the general outward effect is really due to the picturesqueness of the national garb. If confirmation of this be needed, it is sufficient to behold the same women clad in foreign clothes; or to mix in any gathering where the two styles can be seen together. Making full allowance for the disadvantages that, in the nature of things, must tell against a costume to which its wearer is wholly unaccustomed, no one who has eyes to see can hesitate then, as to the artistic superiority of the Japanese apparel. And, besides its æsthetic merits, the latter has other points of excellence. It is healthy, in that it involves no distortion or compression, of the limbs imposed by Western fashions. If the skirts of a well-dressed lady's robes are gathered somewhat too tightly for very active locomotion—perhaps the only fault that can be found in her whole attire—no other part of her frame is subjected to unnatural constraint; while the massive girdle gives warmth and protection to the chief bodily organs. Secondly, it is very much less expensive than the costly and irrational habiliments of the West. Jewelry, moreover, forms no part of it, in any station of life. Again, its fashions are abiding. While a Japanese belle, like all of her sex, delights in having good clothes and plenty of them, she has—or at least has hitherto had—the comfortable assurance that her ever-increasing wardrobe is in no danger of being at any moment thrown out of date by the caprices of Court milliners and fashion-mongers. Lastly, it is admirably suited to the beautiful fabrics of the country. It is no wonder, then, that the grievous change now in progress is loudly deprecated by nearly all onlookers.

With most of us the first feeling is one of wrathful indignation. That the Japanese, who are before all things artistic, should set themselves in this cold-blooded way to blot out one of the most delightful and picturesque features of the whole national life is regarded as incredible, unnatural, and exasperating. "It is Vandalism; it is sacrilege; it is senseless mimicry; it is everything that is bad." That is the general lament, and there seems to be a good deal in its favour. But, on the other hand, is it possible that a sacrifice so deplorable and so palpably to Japan's loss rests on no stronger or higher ground than a giddy aspiration to ape, even to this bitter end, the pomps and fashions of the West? It is a habit in certain quarters to speak of the Japanese as a nation of children, always thirsting after some new toy. Yet that character will hardly be assigned to Count Ito, even by the most reckless of censors. And Count Ito it undoubtedly was who advised the Empress to inaugurate the new movement. There must surely be something behind it all, of graver purpose and import than aught yet divined, to have led a statesman with his cool head and sagacious brain to beget a reform of this sweeping nature. Into that something—into the real springs of the movement—it seems worth while to enquire.

To understand this question at all, it is necessary to glance at the present state of Japan's progress. Thoughtful watchers of events in this country are agreed that the Japanese people have now reached a very critical point in their career of advancement. If they aim at complete success in their new civilization, it is impossible for them to remain any longer content with material, administrative, and educational reforms, of the kind pursued during the last twenty years with such unexampled vigour and resolution.

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Not only into the body politic, but into the whole social and moral fabric, must be ingrafted those conditions and principles to which Western civilization owes its growth and vitality. With the tone of that civilization perhaps nothing in Japan is so gravely out of harmony as the position of her women. There is abundant proof that, if women are to take that part in the great work of national regeneration to which they are entitled, and which is essential for success, their whole position in society must be radically changed. Now, they are at the disposal and mercy of others, and enjoy few personal rights. Before marriage a Japanese daughter is a child, owing the profoundest submission to her parents and relatives. She has no voice in the choosing of her husband, whom she barely sees, and of whom she practically knows nothing, before the nuptial ceremony. The sexes make pairs, not matches, and the pairing is managed by a go-between. After marriage the wife is little better than a slave or chattel. She may be divorced almost at will. Docility, sacrifice, and self-effacement are well-nigh the sum of her daily duties. It is to be remarked also that, while the inferior position of women has long been recognized as one of the darkest blots on Japan's ancient civilization, thus far the new civilization, instead of mending matters, has rather accentuated them. The more Japanese men learn by foreign travel and study, the wider thereby must grow the gulf that divides them from the weaker sex, as long as the present social and domestic systems remain unaltered. Plainly the sole way of curing these evils is to better the training and *status* of the women. Not only must they receive good education and be granted fuller liberty, independence, and rights of property, but they must be awarded a higher place in society as well as in the household, and be protected by adequate marriage laws, social

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intercourse being at the same time so modified that men and women may mix freely before marriage.

Another matter which calls for attention in this context is the present system of domestic life. In this is fully recognized by those who know Japan a wide sphere for useful and necessary reforms. With the broad features of ordinary Japanese household life every one is by this time more or less well acquainted. But probably few are aware that along with its good and attractive features, its exquisite cleanness and delightful simplicity, there are sundry conditions which have certainly wrought baneful effects on the national physique, and in some respects also on the national morality; and which, besides, are in many ways unsuited to the conditions of Western civilization. Removal of those drawbacks, by the gradual adoption of European modes of home life, houses and furniture in European style, and a proportion of European diet, is held to be of cardinal importance by some of Japan's ablest thinkers. The task is far from being an easy one. Neither men nor women are very ready—few are pecuniarily able—to move in reforms of such dimensions. They are wedded, naturally enough, to ancient traditions and habits. It is believed, however, that the adoption of foreign apparel by women of the upper and upper-middle classes would be a serviceable aid to getting over the threshold of the difficulty. Japanese female costume is essentially suited to Japanese modes of life, and needs but little adaptation to fit it for life in the Western style. European female costume, on the other hand, is incompatible with existence *à la Japonaise*. If, then, says the Japanese reformer, our women can be induced to wear foreign attire, their husbands will be obliged to modify the dwellings they inhabit, and to adopt in a greater or less degree improved

systems of domestic and even social life. Women will also be working out, in part, a change for the better in their own condition and *status*, and gradually raising themselves to a place in the household, in their husbands' eyes, and in society, which shall fit them for cöoperation in the work of Japan's advancement.

Much that has been said here regarding the national dress of Japanese women applies equally to that of the men. The latter, as worn by the upper and middle classes, is a great deal more becoming, comfortable, and inexpensive than the clumsy male garments of Europe, and is easily adaptable to life in foreign houses. But, while well enough for men of sedentary habits, it is hardly fitted for those active pursuits which are the accompaniments of Western ways of life. And there is a further argument for its abolition, which cuts pretty deeply into the free criticisms that have been bestowed on the Japanese desire for a change. If there is one doctrine which we Westerns have hammered into the minds of Orientals more forcibly than any other, it is the doctrine of their own inferiority. The idea of most Europeans, "from noblemen to tailors," is that an Oriental, though possibly one of God's creatures, hails from some substratum far down on the human scale, and is to be treated accordingly. That is the kind of teaching which has inclined this most patriotic of peoples towards the adoption of expedients which, without sacrificing their national individuality, may tend to make Occidentals forget the differences between them. Dress, without doubt, is an important factor in this question. As long as a Japanese wears his country's costume, it marks him conspicuously an Oriental, and tells against him in his intercourse with foreigners. Substitute European



MAN IN FOREIGN DRESS.      SAME IN JAPANESE DRESS.

clothing, and the contrast becomes less striking. He at once receives greater recognition and respect. Similar considerations help to account for the willingness that is already being shown by a few ladies of the upper classes to abandon their own charming and graceful apparel for habiliments which must be utterly repugnant to their artistic taste. Seeing that Japan's keenest aspiration is admittance into the circle of Christendom, we can hardly be astonished if her daughters aim at dressing themselves like the rest of the ladies of Christendom, even though the change be, as it certainly is, for its own sake, unwelcome and against the grain.

If the foregoing be a correct outline of the reasons by which Count Ito was swayed when recommending the Empress and her Court to set the example of adopting



JAPANESE LADY IN CEREMONIAL DRESS.



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European dress, we are led to conclude that the new movement, so far from being a blind following after Western ways merely because they are Western, is part of a high and deliberate scheme for bringing Japan into line with the nations of the Occident, and for reducing to the narrowest breadth possible the gulf of separation that lies between them. Bent on this task, the Japanese Chancellor believes that it can only be achieved by a modification of the domestic and social habits of Old Japan. He sees that improved methods of home life are necessary to the physical and moral amelioration of his people, that the whole training and *status* of women call for thorough reform, and that social intercourse needs to be placed on a broader and freer basis. He believes that those changes may best be wrought on the models of systems which have grown up in the most advanced countries of the globe. Further, he believes that a gradual assimilation of the national garb to that of Western lands will serve the double purpose of contributing to the above objects and of helping to blot out the stigma of Orientalism which, in spite of a long series of drastic reforms stamped with the seal of the world's approval, still clings to his progressive race. Believing these things, he has not flinched from applying his remedies. Here, then, we have the key to all the recent novelties—to this heart-breaking dress reform; to the improved means of education for girls and women; the thirst for foreign tongues, especially the English; the rapid growth of houses built, furnished, and managed in foreign style; the classes for training ladies in domestic work; and the multiplication of dances and other entertainments for the free intercourse of foreigners and Japanese, and of the Japanese among themselves. All these are due more or less to Government example or initiative. There will long be rival



CHILDREN IN HAKAMA.

opinions as to the wisdom of some of the above measures and experiments; as to their necessity; as to whether they are sufficiently deliberate; as to their power to penetrate far into the ranks of society, or to effect the end in view. On the question of ladies' dress, I, for one, am disposed to agree with the able editor of the *Japan Mail*, that the ruthless sacrifice just begun might have been avoided by a modification of the national costume, which, while preserving its essential features, would have met all needful requirements at the present stage, and possibly even have furnished a happy solution of the vexed problem which Lady Harberton and her colleagues have made their own. I also doubt whether the purses of more than a privileged few will prove equal to the cost of foreign clothing and its accessories. But, whatever we may think about the policy and methods of the Japanese, it is impossible to withhold admiration of their

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profound earnestness. And, after all, the rulers of Japan must be credited with understanding the needs of the people, and the way to meet those needs, a good deal better than any of us. Count Ito in particular is known to be gifted with governing faculties of a high order, and with remarkable judgment in timing and attuning domestic measures to the beat of the national pulse.

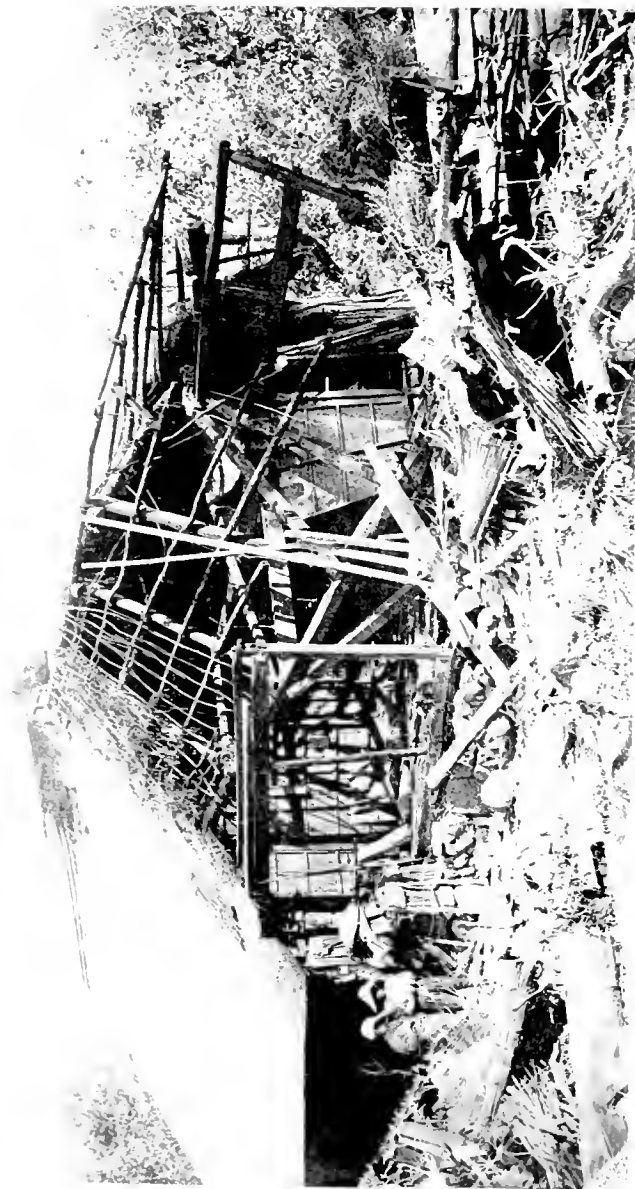


## LETTER VI.

### *THE STORY OF AN EARTHQUAKE.*

Tokyo, 1st March, 1887.

On the evening of the 15th of last January, East Central Japan was convulsed by an earthquake of most unusual violence. Originating near the eastern seaboard, in the hill region south-west of Tokyo, its vibrations extended over a land area of more than 27,000 square miles. It shook up the inhabitants of the capital and Yokohama with a frisky energy which frightened even those hardened folks into something very like a panic. It swayed and twisted houses, wrecked roofs, threw down chimneys, cracked walls, rocked furniture, and upset crockery. Persons walking abroad felt the ground moving to and fro beneath their feet. Vessels anchored in Yokohama Bay shivered so smartly that the hands below rushed on deck, believing that their craft had been run into. In short, it was the severest and longest earthquake that had been felt in Japan for many years. As such, it obviously offered a good opportunity for the collection of further *data* bearing on seismological research. And the University authorities, fired by some of that seismic energy which Professor Milne contrives to breathe into all with whom he comes into contact, promptly despatched a Japanese expert to explore the field of action and report



EARTHQUAKE EFFECTS.

fully upon the phenomenon and its effects. The gentleman chosen for this mission was Professor S. Sekiya, of the Imperial University, a seismologist of considerable local repute. He has carried out his task with that minute and painstaking fidelity which is usually shown by Japanese who have an allotted duty to do. He tracked the earthquake to its source and followed it to its farthest bounds, collected a large mass of information, and illustrated his discoveries by a number of instructive drawings. And all this was done so quickly that already, but six weeks after the event, we find him reading a paper before the Seismological Society, which, as a narrative of interesting details, confirming and illustrating in many particulars the theory of the subject, and pointing to some valuable conclusions, deserves a place of merit in seismic literature. The story as told by Professor Sekiya is in no way sensational. It is nothing more than a plain account of the short-lived exploits of an earthquake that only approached, without reaching, the dimensions of a catastrophe. But its bearing upon a subject to which recent events in many parts of the world have drawn the attention of all mankind invests it at the present time with more than ordinary interest.

In *The Times* of the 7th of January, it was pointed out that some eighty per cent. of Japanese earthquakes come along the seaboard. The shock under consideration followed the prevailing rule. A narrow axis or band of country, running near to the coast and nearly parallel to its general trend, for about thirty miles, and reaching the shore at Yokohama, is described by Professor Sekiya as the seat or origin of violent motion. As in some former heavy shocks in this country, the area of destructive effect was found to be limited to a small breadth on either side of the

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axis, so that places as little as two or three miles to the north or south of it experienced a well marked deficiency of seismic energy. The earthquake was preceded by the usual warning roar or rumbling, as of distant cannon, emanating apparently from the western part of the central band. Respecting the cause of the shock, Professor Sekiya believes it to have been a faulting or dislocation of strata in the earth's crust, a conclusion to which the geological and other physical features of at least the western half of this axial band lend considerable support. If he be correct, we have in this case a variation from the probable most common cause of Japanese earthquakes, which, according to Professor Milne, is underground explosion of steam. All along the central band, and more conspicuous in the western and hilly half than in the eastern, which is low table-land, the effects of the earthquake were strongly marked. In the former, fissures and landslips were very numerous. Professor Sekiya counted no fewer than seventy-two cracks in a distance of seven miles, one of them being a foot wide and five hundred feet long, and all of them running parallel to the main axis of origin, which is also parallel to the main topographical features. In the same region, which abounds with villages and hamlets, the effects generally reached their greatest intensity. The sliding screens, covered with paper or of wood, which serve as doors, shutters, partitions, and windows in Japanese dwellings, were bent, broken, and shot out of their grooves. The paper-covering or glazing of some partitions was rent and shivered in an extraordinary fashion, such as no other conceivable power could have brought about. Houses were cracked, mutilated, unroofed, twisted, tilted up, and more or less wrecked. Those of wood framing and heavily plastered suffered especially as to their walls. Yet, strange



to say, though thousands of buildings were left tottering on the verge of demolition, apparently needing but a puff of wind to blow them over, only two were actually levelled to the ground. Several wells became turbid. In some of artesian character the water decreased permanently or failed altogether; in others it increased. One large river was so strongly agitated that the ferry boat could not be taken across it for some time after the shock. The peasants say that they felt as if standing on waves of the sea. Many persons were thrown down; and one scared countryman vouches to having been obliged to crawl on all fours, owing to the impossibility of walking upright. To all these things were added the noise of the earthquake's ruthless work and the shrieks of affrighted women and children.

At Yokohama the effects on buildings were corroborative of all that Professor Milne has from time to time told the world with regard to construction in earthquake countries. Houses in that town are of so many types that they afford a fair field for comparison of results. Most happily the intensity there was only one-third as great as in the hill-region on the west. Had the *maximum* intensity reached Yokohama, it is more than likely than not a chimney would have been left standing, and that, in the foreign quarter at least, there would have been heavy ruin and loss of life. To sum up the conclusions deducible on the recent occasion and confirming all previous experience, it is now more than ever clear that buildings of the composite construction common in this country, such as wood encased with brick or stone, are the earthquake's happiest playground. They are embodiments of the cardinal error of rigid attachment of parts of a building which have different periods of vibration—*i.e.*, which swing at different rates

during earthquake shocks. Houses of weak construction—for example, of thin brick-work or wood and plaster—and houses built of bad materials or on faulty principles, are also dangerous. But the composite houses are mere earthquake traps. Wooden structures, like the ordinary Japanese dwelling, are well enough—perhaps better than any as far as earthquakes alone are concerned, if thoroughly well constructed. In Japan, however, fire is a more constant and even more dread enemy than the earthquake, and the latter often brings fire in its train, as a result of the overthrowing of lamps. Sheet-iron houses, as used in Australia, would be strong, cheap, and effectual, but they have the drawbacks of ugliness, difficulty in providing against extremes of temperature, and danger from typhoons. On the whole, it appears to be the conclusion of our seismologists that solid, heavy buildings of stone or brick, with their various parts well constructed, strengthened, tied, and bonded, on true principles of architecture, and with due knowledge of the strength of materials, are the best and safest for earthquake-ridden countries. The forces to be dealt with are forces altogether independent of gravity, and for the most part act in a horizontal direction; and architects and builders must apply the resources of their arts accordingly. Many valuable suggestions under this head, into which it would be tedious to enter here, are to be found in Professor Milne's paper on "Construction in Earthquake Countries," in the Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers. High-pitched roofs, heavy balconies, tall chimneys, and all other forms of top-heaviness are to be avoided. Although Japanese temples, with their abnormally heavy roofs and relatively light supports, seem to be almost earthquake-proof, they owe their safety to the great number and elasticity of the joints in their sub-structure. In the words

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of seismology's chief apostle, Milne, "Keep your weights low, and your roofs as flat as possible." If Naples, with its piles of high top-heavy houses, were to be shaken by an earthquake as severe as the one under consideration, it is not too much to say that a large part of the city would be reduced to ruins. Short, squat, strong chimneys, without heavy mouldings, are to be recommended. Tall, projecting chimneys will surely come down, unless free to swing without connexion with the house. Of the chimneys demolished in Tokyo and Yokohama on the 15th of January, nearly fifty per cent. were cut clean off at their junction with the roof, the wooden or composite house swinging much more quickly than the chimney. The recent earthquake also furnished many corroborations of the accepted maxim that buildings on soft or made ground suffer more than those on hard, virgin soils. At one village, Professor Sekiya found that in a long street only twenty feet wide much greater damage was done to the houses on one side than to those on the other, a difference attributable only to the fact that the former stood on artificially-made ground. And, generally, villages built on soft soils felt the severest effects; while in Tokyo the ratio of disturbance on low, marshy ground to that on firm ground was as great as three to one. Again, buildings situated on hill-brows and hill-sides were found to vibrate much more actively than those on a flat hill-top or at its base. This well established fact respecting "marginal vibration," as it is termed, is being made the subject of systematic observation in Tokyo. It is easy to understand that the large free surface exposed in a hill-side must be highly susceptible to the horizontal throw of an earthquake.

In Tokyo, situated some miles from the axis of origin,

the shock was felt only about one-half as severely as in Yokohama. Here, however, the shakings of the ground came within the range of exact scientific measurement and observance. It is thus recorded that the principal movements—*i.e.*, those exclusive of preliminary and after tremors—lasted for more than two minutes, during which time no fewer than sixty distinct shocks occurred, at intervals of about two seconds. In the greatest of these—which, as before remarked, took place in marshy ground—the horizontal range, or back-and-forth motion of the ground, amounted to eight-tenths of an inch, while the vertical component was barely one-fourteenth of an inch. Though of large amplitude as well as unusual and alarming duration, the rapidity of these oscillations was not great enough to cause very much damage. The comparative immunity enjoyed by the capital during the earthquake proper was extended also to the after shakes, only one of which was felt in Tokyo, while near the origin there were five shakes on the same night and four tremors on the following date.

To us who are constrained to dwell in the midst of so many and great dangers, on this unstable and highly heated domain of the earth's crust, it is some comfort to remember that, besides the practicable safeguards which have been indicated above, the patient researches, in other directions, of Professor Milne and his disciples have opened up to us additional means of providing against disaster from earthquakes. Properly conducted seismic observations and seismic surveys may be made in the future to tell us not only what parts of a large country enjoy complete or comparative immunity from earthquake movements, and even what parts of a country or province are the securest districts for human habitation, but, yet further, to point out within

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the limit of a single city or town—nay, within as little as a few acres of space—the safest spots on which to build our dwellings. This much learnt, we may largely reduce the amount of motion by isolating our foundation piers or walls from contact with the surrounding soil for a depth of a few feet only below the surface; or, under certain conditions, we may resort to the method of free foundations. And, again, having discovered the quarter from which the motions are wont to proceed, we may strengthen our structures by due precautions as to materials and modes of building, and may plant them on the ground in that direction which will best avert evil consequences from shocks—that is to say, a square or oblong building will be most wisely erected with its diagonal parallel or nearly so to the line of motion. However long it may be before the inhabitants of countries subject to earthquake movements will have the sense and the means to act upon the warnings which science gives them, we have here an epitome of all that human ingenuity has yet been able to devise for the protection of human life and property against one of the most potent and fearful of all forms of energy.



## LETTER VII.

### *A JAPANESE STORY FROM REAL LIFE.*

Kyoto, 24th April, 1888.

Spring is of all seasons the most delightful in Japan. To winter's rigours, which in the flimsy dwellings of the Japanese are nothing short of severe, succeed two or three months of generally pleasant weather. Lit by a warm sun, and no longer swept by Siberian blasts, the land bursts of a sudden into a beauty peculiarly its own. Maple-sprouts begin to blush in the woods; several kinds of flowering trees successively put forth their exquisite blossoms; and many-hued varieties of camellia and azalea deck the gardens with a blaze of colour. To all classes of the nature-loving Japanese this floral epoch is a time of festival. While the higher ranks of society, from the Sovereign downwards, exhibit the glories of their private grounds to parties of invited guests, every city and town has what may be called its natural flower-shows open to all comers. In the parks, gardens, and temple-grounds, by river and lake margins, and at choice spots in the suburbs, are to be found groves of flowering plum, peach, and cherry trees, which from early March until late in April are thronged by happy swarms of admiring visitors, clad in holiday raiment and bent on genuine but simple pleasure. Young men and maidens, old



## WISTARIA.

folks and children, alike flock to these gatherings, which form one of the most attractive and characteristic features of the national life. To a stranger unaccustomed to Japanese crowds the scene is full of novelty and interest. He must be a poor observer indeed who fails to be struck by the singular capacity for innocent enjoyment that is displayed by those around him—by their love of natural beauties, their wonderful politeness to one another, their pleasant ripple of conversation, and their picturesque appearance. And to the watchful looker-on there will surely be manifested something of the happy and tender relation between parents and children which is the fruit partly of their sunshiny disposition, and partly of that most hallowed of all articles of Japanese faith, the doctrine of filial reverence. Among such people and in such a scene, at the famed Gion Temple in this “city of gardens,” there



happened very lately a dramatic incident in which the dying embers of an old feudal practice flashed into momentary brightness. The world may never hear again a tale from life in this country so strangely connecting the present with the past. Let me, then, tell it to the readers of *The Times* in the style of the Japanese narrator.

A few days ago, a Japanese named Suda Tomojiro, advanced in years, went for a day's outing, to see the cherry-blooms at Gion (Kyoto), accompanied by his daughter Kuni, a charming girl of eighteen or nineteen. After a long stroll, spent in admiring the beautiful flowers, they sat down to rest beneath a fine cherry-tree outside the temple-gates, where Suda was not sorry to refresh himself from the *saké* bottle which Japanese generally take with them on such occasions. Hard by, and similarly occupied, was another Japanese, about forty-five years old, accompanied by a lad just out of his teens. As soon as this stranger cast his eyes on Suda, his features underwent an extraordinary change; and, although his young companion, seemingly apprehensive of some evil, sought to divert his attention, his gaze was kept intently rivetted on the features of his elderly neighbour. At length, after scrutinising Suda in this wise for a space of some minutes, he enquired in an excited tone whether his name was not Suda Tomojiro. The latter, assenting, asked him, with some surprise, what his business might be. To this the stranger replied, "I am a younger brother of Mayeda Hirona, formerly a *samurai* of Hikone, whom you, his fellow-clansman, slew. To avenge my dead brother I have for long years sought you far and near, but always without success, until this auspicious day which has brought us together. Do you not remember that affair?" "I indeed it was," answered Suda,

who slew your brother, but I slew him justly because he offered me insult—a provocation which no *samurai* could brook. If you seek revenge, think not that I, a *samurai* of the old time, shall evade you: we will cross swords as becomes men of our birth. Take revenge on me if you can. I am ready at any time." The two *samurai* then arranged to meet in combat that very night, at Reizan, and were about to solemnize their agreement with a libation of *saké*, when the agony of Kuni, hitherto suppressed, broke forth. Bursting into tears, and seizing her parent's hand, she conjured him not to pledge himself to this terrible duel, and besought him at least to reflect on what would become of her were she to lose the father whom she so loved and to whom she owed so much. At this appeal, the stranger, by name Kakujiro, was greatly moved, and hung down his head. "It was some thirteen years ago," he at length said, "that business brought me to this city, together with my wife and our little daughter who was then six years old. We went to worship at the Kitano shrine, and lost our child in the crowd; nor, in spite of the utmost efforts, were we ever able to find her again. My wife soon afterwards died, broken-hearted at this sad calamity. Were our child living now, she would be grown as this your daughter." During Kakujiro's narrative Suda's face displayed unusual interest. At its close he drew near to the narrator, and said, "You have told me you lost your daughter at Kitano when she was six years old. Now this little maid, it so happens, is not my real daughter, but a lost child, found by my wife near the Kitano shrine about the very time of which you speak. Never having been blessed with any children, we adopted her as our own daughter. But it seems not at all impossible that she is the very child whom you lost." "I have heard

my wife say," replied Kakujiro, "that our daughter wore at the time a small bag containing three charms, by which she could easily be identified." Almost before he had finished speaking, Kuni produced from her bosom a little bag, out of which she eagerly drew three charms, asking whether they corresponded with those of the lost child. Kakujiro at once recognised them, and in the joy of this great discovery, the duel was forgotten, until Kuni, reverting to it, entreated her newly-found father to abandon all thought of revenge upon one to whom she owed the deepest debt of gratitude. He, unable to insist, was silent, when the lad in his company for the first time spoke, avowing, not only that the case was clearly one for reconciliation, but that revenge after the manner of feudal times was now a thing of the past. This declaration satisfied both sides—Suda because he had only accepted the contest when forced upon him, Kakujiro because of the discovery that Suda was his own child's foster-father. So the little party went happily away, to celebrate the joyful discovery of the long lost daughter, and to vow ties of future relationship between the two men who but a few minutes before had been resolved on mortal combat.



## LETTER VIII.

### *THE RECENT VOLCANIC EXPLOSION IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, July 28th, 1888.

A wide band of volcanic vents runs for some four hundred and fifty miles through the northern half of this main island of Japan. It is one of the four great lines which make up the volcano system of the Japanese archipelago. It occupies the backbone of the islands, and includes between forty and fifty peaks of distinctly volcanic character. Most of these are extinct, probably for ever. But some of them, doubtless, are only slumbering, and several others are active and giving off steam. Of the last, the giant both in vigour and proportions is Asama-yama, situated near the southern end of the chain. The characteristics of that mountain, its remarkable crater and awful history, were described by me in *The Times* a couple of years ago. North-east of Asama-yama, at a distance of about forty leagues, is another active volcano, Bandai-san by name, of the second order of magnitude, and 5,800 feet in height. Nearly eleven centuries have passed since this peak was last in eruption. In that long interval its volcanic features have been to a great extent obliterated by natural agencies, its crater broken down, its old lava-streams de-

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composed, and the whole covered from foot to summit with a rich growth of vegetation. On its north-east flank, however, there is, or was a fortnight ago, a subordinate peak, Sho-Bandai-san, rising directly above a group of three solfatara. In the existence of these hot springs, coupled with the recorded eruption of the principal peak within historic times, was recognised sufficient reason for including Bandai-san in the roll of still active volcanoes. If any lingering doubts were felt as to the mountain's title of admission to that fiery fraternity, they have been completely dispelled by the latest experience. At about eight o'clock on the morning of the 15th instant, almost in the twinkling of an eye, and by means of one of those most potent but happily rare manifestations of energy which seem to be our mother Earth's way of assuring us that she is still hearty, Sho-Bandai-san was blown into the air and wiped out of the map of Japan. A few minutes later its *débris* had buried or devastated an area about half the size of London. A dozen or more of upland hamlets had been overwhelmed in the earthen deluge, or wrecked by other phenomena attending the outburst. Several hundreds of people had met with sudden and terrible death. Scores of others had been injured; and the long roll of disaster included the destruction of horses and cattle, damming up of rivers, and laying waste of large tracts of rice-land and mulberry groves. Such were the facts as to the explosion and its results which gradually reached the capital in the course of last week. With them came thrilling reports of the tremendous sights and sounds that attended the eruption. Evidently the whole catastrophe had been one after the manner of Krakatoa—on a vastly smaller scale, of course, but belonging to the same order of volcanic phenomena. It was impossible to

sit still in Tokyo while the scene of such a great disaster was within fairly easy reach. So a small party of explorers was quickly formed. We went, and we have returned; and the following narrative will tell something of what we saw in our rapid but most interesting survey.

It took us two days to reach the foot of the volcano. On the first, our journey, performed by railway, ended at a country town some twenty miles, as the crow flies, from Bandai-san. Here, though neither earthquake nor noise had been experienced on the 15th, gloom and mist prevailed for about seven hours, the result of a shower of impalpable blue-gray ash, which fell to a depth of half an inch, sorely puzzling the inhabitants as to its origin. Next day, exchanging the railway for jinrikisha, we ascended gradually through a pretty, broken country, exhibiting all the wealth of verdure and picturesqueness of outline which everywhere in the Japanese highlands lend softness and variety to the landscape. For a while the weather favoured us. Long before noon, however, we were met by a plague of hot wind and drenching rain, assailing us in those fierce, fitful bursts which in this country usually betoken a not very distant typhoon. Wild squalls swept wrathfully over the surface of Lake Inawashiro as, on reaching the edge of the large plain at the foot of Bandai-san, we caught our first glimpse of the volcano, and were able to make out faintly, far away, the dull brown hue of its mud-deluged north-eastern slope. It was a gloomy scene, on a gloomy day. But hardly less gloomy than either the weather or the landscape were the faces of the still dazed and affrighted people dwelling in and about Inawashiro, the mountain village which was to be our head-quarters during our stay. Only a week before, these poor folks had fled westward from their

homes and from the volcano's fury, some of them injured, others half-naked, and every countenance blanched with terror. Though their village itself had been spared from destruction, a great wave of earth and rocks had swept down to within a thousand yards of it. Showers of sand, hot water, leaves, and ashes had fallen all about them; and they had felt the full force of repeated earthquake shocks, so violent that the ground undulated "like the waves of the sea," while the fugitives, unable to stand, had at first to crawl away on all-fours. Awe-stricken as they must have been by the recollection of that terrible morning, it is little wonder that these simple country folks had with difficulty been persuaded to return to their homes, or that they had not yet fully regained the cheerful spirits and gentle carelessness of manner which are natural attributes of even the humbler classes of Japanese.

To visit the newly formed crater, it was necessary to take a roundabout route, ascending the mountain by a back way, as it were, from its southern slope. To this our third day was given. Of the climb little need be said. There was no difficulty—only four hours' steady going on a sultry July morning, and a total rise of less than three thousand feet. Once clear of the ash-covered neighbourhood of the village, our route lay through a scene of rich and tranquil beauty. Only on nearing the end of the ascent were we again brought face to face with signs of the explosion. Here, besides the rain of fine gray ashen mud which had fallen on, and still covered, the ground and all vegetation, we came upon a number of freshly opened pits, evidently in some way the work of the volcano. We heard afterwards that Japanese experts are divided in opinion as to whether these are diminutive mine-craters blown out at the time of





SCENE IN THE CRATER.

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the general catastrophe, or cavities formed by the fall of great boulders burying themselves in the soil. The latter hypothesis, however, was subsequently shown to be mathematically impossible. Ascending the last steep rise to the ridge behind Sho-Bandai-san, signs of the great disaster grew in number and intensity. Fetid vapours swept over us, emanating from evil-looking pools. Great trees torn up by their roots lay all round; and the whole face of the mountain wore the look of having been withered by some fierce and baleful blast. A few minutes further and we had gained the crest of the narrow ridge, and now for the first time looked forth upon the sight we had come to see. I hardly know which to pronounce the more astonishing, the prospect that now opened before our eyes, or the suddenness with which it burst upon us. To the former, perhaps, no more fitting phrase can be applied than that of absolute, unredeemed desolation—so intense, so sad, and so bewildering that I despair of describing it adequately in detail. On our right, a little above us, rose the incurved rear wall of what, eight days before, had been Sho-Bandai-san, a ragged, almost sheer cliff, falling with scarce a break to a depth of fully a thousand feet. In front of this cliff everything had been blown away, and scattered over the face of the country before it, in a roughly fan-shaped deposit of, for the most part, unknown depth—deep enough, however, to erase every landmark, and conceal every feature of the deluged area. At the foot of the cliff, clouds of suffocating steam rose ceaselessly and angrily, and with loud roaring, from two great fissures in the crater-bed, and now and then assailed us with their hellish odour. To our eyes the base denuded by the explosion seemed to cover a space of between one and two square miles. This, however, can only be rough conjecture. Equally vague must be all present attempts to determine

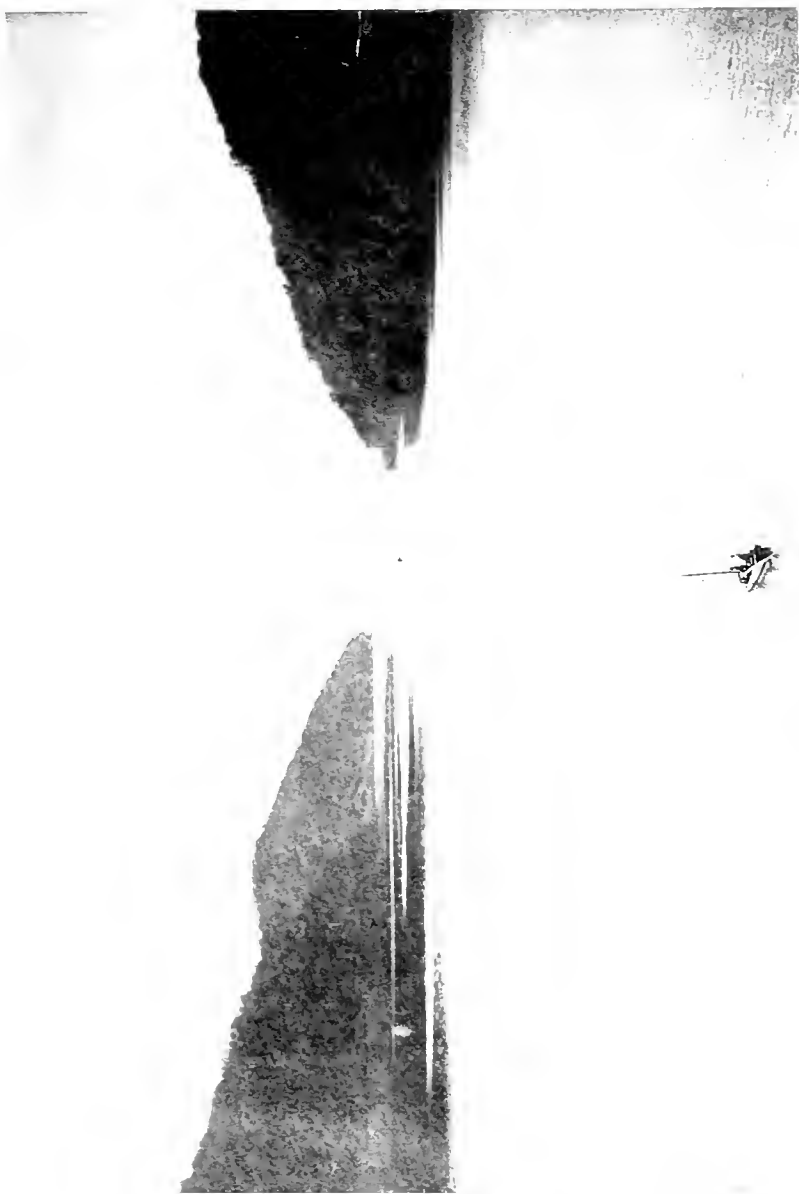


FISSURES IN THE CRATER.

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the volume of the disrupted matter. Yet, if we assume, as a very moderate calculation, that the mean depth of the *débris* covering the buried area of about thirty square miles is not less than fifteen feet, we find that the work achieved by this last great mine of Nature's firing was the upheaval and wide distribution of no fewer than seven hundred millions of tons of earth, rocks, and other ponderous material. The real figure is probably very much greater.

Around and below the crater all was a blank and horrid waste, literally an abomination of desolation. Down the slopes of Bandai-san, across the valley of the Nakasegawa, choking up the river, and stretching beyond it to the opposite foot-hills five or six miles away, spread a vast billowy sheet of ash-covered earth or mud, obliterating every foot of the erstwhile smiling landscape. Here and there its surface was dotted or streaked with water. Elsewhere the eye rested on huge disordered heaps of rock *débris*, in the distance resembling nothing so much as the giant concrete block substructure of some modern break-water. It was curious to see on the farther side the sharp line of demarcation between the brown sea of mud and the green forests on which it had encroached; or, again, the lakes formed in every tributary glen of the Nakasegawa by the massive dams so suddenly raised against the passage of their stream water. One lake was conspicuous among the rest. It was there that the Nakasegawa itself had been arrested at its issue from a narrow pass by a monster barrier of disrupted matter thrown right across its course. Neither living thing nor any sign of life could be descried over the whole expanse. All was dismal, silent, and solitary. Beneath it, however, lay half a score of hamlets, and hundreds of corpses of men, women, and children, who had been overtaken by swift and



NEWLY FORMED LAKE.



painful deaths. The graves of some of the dead were, indeed, nearer than we thought. We were standing immediately above the site of the group of solfatara already mentioned as having existed on the heights of Sho-Bandai-san. At two of these, houses had been built for the accommodation of bathing-visitors, several of whom were staying in them on the fatal day. And our guides, pointing in one quarter to a gable-corner projecting above the chaos just below us—in another to a spot farther down, on the very crater's edge, marked only by a few puddles and ragged stumps and rocks—told us that beneath these lay the little spahamlets Naka-no-yu and Shimo-no-yu, and the bodies of some thirty mud-smothered victims. Only from the upper spring did any escape, and that was by reason that in this case the destroying matter issued, not from the great focus of disturbance, but from a milder eruption of the solfatara itself, which was situated well behind the crater. The comparative immunity enjoyed by this and other places at the back of the chief seat of explosion—as, for example, the slope by which we had approached the scene—coupled with other indications afforded by the catastrophe as a whole and verified by later observation, have convinced us that the disruptive force must in the main have been directed outwards from the hill-face at a considerable inclination to the vertical. On no other hypothesis is it possible to account for some of the most startling phenomena, for the great distances reached by the waves of *ejectamenta*, and for the incredibly brief intervals that elapsed between the short-lived explosion and the submersion of large tracts many miles away from the crater. It must not, however, be supposed that the havoc wrought by the volcano's fury was limited to the fall of disrupted matter, or to the area covered by it. Besides the rain of scalding earth and mud,

heated rocks and stones, sand, and hot softly-falling ashes, there were the awful shocks of the explosions, accompanied by winds or whirlwinds which every survivor describes as of intense and extraordinary vehemence. Nowhere, of course, were the effects of these concomitants more fierce than on the heights of Bandai-san. I, for one, can never forget the weird spectacle presented by the forests on the unburied slopes above and near the crater. In these hardly a stick was left standing. As if some giant reaper had mown down whole acres with a sweep of his sickle, the trees lay literally in hundreds on the ground, all felled in a direction away from the crater, stripped of their branches, their leaves, and even their bark, and twisted into the most grotesque contortions. But it would fill pages to tell of all the strange and fearful things we witnessed in our long afternoon's scramble over those volcano-wrecked heights. Sufficient perhaps has been already said to give a faint picture of the scene, though I suppose we shall always be sorry that time prevented a yet fuller exploration. At least, however, we had seen enough to make us feel, as we trudged home, that the day had been for each one of us a great day in his life, and that our faith in the immutability of the everlasting hills had been very rudely shaken.

Our fourth and last day was given to exploring the buried area at its lower levels, in the valley of the Nagasegawa—till lately a happy, prosperous dale, but suddenly converted on that sad summer morning into a veritable valley of the shadow of death. At perhaps two-thirds of a mile from our inn we reached the outskirts of volcanic deluge. Here a secondary earth-wave, issuing from the crater by a lateral gap, had rushed swiftly down the mountain side, burying a large party of grass-cutters and horses,



WRECKED HAMLET.



and reaching, but only half destroying, the little hamlet of Miné. Its energy seems to have been exactly spent at this point. It was strange to see the great wall of earth and stones, with its vertical face some seven or eight feet high, brought up all standing, as it were, by a frail farm outbuilding. A yet stranger sight was it to see the enormous masses of rock that were strewn about *on the surface* of the neighbouring field of mud. One of them, which I measured, weighed at least two hundred tons. How they came there is an unsolved and, I daresay, insoluble mystery. Higher up, on the far side of the river, we visited a couple of large villages, which, though not reached by any mud-stream, told a telling tale of other phenomena attending the outburst. Here the voices of the earthquake, the concussion, and the rushing wind spoke to us in no uncertain tones. Not a house was whole. Many had been levelled to the ground; others were tottering on the verge of destruction; and of the rest, all were cracked, mutilated, unroofed, twisted, tilted up, or otherwise injured or partially wrecked. A scene of more ruthless and utter desolation could hardly be conceived. Yet higher, after recrossing the stream, we came to the village of Nagasaka, its buildings little harmed, though of its people two-thirds had met with a tragic end, to be presently described. Beyond this, our route entered upon the great earth-field on which we had looked down the day before from the heights of Bandai-san. Nothing could convey a more vivid idea of the destructive forces that were let loose upon that doomed region than a sight of the wild chaos of earth, rock, and mud which now reigns over its surface. The whole effect in some places is much as if a raging sea of those materials, on a gigantic scale, had been suddenly congealed and made to stand still. At one spot, not seen by us, there is a long earth or mud

precipice said by some observers to be fully two hundred feet high. Happy indeed is it that the area was so thinly inhabited. As it is, nigh upon three hundred people perished, with their cattle and other living things. The wonder is that out of such general havoc any man or house escaped.

Pitiful beyond all others is the story of the Nagasaka village, above mentioned. The valley here is narrow, barely half a mile across. On the side towards the volcano stands the village, on rising ground. On the far side ran the river, there easily fordable. Situated on a protected area, between the two great avalanches that descended from the crater, the hamlet itself was invaded by no earth torrent. Nevertheless, more than ninety of its inhabitants met their death—in this wise. When Sho-Bandai-san blew up, and hot ashes and sand began to fall, the young and strong fled, panic-stricken, across the fields, making for the opposite hills by paths well known to all. A minute later came a thick darkness, as of midnight. Blinded by this, and dazed by the falling *débris* and other horrors of the scene, their steps, probably also their senses, failed them. And before the light returned every soul was caught by a swift bore of soft mud, which, rushing down the valley bed, overwhelmed them in a fate more horrible and not less sudden than that of Pharaoh and his host. None escaped save those who stayed at home—mostly the old and very young. One house we saw, of which all the inmates, ten in number, had perished thus. Standing on the threshold of that desolated home, with all the scene before us, and with the tales of many survivors still fresh in our ears, we tried to pass in mental review the events of the memorable morning of the 15th. It seems clear from every account

that one of the worst features of the catastrophe must have been its appalling suddenness. Though there had been, it is said, slight shocks of earthquake for a couple of days before, and, according to some witnesses, strange subterranean rumblings and suspicious variations in the temperature and volume of the hot-springs, these caused no grave alarm. Nothing worthy to be called a serious warning occurred until about 7.30 a.m. on the 15th. Then came a violent earthquake, followed a quarter of an hour later by a second, yet more intense. Ten minutes after, there ensued throes of such terrible severity that the ground heaved and fell, people were thrown down, and houses demolished or wrecked. To all it seemed that their last hour had come. Instantly upon this arose a fearful noise, described by some as like that of a hundred thunders, by others as the most unearthly sound that ever startled the ears of men. Sho-Bandai-san was seen to be lifted bodily into the air and spread abroad, and after it leaped forth tongues of flame, and dense, dark clouds of vapour and *ejectamenta*. Of the ensuing phenomena it is hard to gain any clear idea from the tales of the distracted survivors. Apparently, however, a quick succession of reports, accompanied by violent earth throes and winds of hurricane force, lasted for about a minute. Then began the shower of ashes, dust, hot water, and leaves. The light quickly faded as the exploded matter spread over the firmament, so that day was soon changed into night and did not return for a space of several minutes. Meanwhile, the avalanches of earth and mud must have already done much of their deadly work. We gather, at least, from the narratives of the survivors at Nagasaka, and from other concurrent testimony, that the interval between the explosion and the arrival of the mud-torrent which swept past that hamlet cannot have been

more than from 10 to 15 minutes. Before the light was restored, all the flower of the village had been swallowed up. How that long journey of some ten miles from the crater had been performed by the mud at such an astonishing speed it is impossible to say. There is evidence that in places the earth-flow lasted for about an hour. But in the above we have the clearest proof that some at least of the destroying matter was hurled over the country at railroad speed, even after having been deflected through wide angles from its original line of motion. A little way below Nagasaki, on a raised ridge in the drowned and wasted land, we came to a row of nameless graves, the "field of sleep" of thirty sufferers exhumed from the mud. Of all those bodies, one only—that of a child—was perfect. In every other case the features at least were destroyed. And thus it was that the rude headboards came to be inscribed only with such simple epitaphs as, "No. 17; one man; countenance unrecognisable." It was the same story everywhere. Sooner or later the victims' bodies had been crushed, dismembered, or decapitated in the mad whirl of matter, stripped of every shred of clothing, and mangled beyond recognition.

No attempt has been made in the foregoing narrative to enter into elaborate topographical descriptions, or to hazard scientific discussion of the observed phenomena, many of which are in the highest degree perplexing. The one would be tedious, if not unintelligible, without the aid of plans; the other is and must be hopeless, in default of patient and skilled investigation. There are many strange things to be explained—problems which will sorely tax the sagacity of Professor Sekiya and other experts already at work on the ground. We may, perhaps, hope to learn

something hereafter that will throw a clear light on the immediate cause of the explosion (the agent, it cannot be doubted, was steam), on the approximate volume of the projected matter, on the partiality of the effects, and on the many and most bewildering mysteries connected with the propagation and distribution of the earth-waves, rocks, &c. Meanwhile, we have before us the fact that a massive mountain peak has been blown to bits by an explosion within its bowels powerful enough to toss many hundred millions of tons of material high into the air, and to change the face of nature over an area of some thirty square miles. While whole forests were levelled by the shock, the disrupted matter dammed up rivers, deluged and drowned the land and crops, and buried a dozen hamlets. Earthquakes and *coups de vent* added their quota to the work of destruction. Nearly six hundred people perished by horrible deaths in their mountain homes and valleys. Four times that number have been reduced to destitution or dire poverty. With one possible exception, it is the gravest disaster of its class that has happened, even in this land of volcanoes, since the famous eruption of Asama-yama in 1783. And it cannot but be ranked among the most mighty and startling volcanic explosions of which history has any record.



## LETTER IX.

### *THE BANDAI-SAN ERUPTION.*

Tokyo, October 12th.

In my letter dated the 28th of July, giving some account of the Bandai-san explosion, I mentioned that, pending the reports of Japanese experts then at work upon the problem, it would be idle to look for any full and scientific explanation of that melancholy and most appalling catastrophe. To the mere visitor little was evident but its tremendous effects. Chaos, death and havoc, a deluge of earth, mud, and rocks, buried lands and hamlets, wrecked forests, shattered buildings, dammed up rivers, and a vast, steaming crater—these left an impression on eye and mind awful and vivid indeed, yet to the last degree bewildering from their very profusion and immensity. But the bare spectacle of results, even when supplemented by such accounts as might be gathered from scared survivors among the peasantry, was, after all, only half satisfying. Though accomplished facts were patent and plentiful enough, the how and why of many strange particulars were still veiled in more or less mystery; and one came away from the spot reluctant and perplexed—athirst for the fuller explanation of things seen but not well understood, which skilled and protracted investigation alone could give. This explana-

tion is at length before us, as far, at least, as the patient labours of highly-trained specialists, extended over a period of between two and three months, have resulted in eliciting the truths of the case and throwing light on its greater mysteries. Professor Sekiya, a young seismologist already known to the world, and Mr. Y. Kikuchi, a geologist—both of the Imperial University—have embodied, in a paper read by the former last evening before the Seismological Society of Japan, as much as we are ever likely to know of a volcanic manifestation of the first order, investigated under highly favourable circumstances, and full of interest for the student of natural science.

Sho-Bandai-san, the peak that was destroyed on the 15th of July, is, or was, one of a group of four conical mountains, known collectively as Bandai-san, forming the walls of an old elevated crater basin, and rising to a height of some 6,000ft. above the sea. Stratified volcanic rocks, for the most part gneiss and andesite, form the bulk of this mountain mass, and are mainly disposed in six great layers, the fruits of as many successive eruptions. Lava, apparently of prehistoric date, is found on the slopes. But though Japanese records often speak of fire and smoke and poisonous vapours issuing from Bandai-san, the latest known active eruption took place 1,081 years ago, and all that remained to warrant the mountain's retention in the list of live volcanoes were a few *solfataræ* in and near the old crater, Numanotaira, which from time immemorial have given off steam. On the morning of the 15th of July, however, this condition of tranquillity was suddenly and violently disturbed. Soon after the mild preliminary earthquake, which took place at about half-past 7, there came a second and prolonged shock of fearful intensity. Then, while the



ground in the whole region was still heaving and groaning and making the houses rock, a dense black column was shot forth from Sho-Bandai-san to a height of some 4,000ft. During the next minute there were 15 or 20 repetitions of this phenomenon, all of them accompanied by horrible and tremendous noises. In the last of them, the *ejectamenta* took a course highly inclined to the vertical. Zigzag flashes of lightning, resulting from the electricity generated by the steam explosions, were seen to shoot forth from the ascending columns. Then, for another half-hour, the thunders of minor explosions were heard at frequent intervals. Meanwhile, the lighter particles of the black columns, consisting of mingled steam and dust, rose steadily upward, attaining an altitude of some 12,000 or 15,000 feet above the volcano, and spreading out into a vast cloud like an open umbrella in shape, which shrouded the earth beneath it in midnight darkness, until dispersed and wafted away by the north-westerly wind. From this cloud descended the shower of blue-gray ash, so-called, which has been mentioned in every account of the catastrophe—in reality, volcanic dust or powder (augite-andesite), caused by the violent mechanical disintegration of ejected rocks, hurled swiftly through the air after having been rendered brittle and soft by the action of steam and gases. Highly heated itself, and mingling with the condensing steam, it assumed a fine granular shape and fell on the adjacent country in a solid, scalding rain, which caused shocking injuries to many individuals and clothed the ground with a mantle on which it was difficult and painful to walk. On the map this dust-strewn region has the shape of a half-open fan, and covers 1,040 square miles of land area, attaining at the Pacific shore, 62 miles from the volcano, a breadth of some 41 miles, and spreading yet farther over the ocean. About

six inches deep at and near its origin, the layer gradually diminished in thickness, till at the coast it was a barely perceptible film. The noises of the explosions were heard some 30 miles to windward of Bandai-san, and 62 miles to leeward. But the earthquake which preceded and attended the outburst, though so prolonged and terrible in intensity, was, strange to say, not felt beyond a radius of 30 miles from the volcano—a fact accounted for by Messrs. Sekiya and Kikuchi on the ground that the seat of violent action was doubtless but a little way below the earth's surface, if indeed, not above the mean periphery and in the bowels of the mountain itself. Steam—a well-known and powerful cause of seismic phenomena—was, as has been already indicated, the agent of the explosions. The great volumes of steam that must be generated whenever, from any cause, subterranean waters are brought into contact with the molten interior expand and fill up the rock-fissures. If not deep enough down, or if lacking sufficient pressure and volume to break through the superincumbent masses, such ebullitions, though they may wrench and strain and tear the earth's crust internally, are yet hopelessly imprisoned and can only produce on the surface the phenomena of earthquakes or minor seismic vibrations. But there are cases—happily none too common in this our day—when the pent-up vapour succeeds in bursting open its prison roof along some line of least resistance and working havoc on a prodigious scale. Of such was the explosion which lately rent Sho-Bandai-san in twain.

Besides the lighter erupted matter, whose nature and behaviour have been sketched above, there was the solid body of the peak itself, which, tossed in gigantic masses high into the air, fell upon the slopes and glens, and

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rushing down them with fearful velocity until brought to rest on level ground or by impassable obstacles, buried 27 square miles of country fathoms deep in *débris*, in the short space of about ten minutes from the first explosion. One of the toughest of the many problems which beset the Japanese investigators was that of accounting for the wonderful and apparently eccentric fashion in which this mighty volume of matter had been propagated and disposed. Persevering examinations, however, soon brought them to intelligent conclusions; and these were confirmed before the very eyes of Professor Sekiya by an occurrence which, though doubtless gratifying to that ardent seismologist, was not, as he drily remarked, a particularly comfortable incident of a solitary ramble. One day, while he was at work in the crater, a huge slice of the precipitous rear-wall that had been bared by the explosions fell of a sudden, quite near to but happily clear of him, and crashed with a tremendous uproar down the steep mountain side. This slab was about 1,000 feet high and of considerable thickness. He witnessed its fall and its long descent. He saw how the great masses of earth and rock were shattered as they fell, and broken up into bits ever growing smaller as the velocity and the distance increased and as the fragments were dashed against one another and against obstacles in their way, until they finally lost cohesion, and were reduced to a pulverised, almost impalpable state, not very different from that of sand. The behaviour of the mass now resembled the rush of a headlong torrent. Tough boulders, able to survive the ordeal, were of course mixed with the finer matter, and great rock masses from 20 to 30 feet in diameter were floated down on the surface. But, as a whole, the movement approximated to that of a fluid. No words, says the Professor, can describe the

"fierceness and force" of that magnificent and impetuous downpour—its mad surgings this way and that, and the bold leaps with which it would now and then bound over low hills that hindered its progress, and shoot onward down the neighbouring depression. Similar, though on a vastly greater scale, must have been the awful avalanches which darted down from Sho-Bandai-san in two principal streams on the fatal morning of the 15th of July. These, it is now known, dashed over hills and ridges fully 100 feet in height, and Professor Sekiya's estimate that they must have attained a velocity of nearly 50 miles an hour sufficiently accounts for the swiftness of fate that befell the doomed peasantry in the uplands and valleys below. A part, doubtless, of the descending matter, mingling with the waters of ponds and lakes in its course, became a kind of mud, and may have been thus assisted in its flow; while that which reached the Nagase river and swallowed up so many of the Nagasaka villagers, as described in my last letter, acquired the consistency of a paste. But by far the greater volume was never moistened, and must have derived its fluid or semi-fluid properties, from a rapid process of pulverization, after the manner witnessed by Professor Sekiya.

As for the crater, the researches conducted by the Japanese explorers now assign to the disrupted matter dimensions far in excess of all previous estimates. In form, the crater-bed is roughly that of a horse-shoe, opening northward, and inclined slightly down from the apex to the mouth, where it is nearly 1½ mile wide. Its whole area is about 650 acres. Round the crown of the shoe is a nearly vertical wall, 1,660 feet high, in front of which everything has been blown away. But the peak itself, which was 540 feet higher than the summit of the crown,

lay within the now empty space. Thus, the three greatest dimensions of this gigantic projectile were, respectively, about 2,200, 7,500, and 7,800 feet. From these and other particulars it has been possible to estimate very approximately both the volume and weight of the disrupted matter. In my former narrative I ventured on the statement that, assuming the mean depth of *débris* over the buried area to be 15 feet, its weight would not be less than 700 millions of tons. I added, however, that this depth was probably far short of the truth. It proves to be only about one-fourth of the truth. No fewer than 1,587 millions of cubic yards, weighing 2,880 millions of tons, and spread over 27 square miles of country to an average depth of 57 feet, are the approximate figures with which to estimate the power exerted in this latest manifestation of plutonic energy. A great fissure, doubtless correspondent with the original line of least resistance, runs though the crater from its vortex nearly to its mouth. It is marked by a long range of steam jets, large and small, which puff and hiss forth immense volumes of white, pungent vapours. But Bandai-san is now perfectly at rest. Delicate tromometers fail to detect the faintest throb upon its surface. Only that row of jets remains to tell of the fever that rages far beneath.

The terrible *coups de vent* that accompanied the explosions, and wrought such havoc in the forests and villages, were, of course, corresponding phenomena to those which break windows and lay low the grass and plants at the firing of ordinance forged by men. The difference was one of degree only, though some idea of its vastness may be gathered from the fact that in this case villages many miles from the scene were literally wrecked, while in the forests near the crater hundreds of trees three or four feet

in diameter were laid prostrate on the ground. Suddenness, from first to last, characterized the whole of this remarkable phenomenon. There had been slight shocks of earthquake on the 8th, 9th, 10th, and 13th; also a momentary spasm at about 7 o'clock on the morning of the eruption, so feeble, however, that many persons failed to notice it. Strange rumblings, taken for distant thunder, were heard in the mountains soon after 7. But of palpable warning there was virtually none, with, perhaps, the bare exception that animals in the neighbourhood are said to have shown signs of uneasiness and fear shortly before the outburst. That animals are highly susceptible to minute tremors of the ground is a well-established fact; and, as the earth in the vicinity must have been more or less affected before such an explosion as that of Bandai-san, it is quite conceivable that there may have been a succession of microseisms perceptible only to the delicate senses of quadrupeds and other dumb creatures. Well-waters are said to have diminished in some places before the eruption occurred. But neither before nor after did the large Lake Inawashiro, to the south of the volcano, give any sign of being affected by it. And, generally, it must be owned that the Bandai-san catastrophe and the phenomena preceding it have not brought us any nearer than we were before to the power of saying when—or even where—volcanic mountains may be expected to give vent to their hidden fury.

## LETTER X.

### *THE SHRINES OF ISE, IN JAPAN.*

Tokyo, November 6th.

The old and the new of Japanese civilization may now-a-days be seen in striking juxtaposition on the southern shore of the Gulf of Owari. From Kyoto, a dozen hours of travel by railway and steamboat bring you to the little haven of Kamiyashiro, which does duty as the port of Yamada, head-quarters of the Shinto faith, and a goodly town of the province of Ise. Then, as you step from the modern vessel's deck into an antiquated Japanese wherry, you have the comfortable conviction that you are escaping from the half-modernized world of new Japan, with its odd mixtures and incongruities, into the comparative peace and solitude of a region barely reached as yet by the waves of progress. At Yamada itself, a couple of miles inland, this impression is rather confirmed than disturbed. Old styles and old fashions are there supreme. Except for a pillar letter-box here and there, or arrays of bottles in one or two shops dedicated to the Japanese liking for the bitter beer and light wines of the Occident, little of things new is to be seen. Not a single building of foreign architecture intrudes upon the spirit of the place. In the people's dress and ways, in the bright shops, spacious inns, and numerous places of

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amusement, and in the narrow, picturesque thoroughfares—the houses all standing gable-wise to the street, and affording a delightful perspective of bold, fantastic, Oriental tiling, varied styles, deep eaves, and artistic proportions—the quaint old town remains even now pretty much what it was in the days of the Daimios. Yamada, in fact, has not yet become the fashion. Though habitually thronged with visitors, these are still, as of old, devout pilgrims to the altars of their faith. Perhaps its position has saved it, for it is one of the outposts, in that quarter, of the Japanese Empire. At all events, unlike Nikko, Ikao, Miyanoshita, and other popular resorts of holiday-makers, it is thus far free from the disintegrating influences of Western novelties and mobs of foreign tourists. Few of the latter visit it. Few, indeed, know its whereabouts, or have even heard of it. Of course, hope to the contrary as we may, the present state of things will inevitably change, there as elsewhere, and all too soon. But meantime Yamada continues to wear the “rust of antiquity.” There, if anywhere, you may put away from you for a while the Japan that is, and bask in tranquil enjoyment of life after the manner of the Japan that was. Nor is the association with past times confined to matters temporal only. It extends also to matters spiritual, and in a greater and much more far-reaching degree. In Yamada and its neighbourhood you come face to face with the two most famous and hallowed shrines of one of the oldest religious systems in the world. There are, it is true, a few other more ancient seats of worship elsewhere in Japan. But these “two great divine palaces,” as they are called, have been for ages the centre and stronghold of the early Shinto faith, and their history runs far back into the mists of time. On the border of the town is the Geku, or outer palace, dating from the year 478





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of our era. The Naiku, or inner palace, three miles beyond was established no fewer than 1,892 years ago, and within it is hidden the original sacred mirror, said to have been forged out of metal from heavenly mines, and bestowed by the Sun-goddess herself on her adopted grandson, the founder of the Japanese Imperial dynasty. Thus, year after year for nearly 19 centuries, Yamada has been visited by unnumbered hosts of the faithful and devout. Chief of all holy places in the Empire, the Ise shrines are to the Shinto believers of this realm what Mecca is to the Moslems or Jerusalem to the Christian Greeks.

Shinto—the name given to the ancient religious belief of the Japanese, before Confucian philosophy and Buddhism came upon the scene—means “the way of the gods.” But it is a cult rather than a religion as commonly understood ;

its deities are for the most part terrestrial; and it has its roots in the remotest depths of Japanese mythology, which as disinterred from old records and commentaries by the scholarly labours of Messrs. Satow and Chamberlain, may, for present purposes, be briefly outlined thus:—In the beginning there were three great deities, who, by miraculous powers beyond man's ken, created "a Thing floated or suspended like a cloud in the midst of space," without support or attachment. In substance this mysterious Thing apparently embodied the materials of the solar system; and "the soil floated about, like a fish on the surface of the water." Out of it were then created the sun and moon, and with them 14 gods, the last pair of whom, Izanagi and Izanami by name, separated the land from the water and gave birth to the Japanese islands. Izanagi begat, among other offspring, Amaterasu, a female, and Susanowo, a male deity, whom he appointed respectively to rule the sun and moon. Ohanomuji-no-mikoto, a descendant of the Moon-god, became the first ruler and part-civilizer of Japan. Then Amaterasu sought to set up her adopted son in his stead. He, however, proposed to substitute his own son; and ultimately, after the failure of two embassies, Ohanomuji was induced by the pressure of a warlike expedition to abdicate in favour of the younger deity, Ninigi-no-mikoto, grandson by adoption of Amaterasu. From Ninigi, otherwise called the "sublime grandchild," was descended, in the third generation, Jimmu Tenno, the sovereign from whose reign Japanese chronology is reckoned, and in whose person began, more than 20 centuries ago, the long line of Japanese monarchs known to the world by the title of Mikado, but to their own people, and more correctly, by that of Tenshi, or Son of Heaven. When the Sun-goddess proclaimed Ninigi-no-mikoto supreme lord of Japan she delivered to him "the

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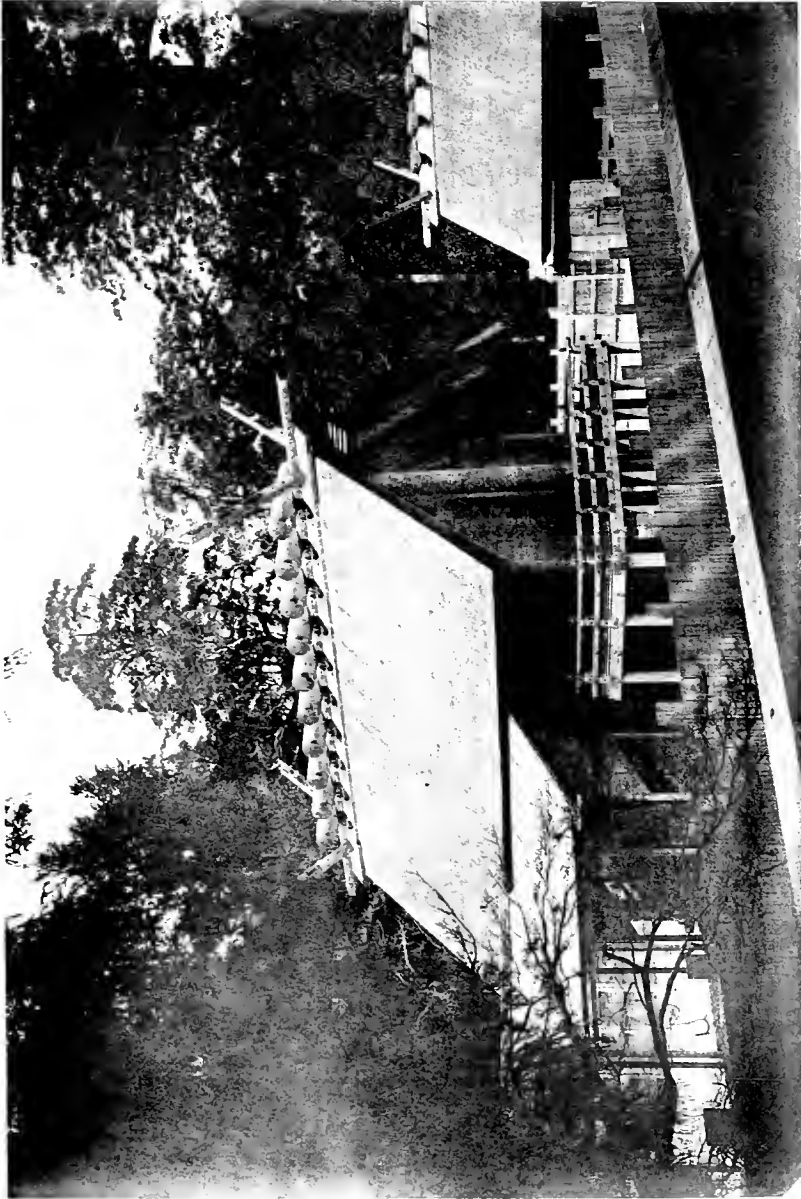
way of the gods" as established and imparted to her by Izanagi and Izanami; and she decreed that his dynasty should be immovable, and that his descendants should continue to rule the land of her birth as long as the sun and moon should endure. Then, before dismissing him to his earthly kingdom, she bestowed on him the three sacred emblematic regalia, the mirror, sword, and stone, saying as to the first, "Look upon this mirror as my spirit, keep it in the same house and on the same floor with yourself, and worship it as if you were worshipping my actual presence." For generations this injunction was strictly fulfilled. But in the year 92 B.C. the reigning Tenshi, led to believe that the mirror's retention in his palace no longer had divine approval, removed it to a shrine specially erected for it in Yamato. Thence, after several changes from place to place, it was eventually brought, in the year 4 B.C., to the new Naiku shrine, built for the purpose, where it remains to this day.

As the leading precepts of his terrestrial rule, Ninigi-no-mikoto was charged to love, while exacting strict obedience from, his people, and especially to worship and pray to the gods, beseeching favours from all, and propitiating those of them who had the power to harm. "And," writes Hirata, the commentator, "as it is the duty of subjects to imitate the practice of the incarnate god who is their sovereign, the necessity of worshipping his ancestors and the gods from whom they spring is to be enjoined upon every man." In the above short and plain maxims are summed up the chief canons and articles of the Shinto cult. Worship of the deities; implicit obedience to an infallible and god-descended monarch—these constitute the main fabric of the system, which after all, is virtually a form

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of nature-worship. Through it runs a strong vein of patriotism, as well as that deep reverence for the dead which in the Orient takes the shape of the general worship of ancestors. But of moral code, strictly speaking, there is none. Moral codes, it was said of old, might be well enough for immoral people; but the Japanese were akin to and enjoyed the special favour of the gods, and therefore needed no vain creeds or doctrines.

Simple and unadorned as the Shinto faith itself, and exhaling a like odour of antiquity, are the "two great divine palaces" of Ise. He who may think to see in them any repetition of the architectural and decorative glories which distinguish the famed Buddhist temples at Nikko and Shiba will assuredly be disappointed. At the Geku and Naiku you find no such splendour—no wealth of colour, ornaments, or carving, no elaborate gateways or gorgeous altars, no pompous ceremonials, no images or objects exposed for veneration, no grandeur of form or cunning workmanship, no sacrifices, hardly any symbols. On the contrary, there reigns supreme in every detail the rigid, almost rude simplicity of the purest and humblest Shinto style. Except that the main posts are supported on hewn-stone blocks instead of entering the ground, that the floors are raised, and that wooden walls have taken the place of mats, the buildings approximate in form and structure to the primeval Japanese hut. Wood and thatch form the materials; brass, bronze, and iron, scantily used, the sole adornments; plain fences of posts, rails, and palisades the outer and inner cathedral enclosures. There is no patch of paint or scrap of carving—no colour but the browns and drabs of thatch and weatherworn woodwork. For gateways there are merely open *torii*, constructed of bare round logs, in the



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form with which the world is now familiar ; for gates nought but hanging screens of thin white silk ; for sacrifices daily offerings of water, rice, fish, salt, and other simple products of land and sea. The very lamps for the service of the temple are of coarse white paper, decorated only, in black, with the chrysanthemum flower, which is the crest of the Son of Heaven. And in place of the long ranks of costly and beautiful *toro*, or lantern-standards, in stone and bronze, which line the approaches to more pretentious shrines, the few of such objects that are to be seen here are of common forms, common wood, and insignificant value. As for emblems, they too are of the same simple and unaffected type. Rice-straw ropes and wisps, sprigs and wands of the rare and sacred *sakaki* tree (*clevera japonica*), hanging slips of notched white paper—each symbolical of some incident in the well-known legend of the Sun-goddess's enticement out of the cave to which she had retired, in wrath and pain, from the the Moon-god's violence—that is all. Though the sacred mirror and its copies are there too, they are never now seen by human eyes. For each there is a spruce-wood box, shrouded in a wrapper of plain white silk and covered by a wooden cage, which again is completely hidden under a voluminous silken mantle. Within the box reposes the mirror, in a sack of brocade, or rather in a succession of sacks, for, as soon as one begins to perish from age, a new one is added without removing it. Of public ritual at these shrines there is virtually none, except on occasional feast-days ; and even then it is of the most unpretending kind. No sacerdotal hosts or gorgeous vestments, no incense or solemn music, no rites of adoration, no scriptures, sacrament, sermon, or blessing—none but two or three plain-robed priests, who, calling the deity's attention by strokes upon a gong, recite short prayers and

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formulas for a few minutes, worship, bow the head, and retire. Now and then the *kagura*—a maiden dance of great antiquity, and said to be emblematic of the goddess Uzume's choragic feats before the cave of Amaterasu—is performed in a building outside of the temple; but it is not a feature of the ritual proper. And the lay-worshippers; what of them? Again the same tale of profound simplicity. First purified by washing their hands in the neighbouring river, they advance to the silk screen at the fourth *torii*, cast a few coppers into the receptacle for tribute, clap their hands twice together, and then, with bowed heads and bended knees, or in a kneeling posture, remain for a minute or so in silent or muttered prayer. Petitions for prosperity and long life, for correction of faults, and exemption from evil, sin, calamity, and pestilence—these, with humble expressions of worship, all in the fewest possible words, form the Shinto believer's prayer. Long supplications after the way of the Scribes and Pharisees are no more favoured here than they were in Jerusalem, some 18 centuries ago, by the great founder of the Christian faith. Brevity, indeed, was enjoined upon the people by ancient Shinto precepts. The Son of Heaven's daily prayers for his subjects are, they were told, far more efficacious than the greedy petitions of individuals. As for the neatness and cleanliness of the temples and their surroundings, these are beyond reproach. Seen as I saw them but a little while ago, the roofs of the buildings at first seemed to almost wear the appearance of neglect. The thatch had a seedy and withered look, and in some cases was overrun by creepers, or showed grasses and infant bushes springing up from its surface. But you soon learn that this apparent neglect is studied. Heat and cold, sun and rain, moss, lichen, and natural decay are purposely allowed to work



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their own will on the buildings and fences. Beyond that, all is scrupulously cared for by tender and reverent hands. Not a thing is out of place; not a weed disfigures the wide walks and gravelled spaces; not a scrap of dirt of any kind is where dirt ought not to be. Let it not be supposed, however, that the buildings themselves are of great age, or even as old as they often look. Those now standing were erected no longer ago than 1869. But in this damp and highly variable climate a single decade goes far to impair rude thatch and unpainted cedar. And, as a matter of fact, the entire structure of each temple is, and has been from time immemorial, renewed every 20th year. Not by pulling down one set and building another in its place, but by the expedient of two precisely similar sites, contiguous to one another and alternately occupied, so that the old set is not demolished until the new one is ready. The great point is the care that is taken to preserve the ancient style most faithfully in every detail. Each successive structure is an exact copy of the last—exact to Oriental fidelity—and you know that in looking on any one of them, you are beholding a genuine type of the identical buildings that prevailed in Japan before the birth of Christ.

Such, in their history and impressive plainness—which have surely left some marks, when you come to think of it, on the annals and temperament of the Japanese race—are the leading externals and other characteristics of the “two great divine palaces” of the Shinto faith. These teach us that antiquity, simplicity, and purity are the key-notes of Shinto in all its phases, as far as exemplified at its headquarters in Ise. Could any loftier ideals be devised for fostering those genuine and soul-stirring emotions which are aimed at in the fabrics of all religions? I doubt it. And I



TOMB OF IVEYASU.

am sure that no man or woman, Christian or otherwise, can come away from Yamada without feeling that a very curious and deep interest attaches itself to those strange groups of homely buildings, breathing the flavour of age, decay, and repose, and bringing you into touch with the earliest days of the oldest faith of this interesting people. As for the setting, it is well worthy of the gems. If the Princess of old who chose the Ise sites can hardly be credited with having shown an equal taste for the grand and picturesque in nature to that, for example, which hit upon the mighty mansions of the Nikko mountains as the last resting-places of the early Tokugawa Shoguns, at least the loving care of later generations of men has provided ample atonement for her shortcomings. Nothing could better heighten the impression produced upon all beholders by the shrines themselves than the solemn magnificence of the forest

groves and aisles by which they are surrounded and approached. Evidently these were planted for the purpose—who shall say how many centuries ago? Splendid, at all events, in form and dimensions, are the dense ranks of Japanese cedar, spruce, elm, and other trees which now rear their dark masses to heights so great that the firmament is almost shut out from view. Except where some giant has been ruthlessly beheaded by the typhoon's fury, these lordly forests seem to defy alike destruction, decay, and death. The Naiku grove is especially enchanting, and its trees—the finest, without doubt, in all Japan—are a rare and goodly spectacle. Here the sombre stillness is pleasantly broken by the sight and sound of the clear waters of the Isuzu-gawa, spanned by rustic bridges and rushing gaily to the sea. And, as you thread the grand and lonely glades, approaching the old-world shrine of the Sun-goddess, you feel that you have before you a temple within a temple, and that the outer of these, reared by the architect of Nature, is a very meet and noble tabernacle for the time-hallowed sanctuary within.

One would fain linger on at Yamada, especially in late autumn, when the forests put forth their glowing tints. There is something about the place, its people, its scenery, and associations, not to be lightly relinquished or easily forgotten. But holidays have their limits, even as the columns of *The Times*—of which latter fact I feel at this moment guiltily and painfully conscious. So we had to draw ourselves away one early morning, and be in turn—for we chose the land route—dragged along by flying, yelling jinrikisha-men, over the smooth and level highroad of Ise. Past trim, prosperous towns and villages; past bands of white-clad pilgrims, robust, well-gaitered, and



PILGRIMS.

wayworn, with their bells and fans, fringed mats, and mighty hats of rush-straw; past running postmen, with letter-bags instead of clothes; past squads of ruddy, old-fashioned-looking school-lads, who bow politely, like the little gentlemen they are; past picturesque, thatched farmsteads, with high, neat fences, foxy dogs, and tailless cats; past *torii* and temples, embosomed in trees, but looking terribly out of repair; past lumbering coaches that might have come out of the Ark, with horses whose ancestors, we think, ought not to have left it; past foot-travellers of many degrees—sturdy men, in white breeches and dark robes and gaiters, comely matrons, plump and panting, and bronze-checked lasses, gay in scarlet kirtles and flower-decked *coiffures*: and then—surely the sweetest pedestrians of all—a pair of rosy children hardly out of infancy, reading their lessons aloud to themselves as they



RUNNING POSTMAN.

toddle home from school. It is quite refreshing to see the pleased curiosity with which the whole population turns out to stare at us as we rush through the villages on our route. Of the boys, the frisky contingent scream at us, run races with us, and blow at us through toy-trumpets, while those of a calculating turn of mind take to counting the jinrikishas and coolies on their fingers. The girls are more amused than amazed. They cover their mouths to hide their mirth, at length fairly exploding into laughter and scuttling away abashed at their innocent rudeness. Then the country again. On our left a wide expanse of highly cultivated but hedgeless fields, creeping far up the slopes of those distant, rugged, and fantastic ranges which bound the southward view. On our right very near, the dancing waters of the beautiful Owari Gulf, stretching away till lost in haze, and backed by the pearly silhouettes of the mountains of

Mikawa. Such is travel on the Ise-kaido in this twenty-first autumn of the Meiji era.

Next day the Tokaido—a more familiar and less pleasant road, hilly withal, and dusty. Early in the afternoon we are at Otsu, which is lapped by the blue waters of Lake Biwa. Our cheery jinrikisha-men have run their 83 miles since yesterday morning, an everyday affair which they take as a matter of course. Then the train once more. By sunset we glide into the station at Kyoto; and thereafter, with a Japanese welcome from the smiling hostess at Nakamura's Hotel, our trip to Ise is ended, and we fully, almost sadly, realize that we have come back to the Japan of to-day.

## LETTER XI.

### *THE BIRTHDAY OF A CONSTITUTION.*

TOKYO, February 12th.

Twenty-one years ago the young Emperor of Japan, restored to temporal power from the seclusion, well nigh amounting to entombment, which had been endured for some eight centuries by his ancient dynasty, swore solemnly before the nobles and territorial princes of this Empire that, as one of the leading principles of his future sway, the "government should be conducted in accordance with public opinion and popular representation." Of the earnestness of this assurance ample proof was afforded by the measures of the succeeding decade. One Parliament, indeed, formed of some 276 members from the *samurai* of the feudal clans, was actually convened in 1869, though it soon proved a failure, as also did a second and modified Assembly attempted shortly afterwards. A slight leaven of the principle and practice of popular representation was nevertheless introduced, gradually and circumspectly, by such later steps as the creation, first, of a Council of Provincial Authorities, and then of the existing system of City and Provincial Assemblies, and of a Senate, a consultative body of officials without any power to initiate laws. At length in 1881 the Emperor affirmed his original assurance by a rescript pro-

claiming that a complete parliamentary system should be carried into effect in the year 1890. During the interval that has passed since that declaration, as in the period preceding it, the whole course of Japan's polity and method of government has been directed to the new order of things that is destined to arise next year under the terms of the Sovereign's promise. In every step, every change, and every novelty that has been adopted from time to time as occasion required, the pilots of the Japanese ark of State have kept steadily before them as their goal the sound establishment of a constitutional Monarchy as understood in Europe. That the task was no easy one none can doubt. It was, indeed, surrounded with grave difficulties and perils, amid which rashness might be irreparable and error fatal. Only by vigilance and foresight of the highest order could the knotty problem of enfranchising a people that had emerged but yesterday, as it were, from the shadow of feudalism be approached with any hope of success. How far those qualities have been exhibited in the successive measures of recent years will have been gathered by the readers of this series of letters in the columns of *The Times*. How far success is to be anticipated from the final and most momentous step may be judged from what follows. Yesterday was the anniversary of the birth of the Emperor Jimmu Tenno, the Sovereign from whom sprang this oldest of the world's dynasties, and who, according to the commonly received chronology, began to reign in the year 660 B.C. Yesterday, then, was chosen as an auspicious day, on which the first Monarch's descendant, the Emperor Mutsuhito, might fitly ratify his Imperial vow and proclaim and give the new Constitution to his subjects. And accordingly on the morning of yesterday, amid the splendours of the new Palace in the ancient castle of this capital, in the





THE EMPEROR.

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presence of a great assemblage representing all the power, wealth, intellect, and high lineage of the country and all classes of the people, and with the pomp and solemnity befitting so signal an occasion, the reigning Sovereign wrought the deed by which the 11th of February becomes henceforward in a double sense a red-letter day among the festivals of the Japanese calendar. Space forbids me to relate in this letter my experiences of the delightful details of yesterday's pageant and the Imperial entertainment which followed it, as well as of those general public rejoicings and demonstrations for which the Japanese people have a happy aptitude amounting to genius, combined with an artistic taste so perfect, that their cities, parks, and gardens are turned as by magic on such occasions into very fairylands of brightness and beauty. For the present at least, therefore, I must confine myself to giving an outline of the general features of the Constitution now brought to birth after years of laborious preparation.

Prior to yesterday's ceremony of promulgation, the Emperor executed a solemn oath in the Palace Sanctuary, by which he swore, in the names of the great founder of his House and of his other Imperial Ancestors, that he would maintain and secure from decline the ancient form of government, and would never fail to be an example to his subjects in the observance of the new laws. Then, after a short speech, couched in stately and kingly language and uttered with great dignity, His Majesty publicly delivered the said laws to Count Kuroda, his Minister President of State. These are five in number, and are entitled respectively the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, the Imperial Ordinance concerning the House of Peers, the Law of the Houses, the Law of Election for the members of the



THE EMPRESS

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House of Representatives, and the Law of Finance. In the first, one salient and interesting feature is the care taken to affirm with emphatic brevity the time-honoured doctrines of the sanctity of the Emperor's title and the immutability of his dynasty. Thus, while the first article declares that his line shall run "for ages eternal," the second says simply "The Emperor is sacred and inviolable." Then follows a definition of the sovereign prerogatives, from which it appears that, while the Emperor is to remain the source of all laws, in that without Imperial approval no Parliamentary measures can become law, the making of laws is to be the function of the Diet, and no law can be put into force without its assent, the one exception on the latter point being that the Emperor reserves the power of issuing ordinances in urgent cases, on behalf of the public safety or welfare, when the Diet is not sitting, but that such ordinances to remain law must be approved at the next Parliamentary Session. In succeeding articles it is laid down that the Emperor determines the organization of every branch of the administration, appoints and dismisses all civil and military officers, and fixes their salaries; that he has the supreme command of the army and navy, and determines their organization and peace standing; and that it is he who makes war or peace, concludes treaties, confers titles of nobility, rank, orders, and other marks of honour, and grants amnesties, pardons, and commutation of punishment. The rights and duties of subjects are next set forth. By these it is determined, among other things, that a Japanese subject, while amenable to taxation and to service in the army or navy, shall be free from all illegal arrest, detention, trial, or punishment; that, subject in every case to the provisions and limits of the laws, he shall have liberty of abode and of change of abode; that his house shall not be

entered or searched against his will ; that the secrecy of his letters and all his rights of property shall be inviolate ; and that he shall enjoy freedom of religious belief, consistently with the duties of the subject and the preservation of peace and order, as well as liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meeting, and association.

The Parliamentary system is to consist of a House of Peers and a House of Representatives, called together the Imperial Diet, and holding an ordinary annual session of three months—which, however, may be extended by Imperial order—and extraordinary sessions in urgent cases. The first session is to take place next year—rumour says in the autumn—and the new Constitution is to come into force from the time of the Diet's opening. For the Upper House there are four classes of members. First, members of the Imperial Family on reaching their majority, and of princes and marquises on attaining the age of 25 ; these hold office for life. Secondly, counts, viscounts, and barons of not less than 25 years, and in numbers not exceeding one-fifth of the whole number of those orders ; these are to be elected by their fellows for a term of seven years. Thirdly, members nominated for life by the Sovereign, for meritorious services to the State, or for erudition, and above the age of 30. Fourthly, 45 commoners, elected in the prefectures and urban districts—one for each—by the 15 largest taxpayers in each electoral area, and appointed for a term of seven years, if approved by the Emperor. It is further laid down that the number of members in the last two classes shall not exceed that in the first two. For the Lower House there are to be 300 members, elected by ballot in 258 electoral districts as defined in an appendix. The suffrage is limited to males not less than

25 years old, who must have resided in the district for at least a year before registration and be still resident, and have paid in the district for a similar period, and be still paying, district national taxes to the amount of not less than 15 Japanese dollars, and, besides, have paid income-tax for three years, and be still paying it. Candidates for election must be full 30 years old, and must possess similar qualifications to the above as taxpayers, but without the condition of residence. Several classes of officials are excepted, as well as Shinto priests and all teachers of religion; while, in addition to obvious disqualifications in the cases of public offenders and others, no one serving in or temporarily retired or suspended from the army or navy can either vote or be elected. Four years, which is the House's limit of life, is also the limit of membership. But the former may be dissolved at any time by Imperial order, and a new Assembly convoked within a period of five months. For each House there are to be, besides a Chief and other Secretaries, a President and a Vice-President nominated by the Emperor, with annual salaries of \$4,000 and \$2,000 respectively; while the commoners in the Upper House and all members of the Lower House, those in the Government service excepted, are to receive \$800 per annum. Among a host of other general provisions it is laid down, for both Houses, that, except in special cases for which rules are provided, all debate shall be public; that the President is to have a casting vote; that the necessary quorum for any debate or vote is to be one-third of the whole number of members; that Cabinet Ministers and Government Delegates—the "Government," meaning the Emperor and his Cabinet—may sit and speak in either House, but not vote therein unless they are members of it; and, further, that, whenever

the Emperor may present to the Diet any project for the amendment of the Constitution, no debate thereon can take place unless two-thirds, at least, of the members are present, and no amendment can be carried by less than a two-thirds majority.

As regards finance, the Diet is to discuss and vote the Budget, and its approval is required in respect of any excesses upon the appropriations, as well as of national loans or other liabilities to the Treasury. Its powers are, nevertheless, a good deal circumscribed. For example, the outlay of the Imperial Household, as well as the entire peace appropriations for the army and navy, the salaries of the army and navy, the salaries of officials, and all expenditures that "may have arisen by the effect of law," or that "appertain to the legal obligations of the Government," are practically removed from Parliamentary control. It is also provided that, in urgent cases arising out of the internal or external condition of the country, and when the Diet cannot be convoked, the necessary financial measures may be taken under Imperial ordinances; and, again, that the Government may carry out the Budget of a preceding year whenever a Budget has not been voted or brought into existence. The Privy Council is, as heretofore, to deliberate on important matters of State, at the instance of the Emperor; and the ten Ministers of State remain His Majesty's responsible advisers; and as to the Judicature, there is a satisfactory provision that the Judges, appointed by the Crown, can only be removed from their office by law. It will be seen from the above outline that, while the Emperor's promise is being strictly fulfilled, the first plunge into Parliamentary representation will be made with befitting vigilance and caution. Looking to the average means

of the Japanese, the franchise is undoubtedly high—a piece of prudence to be much commended, seeing that any precipitate measure of enfranchisement at this epoch might result in a popular despotism fraught with danger to the country. It is evident also, not only from the broad outlines of the scheme, but from abundant internal evidence running through the text of the new laws, that, besides a careful avoidance of any definition of the responsibility of the Cabinet *vis-à-vis* the Diet, the whole intention is to follow the German principle of making the former responsible to the Crown alone, and to render the life of the Ministry independent, at least temporarily, of a hostile Parliament. At present certainly these tactics are wise, whatever Japan, like some other countries under constitutional Monarchy, may come to in the future.

Meantime, what a unique and interesting drama it is that is being enacted before our eyes in this island Empire, so nigh upon the end of the 19th century! Not only is the spectacle that of a Monarch presenting his 40 millions of subjects, released barely two decades ago from the bonds of feudalism, with a well thought-out Constitution, founded on European lines and conveying to them a substantial measure of political liberty. It is also the spectacle of the reigning Sovereign of the world's most ancient dynasty descending finally from the lofty realm occupied for so many ages by the "Sons of Heaven," and, while solemnly abdicating the supreme and autocratic power wielded by his ancestors, in theory at least, for more than 2,500 years, offering to his people henceforward a large share in the functions of government. That matters would sooner or later come to this was, no doubt, in the nature of things inevitable and foreseen. To what purpose, otherwise, the



Restoration of 1868, seeing that the military class enjoyed under the feudal system a not unimportant share in the functions of government, which was wholly lost to them when, with the fall of feudalism, they became absorbed into the masses of the people? If, however, the scene witnessed yesterday at the Imperial Palace was but one act of a drama every part of which has followed in its anticipated order, it constituted, nevertheless, a most memorable and stirring occasion in the history of this interesting country—an occasion marked, moreover, by splendid ceremonial, intense popular joy and enthusiasm, public demonstrations on a scale of remarkable beauty as well as magnitude, and countless tender prayers for the beloved and revered ruler of Japan and for his illustrious Consort from all classes of their subjects. Is not the present also an occasion to call forth the earnest hopes and good wishes of all friendly watchers of Japanese progress?



## LETTER XII.

### *THE BIRTHDAY OF A CONSTITUTION.*

TOKIO, February 16th.

For every reader of *The Times* who has seen Japan there must be hundreds who have not ; and even of the lucky minority none but those present on the 11th inst. can have experienced public Japanese rejoicings on any scale at all comparable with that which was then called forth in this capital in honour of the birthday of the Constitution. At first the weather threatened ruin to every preparation and hope. A snowfall had set in during the night—a most unwelcome reminder that we are not yet out of winter's grasp ; and though crowds of cloaked and hooded sightseers, shivering under their great paper umbrellas, but not to be denied, were abroad from an early hour, these had for greeting gloomy skies and still falling snow above them, raw air and piercing blasts about them, and beneath their rain-clogs a very quagmire of sloppy, slippery mud, while the murmur of dripping waters from every eave and gutter kept up a ceaseless, dismal accompaniment to the sounds and sights of festival. An hour or so before noon, however—at the very time when the Emperor was proclaiming in his palace the boon of political liberty—there was a great and happy change. Snow, gloom, and

cloud passed rapidly away, and the still rising sun burst gladly forth with, as it were, a shout of joy and congratulation to the land that bears his name. Then, no longer restrained by the elements, the big city's holiday-loving masses gave themselves up to thorough enjoyment of the greatest festival yet known in the modern history of Japan, and put the last touches on the elaborate emblems and decoration by which at sundown every street and alley was to become clothed in robes of brightness and beauty such as Japanese artistic ingenuity alone can weave. The scenes in the chief thoroughfares after nightfall were, indeed, magnificent and unique. Triumphal arches, some in Western style, others displaying the far finer form of the Japanese *torii*, with its colossal pillars and cross-beams—others again in the likeness of gigantic city or castle gates—were conspicuous among the decorations. In these, masses of rich greenery; festoons, constellations, and garlands of coloured lanterns, not unfrequently mingled with the soft brilliance of electric lights; and drapings of flags—always the red sun on a white ground, which is the national banner of Japan—together with emblems and ideographic mottoes, wrought sometimes of flowers but more often of warm-tinted oranges, were combined with rare and wonderful taste and skill, and with such wealth and variety of design that no two of them were at all alike. To them were added countless embellishments of other kinds. Here a mighty ship of lanterns, riding above the roof of a steamship office; there, also traced in lamps against the sky, the grand curves of the loved and lordly Fuji-san; yonder, the ugly old Bridge of Japan, transformed by greenery and lanterns into a suspension-bridge with light and graceful outlines; and everywhere, from the wealthiest business premises to the humblest dwellings in the poorest

lanes, a starry host of lanterns, some of plain red, but by far the greater number bearing the national device, while the flag itself, singly or crossed in pairs, floated over every entrance. Of the love, reverence, and devotion to the Throne which are so strongly felt by the people of Japan a striking proof was afforded by the whole character of the decorations. In place of the references which might have been naturally expected to the great event of the day, one sentiment alone—that of loyalty to the Emperor and Empress—ran through every emblem and ideograph, on every building, and every festival car that was paraded through the city.

Among other sights of the streets, pleasant indeed and characteristically Japanese, are those to be seen this evening in the shop-fronts, open, as always, to the air. Here, with the stock-in-trade hidden away for the nonce, with rich screens for a background, with costly and beautiful art-objects, disinterred from the neat boxes and soft nests of brocade or silk which commonly secrete them, and tastefully disposed about, the shopkeepers and their families, clothed in picturesque holiday garb, sit chatting, smoking, often with the added luxuries of musical or dancing performances, to the enjoyment of which, on this day of universal jubilee, every passer-by who may care to loiter for the purpose is freely welcome. Pleasant also, and again peculiarly Japanese, is the behaviour of the crowd. That there is much crushing is, in the nature of things, inevitable. But nowhere else, assuredly, than in Japan could be seen the perfect patience, politeness, gentleness, and good-humour that mark the vast throngs which press this evening through the streets of Tokio. Mingled with them and adding to the general enthusiasm are proces-



DASHI.

sions of many kinds. At one point we come upon a file of *jinrikishas*, each carrying its pair of bewitching little singing-girls, clad in butterfly robes and seen under the becoming shadow of crimson parasols. There are mountebanks, merry-andrews, and mummers; drums and song and music everywhere; guilds of workmen in raiment quaint and picturesque; and strings of the old time *dashi*, or festival, cars, drawn by meek and serious bullocks, escorted by wild looking men in the garb of ancient days, and carrying mighty superstructures ablaze with splendour, in the midst of which musicians pipe and dancers show off their powers of pantomime. Mad excitement presently arises over the followers of one giant *dashi*. Inquisitive, we join the rush; and lo! a bevy of the famed *geisha* of the Shimbashi quarter, arrayed in festival dress, and chanting the plaintive refrain of the firemen's song. Fair and winsome at all times, and possessed of uncommon refinement and grace, these damsels well know and as well deserve the enthusiastic admiration they excite to-night, as they tramp in procession after the lumbering *dashi*, attired no longer in silk, brocade, and crape, but wearing in place thereof the coarsest robes of striped calico, their long black hair twisted on high as in the days of Old Japan, their delicate nether limbs encased in blue-cloth pantaloons, and rough sandals of straw half covering their dainty feet.

From the above unavoidably bare outline of the bright pageantry of the streets it is necessary to pass to the morning's ceremony of promulgating the Constitution, but briefly mentioned in my letter of the 12th. The Imperial Palace, in which this ceremony was held, stands in the heart of the ancient fortress called the Castle of Tokio, which, founded in 1453, and occupied by the Tokugawa Shoguns



ENTRANCE TO PALACE.



from the time of Iyeyasu, dominates and forms the kernel of the vast city, and, with its wide moats and gigantic escarpments, spreads over an area of fully 1,000 acres. Successive fires had so devastated the old palace of the Shogun that by 1873 not a roof remained under the shadow of the pines planted by Iyeyasu three centuries ago. From 1873, then, until quite lately the Emperor dwelt temporarily in the *yashiki* of the Prince of Kishu, without the moats. Meanwhile, after a long controversy which left victory in the hands of the conservative advocates of a structure in Japanese style, the new Palace was built; and thither the Court removed only a few weeks ago. All that Japanese skill could devise to render this Imperial residence worthy of the country and of its illustrious occupant was called into requisition, and issued in a result the success of which cannot be denied. The rare beauties of form and detail in the finished buildings have a charm peculiarly their own. Purists may, and do, object that, in the stress of adapting old Japanese features to the requirements of this epoch, a compromise has been wrought out which does not fully satisfy the strictest canons—as, for example, in the introduction of light by transparent glass slides on two or more sides of the large and lofty rooms, the said slides supporting wall-spaces much deeper than themselves, with heavily decorated ceilings above. The general result, nevertheless, is that, by sparing neither space nor height, an air of truly regal grandeur has been achieved; while the superlative art-taste and workmanship of feature and design, the chaste woods and matchless carpentry, the parquetted floors and sumptuously beautiful ceilings, the rare examples of metal-work and glyptic art, together with the lacquer and latticing, embroidery and painting, are bound to command the warmest admiration. In

the noble throne-room of this edifice, and in the surrounding corridors, was gathered by 10 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, each section in its appointed place, a great assemblage, including well-nigh all the magnates and notables of and in the Empire, and presenting, in the varied uniforms of many nations and many degrees, a radiant and striking spectacle. At half-past ten, while the bands in the courtyard played the national anthem, the Emperor, clad in a military uniform blazing with orders, and followed by a brilliant retinue, entered and seated himself on the throne. Of the three sacred regalia, the mirror, sword, and stone, the last two were carried behind the Sovereign by Court dignitaries, who now took places on either side of the throne; the mirror, as I explained in a recent letter, has lain hidden for nearly 19 centuries in the Naiku Temple at Isé. Then came the Empress, a right sweet, gracious, and Royal lady, wearing a gown of exquisite white silk brocade, and attended by the Princesses and her Court, all in foreign attire. Her Majesty, after making obeisance to the throne and courteous acknowledgments to the assembly, took a seat prepared for her on the Sovereign's right front. This done, the Emperor, rising and bowing thrice, spake to his hearers as follows, with a lofty air and dignified tones that well befitted the solemn occasion:—

*Whereas, We make it the joy and glory of Our heart to behold the prosperity of Our country, and the welfare of Our subjects, We do hereby, in virtue of the supreme power We inherit from Our Imperial ancestors, promulgate the present immutable fundamental laws, for the sake of Our present subjects and their descendants.*

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*The Imperial founder of Our House and Our other Imperial ancestors, by the help and support of the forefathers of Our subjects, laid the foundation of Our Empire upon a basis which is to last for ever. That this brilliant achievement embellishes the annals of Our country, is due to the glorious virtues of Our sacred Imperial ancestors, and to the loyalty and bravery of Our subjects, their love of their country, and their public spirit. Considering that our subjects are the descendants of the loyal and good subjects of our Imperial ancestors, We doubt not but that Our subjects will be guided by Our views, and will sympathize with all Our endeavours, and that, harmoniously coöperating together, they will share with Us Our hope of making manifest the glory of Our country, both at home and abroad, and of securing for ever the stability of the work bequeathed to Us by Our Imperial ancestors.*

Count Kuroda, the Minister President of State, now advanced with deep obeisances to the foot of the dais, and received at His Majesty's hands the new Constitution and Laws, after which the Imperial party withdrew, amid the thunders of prolonged salutes.

Among other events of this memorable day, there was a review on a large scale in the afternoon, when some 14,000 of all arms, including a contingent of blue-jackets, were inspected on parade by the Emperor, and then performed the usual march-past and other evolutions, which, in spite of ground rendered utterly abominable by the preceding weather and the trampling of many feet, were executed in a manner that amply testified to the training



COUNT ITO.

and steadiness of Japan's military forces. Wild and vehement public enthusiasm, with joyful demonstrations of many kinds, were displayed along the route followed by the Imperial *cortège* to and from the review ground. It was the first occasion in the nation's history on which the ruler of Japan had appeared in public with his consort, well-beloved of the people, sitting and smiling at his side. Moreover—which was itself no small event in the eyes of the populace—they appeared in a new and handsome carriage, drawn by six horses and glittering with splendour. Next, certainly, to the Imperial pair, Count Ito, President of the Privy Council, was the hero of the day. To him is due the conception and much of the burden of preparation of the charter of liberty now accorded to the Japanese people. Upon him, accordingly, after the ceremony at the Palace, were poured forth congratulations from all sides, on account,

not alone of the successful issue of his labours, but also of his having that morning been decorated by the Emperor, in recognition of his services, with the Grand Cross of the Order of the Paullownia. It should be added, as another happy feature of the day's proceedings, that the Imperial pardon was granted to a large section of political and other offenders. This act of clemency was in some cases retrospective, including, for example, the posthumous restoration to his original rank of the valiant and famous Saigo Takamori, who, impelled by a misguided patriotism, instigated and led the great Satsuma rebellion in 1877. At its close he died a true *samurai's* death, but meanwhile eight months of obstinate struggle had severely taxed the national treasury and inflicted a terrible check upon his country's progress. One tragic incident, however, broke sadly upon the otherwise cheerful string of events on the birthday of the Constitution: Viscount Mori Arinori, Minister of State for Education, was assassinated by a half-crazy Shinto fanatic, when in the act of leaving his residence for the Palace ceremonial. The assassin, while struggling with the Minister, was cut down by one of the guards, and, from a document found on his body, it transpired that the crime, so far from having been dictated by political considerations, was simply the fell vengeance of a zealot who had sworn that the Minister should pay with his death for having lately entered the chief shrine at Isé without first removing his boots. Viscount Mori, an able statesman and brilliant scholar, was well known in London, where he served as Minister for Japan only a few years ago.

Imperfect as is the foregoing story of a very notable day in the annals of Japan, it would be yet more imperfect were I to omit all description of the unique entertainment



## BUGAKU.

in the evening at the Imperial Palace, at which I had the honour of being present. By 9 o'clock the chief reception chamber—brilliantly lighted, as are all the State apartments, by superb electroliers—was filled to overflowing with a throng of distinguished personages. Soon afterwards the crystal sliding doors at one end were thrown back, and the guests were ushered along the corridors leading to the throne-room, where preparation had been made for a performance of *Bugaku*, or Japanese dancing in the ancient style. A stage for the performers occupied the middle of one side of the chamber, opposite to the dais reserved for the Imperial party, who soon arrived and took their places. The Empress, dressed in white satin brocade and wearing a handsome tiara and necklace of diamonds, sat on His Majesty's left, and behind and about the Imperial pair were gathered Princes and Princesses of Blood and the *person-*

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*nel* of the Court. Members of the Cabinet and other high dignitaries, with their wives, sat facing the stage on the Emperor's right, and opposite to them was the Foreign Corps Diplomatique, the general body of guests filling the rest of the available space within the room as well as in the corridors without. Immediately on the arrival of the Imperial Party the performance began. It was preluded by the wailing strains of old-time music, a slow, sad cadence, to which voices were soon added. Then entered the dancers, four wild and formidable looking men, clad in loose robes of dark red, strange head-gear of the black gauzy material made familiar to us by Korean types, but shaped in far bolder and quainter curves, and furnished with mighty flaps projecting past the ears. Loose white pantaloons, and foot-garniture that might almost have passed for ordinary boots, completed the costume of these most singular looking beings; and each wore a handsome sword. Advancing very slowly and gravely, they performed with equal slowness and gravity, the pantomime of the *Kume-no-mai*, every movement in perfect accord and unerring sympathy with the weird music. It must be here explained of Japanese dances in general that they are purely pantomimic—theatricals, as it were, without any dialogue. Historical scenes are acted by gestures, while the libretto of the accompaniment gives a clue to the successive incidents of the story. Thus, the *Kume-no-mai*, danced on this birthday of the first Emperor, Jimmu Tenno, just as it has, doubtless, been danced at the Japanese Court at any time for the past 2,000 years and more, is founded on a tragic event in one of that time-honoured Monarch's campaigns. Unable to overcome a fierce chieftain named Yasotakeru, who, from his stronghold in Yamato, checked their advance, the Imperial leaders resorted to stratagem, and employed as

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their decoy a fair and zealous damsel, Okumebe by name; whereafter, Yasotakeru and his centurions, having been lured by this nymph to a carouse, were slain in the midst of it by a band of the Emperor's warriors. Even with this knowledge, however, only an expert could appreciate fully the incidents of the story, as now shadowed forth by the gestures of the mute and grim performers and by the accompanying chant. But no one could be at any loss to recognise the singular pantomimic art of the dancers, their extraordinarily subtle training, their rare command of feature, the automatic precision of their movements, and their marvellous deftness of limb and muscle. At one point the music suddenly stopped, and the four dancers, one at each corner of the stage, in dumb show, but always with unspeakable slowness and solemnity, as though they sought to carry their audience into the realm of dreamland, acted the slaying of the love-stricken Yasotakeru and all his captains. This done, the grim figures sheathed their swords, renewed their rhythmic pantomime for a few moments, and then, one by one, left the stage, preserving to the last their sombre air and gait. To the *Kume-no-mai* succeeded the *Taihei-raku*, about 1,800 years old and of Chinese origin; but its story, I fear me, is much too long to tell. In this case also the dancers were four in number, fierce and puissant men of war, fully clad in chain armour and bristling with arms. In addition to a sword, each carried a long, evil-looking lance with a most portentous head, and each had a quiver of arrows on his back, something very like a cross-bow slung under his left arm, and a few surplus weapons suspended or stuck elsewhere; while round his head spread a helmet of truly amazing size and shape. The foot-gear was sandals, and under the armour was worn a robe of crimson gauze, trailing behind the warrior



as he walked. Rather superb and artistic than terrible, these eighteen-century-ago warriors, swaying to music a shade more lively than the previous cadence, and not without occasional notes of the drum, performed an elaborate series of measured movements and dramatic posturings, intensely solemn and dignified. Only when the wielding of swords became a feature of the performance did the music quicken, the faces of the dancers glow with animation, and their gestures grow almost wild and stirring. After perhaps a quarter of an hour, the dance ended by a remarkably fantastic lance-pantomime, and the performers retired, slowly, mournfully, and singly as before. The *Daku-raku*, or polo dance, followed. It had neither tragic nor martial elements, but was chiefly remarkable for the incomparably rich brocades of which the dancers' costumes were made. Carrying polo staves in their hands, the performers went through the movements of the game of *Daku* solemnly and leisurely, but with wonderful grace. There were yet three dances on the programme when the Emperor and Empress rose and withdrew, followed by the whole Court Party and the rest of the assemblage. About midnight, supper being ended, every one took his departure; and, as the guests passed out, they found a number of trays filled with *bouhours*—many of them beautiful little caskets of metal-work in the best style of Japanese art, and engraved or ornamented in designs appropriate to the day—of which each carried away one as a souvenir of the occasion. And thus ended the Birthday of the Japanese Constitution.



## LETTER XIII.

### JAPANESE POLO.

TOKYO, May 8th.

Among the Japanese dances of olden days that were performed on the 11th of last February at the Imperial Palace in the Castle of Tokyo, and described by me at the time, was one called the *Dakin-raku*, or Polo dance, composed in the reign of the Emperor Jumei, about 1,040 years ago. Japanese Polo itself dates a good deal further back. In Mr. Basil Hall Chamberlain's "Classical Poetry of the Japanese" there is an ode from the ancient *Manyō-shū*, or "Collection of a Myriad Leaves," referring to a game of *Dakin* that was played in 727 A.D. in the fields near Nara, at that time the capital, by the nobles and courtiers of the period. And antiquarians hold that it was certainly not later than in the seventh century—more probably in the sixth—that polo, along with many other good things, first found its way into this country from China. It is no small event then, in its way, to see a performance of Japanese *Dakin*—for at least twelve centuries the favourite outdoor pastime of the oldest aristocracy in the world. Happily the game still flourishes, amid the crumbling ruins of so much of the picturesque and interesting in Japan's past. It languished for a decade or so,

during the convulsions that accompanied the extinction of the feudal system twenty years ago. But it never quite died out; and it has latterly been revived with marked activity, as well in the capital as in other parts of the empire. I first saw it played in 1881, at an entertainment given by Prince Higashi Fushimi to our own young princes Albert Victor and George. I saw it again last week, as a guest of the Japanese Polo Club in this city.

Persia, if I mistake not, is said by Dr. Tylor to be the birthplace from which polo originally spread to other lands. But the pastime has assumed in Japan a very different form from that with which Englishmen are familiar in India and at home. Though its name, *Dakin*, means literally "strike the ball," there is no such striking in the Japanese game. Here, lifting and throwing take the place of striking. The arena is a flat, grassed rectangle, 216ft. long and 60ft. wide, enclosed by railings, or, better, by low banks 3ft. or 4ft. high. At the far or goal end, beneath, it may be, an arch of ever-greens, is a wooden barrier or screen, 8ft. high, 12ft. wide, and draped with flags; and in the middle of this screen, at a height of 6ft. from the ground, is a circular hole 1.2ft. in diameter, which opens into a bag net falling into a basket behind the screen. Right and left of the screen are stretched two horizontal wires, each carrying a row of large conspicuous scoring-balls, usually from seven to ten in number. The wire on the right has red balls for the Red side; that on the left white balls for the White side. Behind are stationed two scorers, whose duty it is to attend to the scoring-balls for either side, as well as to proclaim each point made in the game by loud strokes on a *taiko*, or drum, for the White side, and on a gong for the Red side. In front of



POLO PLAYERS.

the barrier, at a distance of 18ft., is a padded railing 3ft. high, stretching across the course, and marking the limit up to which the players may approach the screen. At the opposite or starting end of the enclosure, another railing, 18ft. from that end, also stretches across the course; and behind it two heaps of balls are piled on the ground, one red, the other white; together with two smaller heaps, one of red balls hooped with white, and the other of white balls hooped with black. An attendant tosses these balls, as required, into the arena for the riders, which, owing to the deduction of 18ft. at each end as above explained, measures 180ft. by 60ft. All the balls are made of paper, with a core of very small pebbles and bamboo fibre. Their diameter is 1.7in., and they weigh very nearly an ounce and a quarter. For playing the game, each rider carries a light wand, called *kiu-tsui*, of tapering bamboo, only about  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter at the thick end, and 3ft. 5in. long. To its extremity is bound a flat, narrow strip of bamboo, bent over so as to form a semicircle, of 1.5in. radius, the outer end of which is held in position by a silken stay passing obliquely down to the bamboo shaft, 2in. from its head. The little space thus bounded by the shaft head, the semicircle, and the stay is filled in with light open network, just loose enough to sink into a saucer-shaped hollow when weighted with the *Dakiu* ball. Thus though *kiu-tsui*, being interpreted, means "ball hammer," it is really a "ball scoop." And, as the words *Dakiu* and *kiu-tsui* are both of Chinese origin, it would seem fair to conjecture that the change from striking to lifting and throwing took place on Japanese soil, the original terms surviving in spite of the altered practice.

Among the first lessons a recruit has to learn are the tricks not only of scooping up a ball deftly from the ground

with his *kiu-tsui* in all the hurry-scurry of the game, but of keeping it when he has got it. There is a knack in these things, as in most feats of manual skill—easy enough when mastered, but very far from easy to master. Even after a successful pick up, it seldom happens that a player is long allowed to carry a ball tranquilly goalwards resting in the cup of his *kiu-tsui*. His enemies take care to prevent that. His only chance is to have acquired by long practice the art of retaining the ball in all sorts of positions. This necessitates an expert and incessant brandishing of the *kiu-tsui*, effected by rapid twistings of the fore-arm, in such a manner as to keep the ball under all circumstances pressing, centrifugally as it were, against the saucer-shaped mesh, and so prevent it from falling. I find it as difficult to describe this ingenious handling as I have found it tedious to learn it. But the dexterity with which the ball is thus held by good players in the full career of the game is quite the most curious feature of the whole performance.

Now for details of the play. On each side, Red and White, there is an equal number of riders, usually from six to eight, distinguished by the red and white colours of their head dress; and the object of each side is to be the first to get a certain number of balls into the net at the goal. Seven is the ordinary number of plain balls for a side, and in that case seven scoring balls of either colour are strung out on the wires at the right and left of the screen before the beginning of the game, the signal for which is given by the umpire, and echoed by a brisk peal from the gong and drum. The riders, previously drawn up in readiness at the starting end, now press forward with the balls as thrown in to them by the attendant behind the rails. Carrying, passing, casting—any means, providing that the *kiu-tsui* only

is used—are allowed for getting the balls forward, until they are finally pitched into the net from the hither side of the goal railing. Obstructive tactics are of course a prominent feature of the contest. To steal away or throw back the balls belonging to the other side; to dislodge them from the enemies' *kiu-tsui* by striking the latter; to put them out of play by driving them over the boundary; to hustle and hinder a dangerous foe; and especially to thwart him at the moment of attempting a cast into the net, by shouting, brandishing your *kiu-tsui* before his eyes, or, better still, by arresting his weapon with your own—all this is lawful, and is not less important than successful casting on your own side. One or two skilled players of each colour generally hover about the goal end for these purposes, as well as to shield their friends from being balked by their adversaries. A ball once out of play cannot be touched; a fresh one must be taken from the starting point; but there is no limit to the number that may thus be taken by either side until its required number has been thrown into the net. At each successful cast the scorers deal two blows on the drum or gong, for White or Red as the case may be, at the same time withdrawing out of sight one ball from the corresponding scoring wire. At the seventh ball there is a merry peal of blows. Then the greater struggle begins. For, after succeeding with its seven plain balls, either side has yet to cast one striped ball into the net; and, as victory rests with those who first accomplish this, the skill of every player, for and against, is now exerted to the utmost. There are generally, of course, some ineffectual tries. To pitch a ball from horse-back with the *kiu-tsui* into a hole a foot across, even from the *minimum* distance of 18ft, and with no interference, is a feat not readily learned. To make a good shot in the



thick of fray and movement, from the greater distances often necessarily attempted in the game, and with yelling foes doing their worst to prevent you, is a feat to be proud of indeed. Sooner or later, however, success is achieved, whereupon a joyous crash from gong or drum proclaims the triumph of Red or White. Two wins out of three generally constitute a set unless the steeds tire earlier—a point on which the umpire decides. Such are the broad outlines of Japanese *Dakin*. Into the rules, which are few and simple, it is needless to enter.

At the contest which I had the pleasure of seeing a few days ago, some sets were played on pigskin saddles and in foreign jockey dress, which doubtless give the riders more freedom of movement than do the uncomfortable saddle and picturesque garments of the past. The latter, however, are more attractive to an onlooker, and are certainly more in keeping with the hoary age of the game and the nationality of the players. The teams on this occasion consist of members of the nobility and upper gentry, with one old grim and grizzled *sensei*, or teacher, of the *samurai* class. Seven Whites and seven Reds enter the arena in single file, and draw up facing one another on the left and right of the starting point. They are mounted on eager-eyed ponies, somewhat rough and ungainly to look at, but clever enough at their work, as we soon find out. They wear robes of many hues and patterns, voluminous dark silk *hakama*, or trousers, blue-cloth foot-gear (*tabi*), and low-crowned hats of plaited and glazed bamboo, respectively red and white, with wide turned-up brims, and fastened to the head by an odd-looking system of thick white padded bands. They ride on peaked, lacquered, and caparisoned saddles, with heavy stirrups of inlaid metal

work. The bridles and reins are of silk and tasselled, and attached to plain snaffle bits by an ingenious arrangement of steel rings. Between the players is the umpire, who happens on this occasion to be Viscount Matsudaira, the President of the Club. Except that his attire is of sombre black, he is arrayed and mounted like the rest. He waves his flag, the gong and drum are beaten noisily, and away the riders dart, one by one, after scooping up the balls in their *wa-tsui*. All are soon in the full ardour of the struggle. White at first falls behind. When Red's scoring string is empty and the Reds are already at work with their striped ball, White has yet four plain balls remaining. Gradually and cleverly, however, the Whites make up their lee-way, and in ten minutes from the start are again on even terms, each side now putting forth tremendous efforts to secure victory with its final ball. The game waxes fast and furious, and the ground shakes again as the knots of riders dash to and fro. There are not a few unsuccessful shots at the hole, and there are a dozen instances of an expectant winner being foiled at the instant of casting, or of one ball or the other being thrown out of bounds by the enemy, or pitched back over all heads to the far end of the course. It is very pleasant to watch the skill and quickness of the offensive and defensive tactics. It is not less pleasant to witness the admirable good humour of the players. Each one of them is full of fun, and the most aggravating rebuffs, collisions, and crushings call forth naught but jokes and laughter, in which none join more heartily than the victims themselves. There is another fifteen minutes of this gallant and well balanced contest. At last, a Red horseman is seen hurrying up by the right hand boundary gaily brandishing Red's ball, which had been hurled back a moment before to the starting end. Two or three White combatants await

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him on the hither side of the goal railing. But he pulls up just in time and makes his cast at the hole, some 40ft. away. In vain does a White rider rush at him and strike his *kin-tsui* so quickly that, as the staves meet in the air, we fancy the ball must surely drop. Alas for White, however, their man is a fraction of a second too late to frustrate that splendid shot! The deed is done, and a mad clang from the gong declares a victory for Red. It has been a longer struggle than usual, and the ponies are blown. So the umpire decides that this game is ended. The Reds ride off in triumph, headed by the umpire, and led by the hero who has made the winning cast. But the luckless Whites have to follow the rule for the defeated. They dismount and lead their ponies away, sad, vanquished, and crest-fallen, yet assuredly nothing daunted.



## LETTER XIV.

### *CORMORANT FISHING IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, July 17th.

Whatever may be the degree of credence rightly permissible to the details of early Japanese chronology and history that are set forth in Japan's most venerable records—relating as they do to the dark ages of oral tradition, anterior to the seventh century of our era—there is no gainsaying that those ancient chronicles shed a very interesting and true light on the manners, customs, and language, as well as on the religious and political beliefs, of the early Japanese. Prominent in this respect is the *Kojiki*, or “Records of Ancient Matters,” compiled in A.D. 712, and translated into English a few years ago by that most accomplished scholar, Mr. Basil Hall Chamberlain. The *Kojiki* is, in fact, the oldest existing Japanese book. It is, further, the second historical work of which mention has been preserved. And it is to it among a very few other ancient volumes, that the student naturally turns, in his investigation of old-time Japanese subjects. In the *Kojiki*, for example—to come at once to the subject of this letter—the searcher after knowledge about the past of cormorant-fishing in Japan may read that on a certain occasion in the ages before books were written, during

a campaign in the land of Yamato, the Emperor Jimmu, of deathless memory, with his centurions and his fighting men, found themselves exhausted and an hungered on the slopes of Mount Inasa. Whereupon, addressing some fishermen who were working their cormorants along a neighbouring stream, the Heavenly Sovereign sang:—

*“Ye keepers of cormorants, the birds of the island,  
Come ye now to our rescue!”*

Here, then, we have evidence from a book 1,177 years old that the sport of *Ugari*, or cormorant-fishing, was at that epoch at least already established in Japan, while, if the story and the orthodox tradition as to the period of Jimmu Tenno's reign are to be accepted, we must assign to it an antiquity more than twice as great. In a few parts of the country it is still kept up, notably on the Nagara River at and near Gifu, in the province of Mino, where this hoary pursuit has always had a stronghold, and where the seven hamlets bordering on the choicest part of the stream enjoy to the present day the exclusive fishing rights that were conveyed to them early in the 14th century by the Emperor Daigo, himself on one occasion a beholder of the sport. All through the middle ages, and, indeed, up to this current *Meiji* era which has witnessed the death of so many old customs, offerings of dried cormorant-caught trout, or “ayu” (*salmo altivalis*), from the Nagaragawa were sent yearly to the Court of the Emperor or the Shogun. For then, as now, the fish from that river enjoyed a high character for flavour and excellence, their fine quality being due, it is supposed, partly to the water and food of their habitat, and partly to the painless method of capture. In return for these offerings, grants of rice were made to the

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hamlets aforesaid, and in course of time the special degree of *Usho*, or Master of Cormorants, came to be established for the 21 greatest living experts in the guild, a step which naturally gave a lively stimulus to the cultivation of the utmost possible skill in the cormorant-fishing art.

Gifu, then, is the place to go to if you care to see in all its perfection one of the oldest extant forms of piscatory craft. They who go will certainly not be disappointed. The people of Gifu—a clean country town, situated at the threshold of the Mino mountains, and little known as yet to ordinary tourists—are proud of their beautiful fabrics of silk and crape. They are proud of their tasteful circular fans; prouder still of their renowned and most gracefully decorated lanterns, framed with rare bamboo from the lower slopes of the famed Mount Kinkwa hard by, and encased in wrinkled bark-made paper, delicate yet durable withal, which sheds a light so soft and soothing as to have earned for them the name of the “air-cooling lantern,” from the pretty fancy that they convey no sense of heat to the eye. But it is on their time-honoured *Ugari* and all its traditions that the Gifu townsfolk especially plume themselves. Add to this that they are—as what unspoiled Japanese are not?—the very pink of politeness, ever ready with a graceful welcome to visitors bent on doing the wonders of the neighbourhood, and it will be your own fault if you come away without witnessing to your heart's content a spectacle which, though hardly to be called fine or stirring, has at least the merits of picturesqueness, rarity, and most uncommon antiquity. To see the fishing at all you must be there between May and October, which are the limits of the season. To see it to full advantage, you should choose a time when the river is free from turbidity, and when there

is no moonlight—the darker the night the better. Further, if you are wise, you will take care to see it after the manner of the country, and in the company of a pleasant party of Japanese. That is how I saw it a month ago, and what I saw I now proceed to tell.

It was but a short drive from our inn at Gifu to the river-side tea-house that served as the real starting point of the expedition. Embarking there after nightfall in a roomy pleasure barge, we set off on an up-stream voyage in which our craft was alternately poled and towed over the shoals and rapids of the wide and shallow Nagaragawa. Outside, the night was darkness itself, and profoundly still. Only with difficulty could we make out the huge profile of Kinkazan, rising black and gloomy from the east margin of the stream. Not a star was to be seen, nor any light at all save the soft flashes of occasional fireflies, or the twinkling of some stray passer's lantern on the distant bridge of Gifu. Inside, on the contrary, there was neither silence nor darkness. The cabin or deck-house of the *Korio Maru* is, in truth, a pretty little Japanese room, with its accompaniments of sliding doors, clean soft mats, decorated ceiling, and beautiful woods—the whole brightly lit up by a many coloured galaxy of "air-cooling" lanterns. On the mats sit a cheery party, talking and joking with all the happy *abandon* of Japanese out for a holiday, drinking tea it hardly need be said, and smoking their diminutive pipes the while. Aft of our saloon is a tiny kitchen, from which, as time wears on, attendants bring relays of tea and fruits and sweetmeats, and finally sundry bottles of hot *saké*, followed by a great *jubako*, or provision-box, of gilded lacquer, with its trays upon trays of dainty eatables, among which last are spatch-cooked eels, piping hot, and cooked



as only a Japanese can cook them. After, perhaps, an hour of struggle up stream, the barge is brought to rest at a convenient place in mid-channel, there to await the arrival of the cormorant-fishers we have come to see. Presently the first sign is detected—a spot of hazy red glow, shining over the trees from a reach two or three miles above us. Hereupon, our chief boatman erects his private signal, a mighty paper lantern of a red and white basket pattern. Steadily the glow spreads and deepens, until, as the last intervening point is cleared, we desery its cause—a constellation of shifting, flickering lights, drifting down the dark river towards us. By degrees these develop into balls of fire, seven in number, casting as many long coruscations of light before them, from their reflection in the waters of the stream. Then sounds are heard, sounds of much beating, shouting, and splashing. Next appear the forms of boats and the swarthy figures of men, thrown up with weird, Rembrandt-like effects against the inky blackness of the night; and in the water round about the boats are numbers of cormorants, behaving to all appearance in the maddest fashion. The fires, we now see, are great cages of blazing pine-knots suspended over the bow of each boat, darting forth flames and sparks, and for ever dropping embers which fall with loud hissing into the stream. Nearer still they come. The men have seen our signal, and are manœuvring so as to surround us; which being done, we find ourselves in the midst of all the uproar and excitement of cormorant-fishing *à la Japonaise*.

Now to describe the sport. There are, to begin with, four men in each of the seven boats, one of whom, at the stern, has no duty but that of managing his craft. In the bow stands the Master, distinguished by the peculiar hat

of his rank, and handling no fewer than twelve trained birds with the surpassing skill and coolness that have earned for the sportsmen of Gifu their unrivalled præmiene. Amidships is another fisher, of the second grade, who handles four birds only. Between them is the fourth man, called *kako*, from the bamboo striking-instrument of that name with which he makes the clatter necessary for keeping the birds up to their work: he also encourages them by shouts and cries, looks after spare apparatus, &c., and is ready to give aid if required. Each cormorant wears at the base of its neck a metal ring, drawing tight enough to prevent marketable fish from passing below it, but at the same time loose enough—for it is never removed—to admit the smaller prey which serves as food. Round the body is a cord, having attached to it at the middle of the back a short strip of stiffish whale-bone, by which the great awkward bird may be conveniently lowered into the water, or lifted out, when at work; and to this whalebone is looped a thin rein of spruce fibre, twelve feet long, and so far wanting in pliancy as to minimise the chances of entanglement. When the fishing ground is reached, the master lowers his twelve birds one by one into the stream, and gathers their reins into his left hand, manipulating the latter thereafter with his right as occasion requires; number two does the same with his four birds; the *kako* starts in with his volleys of noise; and forthwith the cormorants set to at their work in the heartiest and jolliest way, diving and ducking with wonderful swiftness as the astonished fish come flocking toward the blaze of light. The master is now the busiest of men. He must handle his twelve strings so deftly that, let the birds dash hither and thither as they will, there shall be no impediment or fouling. He must have his eyes everywhere, and his hands following his eyes. Specially

must he watch for the moment when any of his flock is gorged—a fact generally made known by the bird itself, which then swims about in a foolish, helpless way, with its head and swollen neck erect. Thereupon the master shortening in on that bird, lifts it aboard, forces its bill open with his left hand, which still holds the rest of the lines, squeezes out the fish with his right, and starts the creature off on a fresh foray—all this with such admirable dexterity and quickness that the eleven birds still bustling about have scarce time to get things into a tangle, and in another moment the whole team is again perfectly in hand.

As for the cormorants, they are trained when quite young, being caught in winter with bird-lime on the coasts of the neighbouring Owari Gulf, at their first emigration southward from the summer haunts of the species, on the northern seaboard of Japan. Once trained, they work well up to 15, often up to 19 or 20, years of age; and, though their keep in winter bears hardly on the masters, they are very precious and profitable hunters during the five months' season, and well deserve the great care that is lavished upon them. From four to eight good-sized fish, for example, is the fair result of a single excursion for one bird, which corresponds with an average of about 150 fish per cormorant per hour, or 450 for the three hours occupied in drifting down the whole course. Every bird in a flock has and knows its number; and one of the funniest things about them is the quick-witted jealousy with which they invariably insist, by all that cormorant-language and pantomimic protest can do, on due observance of the recognised rights belonging to their individual numbers. Number one, or "Ichi," is the *doyen* of the corps, the senior in years as well as rank. His colleagues, according to their age, come after

him in numerical order. Ichi is the last to be put into the water and the first to be taken out, the first to be fed, and the last to enter the baskets in which, when work is over, the birds are carried from the boats to their domicile. Ichi, when aboard, has the post of honour at the eyes of the boat. He is a solemn grizzled old fellow, with a pompous, *noli me tangere* air that is almost worthy of a Lord Mayor. The rest have place after him, in succession of rank, alternately on either side of the gunwale. If, haply, the lawful order of precedence be at any time violated—if, for instance, No. 5 be put into the water before No. 6, or No. 4 be placed above No. 2—the rumpus that forthwith arises in that family is a sight to see and a sound to hear.

But all this while we have been drifting down, with the boats about us, to the lower end of the course, and are again almost of Gifu, where the whole squadron is beached. As each cormorant is now taken out of the water, the master can tell by its weight whether it has secured enough supper while engaged in the hunt; failing which, he makes the deficiency good by feeding it with the inferior fish. At length all are ranged in their due order, facing upwards, on the gunwale of each boat. And the sight of that array of great ungainly sea-birds—shaking themselves, flapping their wings, gaw-gawing, making their toilets, clearing their throats, looking about them with a stare of stupid solemnity, and now and then indulging in old-maddish little tiffs with their neighbours—is quite the strangest of its class I have ever seen, except perhaps the wonderful penguinry of the Falkland Islands, whereat a certain French philosopher is said to have even wept. Finally, the cormorants are sent off to bed, and we ourselves follow suit. There is a chorus of grateful “sayonaras!” from

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those politest of fishermen, accompanied by a tub of choice *ayu*, as, after bestowing a modest gratuity on our entertainers, we are carried ashore on the boatsmen's backs, and thence on wheels to the sign of "The Jewel Well"—to our mosquito-curtains and dreams of *Ugari*.



## LETTER XV

### *THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF THE JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER.*

TOKYO, October 21st.

On the afternoon of the 18th inst., as no doubt the telegraph wires have already proclaimed to the world, a desperate but happily abortive attempt was made in this capital upon the life of Count Okuma Shigenobu, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and one of the most earnest, sagacious, and truly patriotic statesmen that the present era has produced. As the Count was coming back from a Cabinet meeting in an open carriage, and just as the vehicle, with slackened speed, was being turned to enter the gateway leading to his official residence, a decently-dressed Japanese, in foreign clothes, ran suddenly towards the carriage, and, before the police-escort following immediately behind had the time to interfere, aimed a hand-bomb at the Minister's body, and instantly drew a short Japanese sword and put an end to his own life by cutting a deep gash in his throat. Fortunately the coachman, seeing the ruffian's advance, had promptly whipped up his horses, with the result that the bomb struck and exploded on the edge of the hood; and though Count Okuma received such severe injuries from splinters in his right leg, which happened to

be crossed over the other at the time, that the limb had to be amputated at once, his life since the occurrence can hardly be said to have been at any time in danger, and there are now the best reasons for belief that his full recovery is only a question of a few weeks. The escape, nevertheless, was a wonderful one. Dynamite was the explosive used. It is a curious example of the way in which the old and the new are so often juxtaposed in Japan, that from the hands of a murderous youth, fired by the ancient feudal instincts of this far-off corner (as some would call it) of the round world, should have been hurled one of the most civilized, if at the same time savage, instruments of death known to Western science.

This dastardly attack has, of course, created a profound sensation throughout the country, and it suggests some grave and interesting reflections which reach far beyond the mere details of the deed itself. Of the would-be assassin it has been ascertained that he was an obscure member of the so-called *shibū* class, a tribe of modern growth, which at this time constitutes one of the most unpleasant and deplorable features of the Japanese body politic. These *shibū*, it may be broadly said, are young men belonging to the lower class of disestablished *samurai*—the class to whose share have fallen none of the good things of the age, and with whom, in their own opinion at least, their failure in life, and often destitute circumstances, are due to the patriotic sacrifices that were made by the *samurai* of Japan a couple of decades ago. Idle, out-at-elbows waifs and strays, they have just enough smattering of foreign education to fill them with violent opinions on the rights of the subject and other political maxims, without enabling them to engage successfully in the battle of





COUNT OKUMA.

life under the new order of things. Count Okuma's assailant, for example, Kurushima by name, had been in turns, with various degrees of failure, a night costermonger and a petty dealer in salt, coals, and other materials. Further, the *soshi* not only have not yet eradicated, but still ardently cherish, the old spirit of patriotism or loyalty—*Yamato-damashii*, as the Japanese call it—which for ages was the *samurai's* idol, and at whose shrine it was his highest glory to lay down his life whenever the canons of feudal practice required it, and to thereby write down his name for ever and ever in the pages of Japanese history. But *Yamato-damashii*, for all its lustre in the past, is at this day entirely out of joint with the times. Of old it found its chief expression in fealty of every kind—above all else in loyalty to the lord of

the clan and in rigorous observance of the vendetta. Patriotism in its wide and true sense was hardly understood, because, as things were then, the opportunities for its exercise were so rare. Wherever, then, at the present day the old spirit survives—as it undoubtedly does among no inconsiderable section of the people of this empire—there can be little wonder that many of its more ignorant possessors are for ever groping about in sheer perplexity as to the line that their patriotism should take. The ancient shibboleths and precepts, about which there could be neither doubt nor mistake, have been swept into the limbo of the past; and in place of them what standard has been set up? Simply, in their poor minds, a hazy, shapeless idea that they must never forget to be patriotic. Of the rightful aim and scope of true patriotism, in their country's present circumstances, they know no more than the babes in the wood. For nine out of every ten of such folks this forlorn state of mind is, fortunately, neither painful nor ruinous; but in the breasts of morbid, brooding lads like the *scots*, filled to bursting, as not a few of them unhappily are, with the wild notion that it behoves them to sacrifice themselves in some way, even unto death, for their country, such a blind, unformulated and rudderless spirit of patriotism cannot but be fraught with elements of disturbance of the public peace. And politics, of course, are at this epoch alike the decoy and the goad of the misguided and turbulent fraternity. There are to-day dozens upon dozens of youths in the empire whose crazy dreams of patriotism are ever impelling them, not, happily, to such brutal deeds as that of last Friday, but at least to acts and agitations of a kind which brand them, as in truth they are, the worst possible foes of their country. Unfortunately, too, as there is a *scots* class, so there is also what may be called a *scots* press. The



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writers in these vehement sheets are for ever dinning into the ears of their clients attacks on the Administration, complaints that the national honour, resources, and dignity are being sacrificed or the Constitution set at naught, fervid exhortations to every thinking Japanese to bestir himself in his country's cause—everything, in short, best calculated to work upon the feelings and passions of youthful, discontented, and desperate readers.

To politics, then, and to the spurious sentiment which such poor creatures as Kurushima and his instigators—educated and lashed into frenzy by a section of the Press—mistake for patriotism, are to be traced the causes that led up to the attack on Count Okuma. By self-nominated soothsayers, unable to see below the surface of things, much will be, and indeed already has been, said about the

recent outrage in a spirit depreciatory of the Japanese people at large, and sceptical as to the reality of Japanese civilization and progress. A broader survey, however, would hardly seem to warrant any such adverse criticism. Few of even the most advanced countries of the West could show a record at all comparable with that of modern Japan in respect of the greater crimes. Last Friday's attempt is the first of its kind in Japan since 1878; for Viscount Mori's murder in February last was the outcome solely of religious, not political, bigotry, and had nothing to do with the station of its victim. And thinking men will be apt to recognize that in view of the marvellous and sweeping changes which have followed one another in this country, with such unexampled rapidity, during the last 20 years, the wonder is, not that a Kurushima should once in a decade lift up his poisoned head, but that political and other crimes have not been of vastly greater frequency among an excitable people so lately emancipated from a state of things in which, during a long roll of ages, it may be almost said that might had been right and the sword the law. The *soshi*, in fact, and all that belongs and springs from them, are the natural, i. e. unhealthy, result and outcome of social and political conditions in Japan at the present epoch. They are just what we might expect to find created out of such a queer compound as the ancient *samurai* and the half-fledged modern student, whose pocket is as empty as his brain, and whose gospel is a fiery section of the Press. But for all their noise and desperate folly, the *soshi* are a mere handful at best—no more truly reflecting the real sentiments, attributes, and capacities of the bulk of the Japanese people than do the Nihilists, Socialists, and Communists of Europe afford standards by which to gauge the greatest nations of the world. The

present occasion, nevertheless, is not without its moral and warning. It shows that, notwithstanding all that has taken place since 1868, there still survives in certain Japanese social strata a leaven of the old temper, spirit, and instincts of the feudal time—mistaken, doubtless, and ill-directed, yet not to be altogether disregarded, heavily though its recognition may handicap the Government in their laudable path of progress. It shows that proclivities established by ages of nourishment in the very grain of a people's character cannot be wholly eradicated in the course of two or three decades, however sincere, intelligent, and resolute may be the aims and actions of the country's leaders. It shows that when, as in this most singular era of Japan's history, an entirely new civilization has been imported wholesale and with giant strides from abroad, there may be times at which the ambition of the superior classes finds itself clogged by the lower intelligence and stubborn prejudices of those who are, after all, of the people. Lastly, it shows that the day has not yet come at which perfect freedom of the Press can be safely permitted in Japan. Journalism, it so happens, is of all callings in this country one of the easiest of access for that very class of inferior *literati* from whose worst members the *soshi* are recruited. Dangerous licence, it necessarily follows, may be expected from newspapers whose writers and editors are in sympathy, if not in league, with the *soshi*; and until the spirit of those gentry, as sketched in this letter, ceases to be something more than a name, it would be madness to allow imprudent scribblers and agitators to heat and keep it alive by their incendiary nostrums. Complaints have often been made against the Japanese Executive for not having long ago relaxed the present somewhat rigorous Press laws. Not only, however,

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do current events show that, as might be expected, they are the best judges of the way of dealing with their own people, but it will be surprising if henceforward, after a tragedy which has so nearly robbed the country of one of its most brilliant and devoted statesmen, they are not seen to come down with an iron hand on every journalistic effort to disturb the public peace. Of course, in the above remarks, I refer solely to a small and unworthy section of the vernacular press—not to the main body, which is as respectable and order-loving as could be desired.

Where there is smoke there must be some fire, and it will be observed that I have not touched directly on the political grievance, real or fancied, of the *soshi* and their allies, or explained how it happens that Count Okuma was singled out as the victim of their malice. I shall consider that part of the subject in a future letter, merely premising, what your readers will have conjectured for themselves, that inasmuch as the Minister of Foreign Affairs was the object of attack, foreign affairs—to wit, the familiar but oppressive nightmare of treaty revision—are at the root of an agitation that has been going on for the last three or four months; an agitation by no means confined to the *soshi*, yet happily of a nature and extent from which no apprehensions of evil or even insurmountable difficulty need be entertained.

## LETTER XVI.

*THE SHINTO FESTIVAL OF ISE, IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, October 22nd.

If it be worth while—and few will deny that it is so—to seize such fleeting opportunities as are still now and then permitted to us of photographing the old ways and ceremonies of the interesting land first introduced to Western ken by Marco Polo, six centuries ago, under the name of Zipangu, then, assuredly, the subject of this letter may well enough claim a hearing in the columns of *The Times*. My story to-day is of an old-time spectacle appertaining to Shinto—at once the primitive, yet still living and ruling, faith of the Japanese people, and one of the most ancient religious systems in the world. To this it may be added that, as the ceremonies which I shall describe take place but once in 20 years, and as no alien was present at them in 1869, nor any but myself on the occasion lately ended, the writer of these lines is, and must in the nature of things be for 20 years to come, the sole foreign eye-witness, living or dead, of the great festival of Ise, which is by far the chief and most rare of all its kind in Japan.

Readers of my letter on the Shrines of Ise in *The Times* of the 27th of last December may remember that, in

a tolerably full account of the temples and matters relating to them. I pointed out that the hoary antiquity of those hallowed seats of worship is the antiquity of type and of establishment, not of the fabrics themselves. I showed that, being built only of plain spruce and thatch, exactly after the primitive fashion of the buildings that prevailed in Japan before the birth of Christ, the two great shrines at Yamada—namely, the Naiku, dedicated to the Sun Goddess, who is regarded as the ancestress of the Imperial line, and the Geku, dedicated to the Goddess of Earth—suffer impairment so rapidly in the damp and variable climate of Japan that it has been the practice for the last 12 centuries to renew them every twentieth year. I dwelt upon the extraordinary care that has been taken on all such occasions to preserve the ancient style most faithfully in every detail, so that each successive group of structures should be an accurate copy of the last. I further explained that, instead of pulling down one set of fabrics and building another in its place, the Japanese plan for each temple is to have two precisely similar sites, contiguous to one another and alternately occupied, the old set not being dismantled until its counterpart is finished and made ready to become the new home of the venerated emblem of the deity, in which latter, be it what it may, is incorporated and centred the sacredness of every Shinto shrine in the empire. Many elaborate ceremonies, 17 in all, mark the various stages of the six months' operations that comprise the whole undertaking of building the new structures and vacating the old ones. For both the Naiku and the Geku these ceremonies are virtually identical. To see one is to see both. Two only of either series, however, may be witnessed by any of the lay public, no matter how exalted. Yet, fortunately, one of the two is by far the



greatest of them all, and that is the Sengyo, or "change of the temples"—in other words, the transfer of the sacred symbol from its old to its new abode. During the Middle Ages, the Ise shrines, though always the head-quarters of Shinto, frequently had hard times and embarrassments to contend against. It is true that the Emperor Tenmu's ancient decree, ordaining the reconstruction of the buildings at every second decade, has never been departed from. But, what with such hindrances as internal commotions, the powerful rivalry of Buddhism, and the ascendancy of military power—with, as its result, the eclipse of the true monarch, who has ever been the centre and embodiment of Shinto—the temples and the observances connected with them came at times to be sadly neglected, and the establishment at Yamada fell into a state of decadence from which it had but partly recovered at the 59th celebration, in 1869. This year, however, which sees the country quiet and the Emperor firmly re-seated on his temporal throne, no pains were spared to re-establish the old order of things, to carry out the entire series of ceremonies strictly according to the ancient canons and practices, and especially to effect the "change of the temples," not only with the solemn ritual and accessories befitting their dignity and their venerable history, but, it is said, on a great and imposing scale, never perhaps equalled hitherto. Plainly, therefore, the Sengyo of this year was an opportunity not to be missed, an opportunity that perchance—but this may Allah forbid!—will never occur again. How I seized it, and what, armed with credentials kindly furnished to me by the Home Minister, I had the pleasure of seeing, at the Geku Sengyo, on the 5th inst., will appear further on.

Meantime—but first asking forgiveness for the above

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dry though very necessary preface—let me invite your readers to come and enjoy with me for a while, in the picturesque thoroughfares and neighbourhood of Yamada, some of the characteristic sights of a Japanese jubilee. And let us begin our pilgrimage at the delightful little park on the northern threshold of the town. Bright, indeed, and joyous is the scene around us on this perfect early-autumn morning. Grand *torii* of evergreens, artificial lakes, reflecting the festoons of countless crimson lanterns that span them overhead; hard by, the solemn forest aisles which lead to the Geku shrine; overhead, the pleasantly warm October sun, shining out of a blue sky that is here and there dappled, far aloft, with fleecy patches of cloud; and everywhere a dense, patient, inquisitive throng, consisting almost wholly of those lower orders of the people who, after all, are the great charm of Japan, and who here exhibit faces alternately indicative of wild astonishment at the day-fireworks that every now and then shoot up into the firmament, and of bewilderment at the cries and exhortations of the swarm of showmen, cheap-jacks, mountebanks, and quacks that line the townward margin of the park. And what man is there with a spark of human kindness in his disposition who can easily tire or grow impatient of a truly Japanese holiday crowd? Surely, for happiness, gentleness, and sobriety, for soft-voiced and always smiling chatter, for the blessed faculty of inhaling healthful enjoyment from the simplest things, and for the lucky possession of bodies and limbs that hours upon hours of weary tramping and sight-seeing are utterly unable to exhaust, no other country can even profess to show the match of a festival crowd in Japan. Police in such a throng, it seems to us, can have nothing to do; and somehow one cannot help wishing that, for all their admirable urbanity and devotion to duty, these guardians



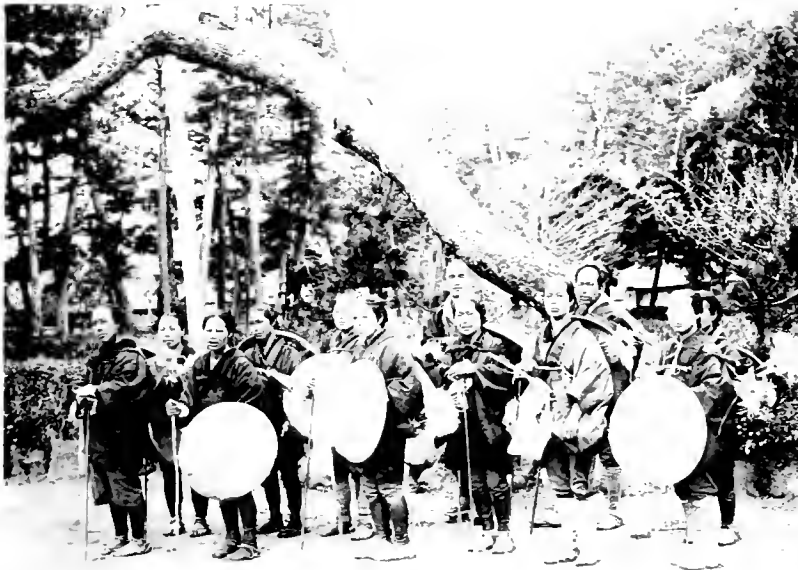
FARMERS.

of the peace would take themselves and their neat foreign uniforms away from a festival whose every association and every thought belong to the olden days and the oldest traditions of this charming old land of Dai Nippon. Meanwhile, we thread our way, Naiku-wards, through the press of men and women, lads and lasses, and swarms of bright-faced children. Shades of gray, indigo, and scarlet are here, as everywhere else in Japan, the prevailing colours in the costumes of the crowd. We rub shoulders with sturdy, smooth-skinned farmers and fishers, and not a few workmen in the bold uniforms of their guilds; with the dear wrinkled old women, whose skirts are gathered up to a height that is just a little startling, and even suggestive of doubts as to the real utility of the long blue leggings that so neatly encase their shrunken limbs; and black-eyed, gipsy-brown lasses, in the whitest of socks and the reddest



FISHERMEN.

of petticoats, with their precious *coiffures* shrouded from the dust by Hasanah-white cotton towels so artistically tied as to give them a killing, coquettish air, of which, true daughters of Eve that they are, none are better aware than themselves; and fat wenches with twinkling eyes, who are absolutely running over with excitement as they waddle along under their great paper umbrellas; and spicy, proud-tipped *puth-belles* of the better class, riding in *jirikisha*, and all ablaze with the splendour of their dainty butterfly robes; and, lastly, those tiny, chubby boys, whose young pates are so quaintly and severely shaved that the too deft barber's art to have only left them just hair enough to swear by. Such, with a sprinkling of gentlefolks and trading people here and there, is the tide of human beings that for this gay world ebbs and flows in two compact streams, from morning till night, over the long highway



OLD WOMEN IN KYAHAN.

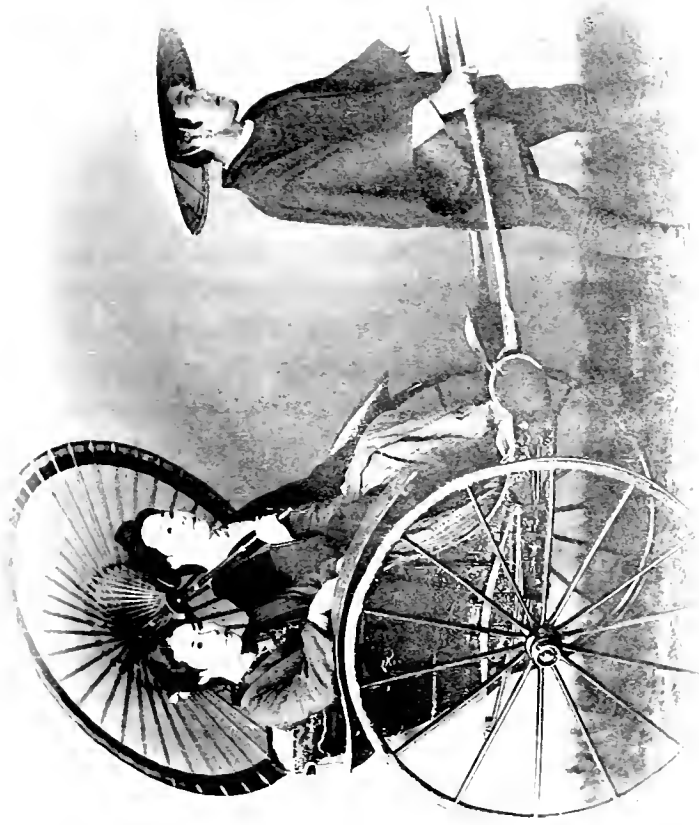
that connects the great twin temples of Yamada. Happy-hearted and kindly poor of Japan! How contented they look, how cheery, and always how clean! How well they relish, in their own humble, artless fashion, the festival that most of them have trudged scores of miles to see! And how simple and tender withal are the feelings of devotion with which they will presently approach these greatest of all the 128,000 and odd Shinto shrines in the empire, always loyally mindful that Ise is the chief worship-seat of the celestial hierarchy whose august descendant, sitting on the throne of Japan, as his ancestors before him have done for these 1,000 years and more, rules ever beneficently and wisely over the land and its people and all that is therein.

Hardly less warm than our appreciation of Japan's



COUNTRY GIRLS IN HOLIDAY CLOTHES.

sunshiny people is that called forth by the street-scenes which enliven our way—as, for instance, the roaring trade that is being driven at the cook-shops, tea-houses, and inns; the fruit-stalls, with their rows of red-gold persimmons and piles of bloom-clad grapes; the happy parties at their meals in the distant inner rooms; the tempting confections of rice and fish, sweet potatoes, pickles, maccaroni, and mushrooms; and the stalls of the lemonade sellers; and the bazaars full of curios, sweetmeats, and toys; and the poor distracted servant-girls, staggering about with the great tubs of steaming rice that are always getting empty—and no wonder; and the hurry and cackle and laughter in every quarter. As for the shows, they are legion, and of the most astounding kinds. There is a Bandaisan of course, so startling that Professor Sekiya himself would hardly know it again; and a diver in full regimentals, who goes



LADIES IN JINRIKISHA.

down as readily with the fisher-folk, intent on "sea-ears," as he is doubtless able to do in the sea itself. As in duty bound, we pay our penny at a booth on Ai-no-yama to see an historical dance after the manner of the fair and famous O Sugi and O Tama—performed, alas! by two little scare-crows of maids in a style fit to make the poor dead artists turn uneasily in their graves, though presumably the dresses are correct. Then the Bridge of Uji, with its row of bare-legged beggars stretched across the shallow stream-bed 30 feet below, waving their mighty gaping begging with such a persuasive, beseeching air as to make them seem almost human, and invoking blessings on our heads as well as coins out of our pockets, not one of which latter, we may be perfectly sure, will the dexterous fraternity let pass them throw we never so wisely. Then, at last, after our three miles' walk, the sombre shade and stillness of the stately Naika grove, with the quiet old-world temple structures resting in its midst, where let us hope that they and their successors may be left in peace for as long as the sun shall warm the earth.

Then, of course, after *tsuna yori* *Yajima* and that charming wash as the "Wisterial" on the back of the Ikuta-gawa, we set off, as all true pilgrims should do, for Fumig-Ura, greatly famed in song and story, and distant no more than three or four miles, on the shore of the Gulf of Owari. The route thither is pretty enough at first passing over rocky wooded uplands, and later through richly cultivated fields in the literal plain, now heavy with golden rice, and dotted with picturesque groups of peasants who are this very day beginning the harvest. Evidently also to-day is a *tsuki no* or lucky day for marrying. For here, as we approach the seaside village of Futami,



comes a rustic wedding procession, on its way from the bride's old home to her husband's. At its head trot three or four couples of "proud young porters," laden with great chests full of the bride's ceremonial presents and belongings; and after them, in *jinrikisha*, come the go-between and others, escorting the bride herself. She is tastefully arrayed in her wedding garments, and oh! how powdered and rouged; and she looks calm and happy enough until those abominable jinrikisha-men of ours raise such a chorus of laughter that the poor girl blushes indignantly through her cosmetics, and we ourselves feel the sorest of longings to wring their wicked necks in her presence. Next we come to our destination and alight at the Hinjitsukan, or "Sun-inviting Mansion," the Japanese club to which we have an *entrée* by the kindness of the Governor of the province. A goodly place it indeed is, this Futami on the Ise Sea; and most justly, as we think, have the nature-loving Japanese given it high rank among the beautiful spots of the Empire. A long curved strip of the purest and finest shingle beach; straggling pine trees and the grateful odour thereof; blue sea for a foreground, crisped by a gentle breeze, dotted with the sails of quaint barques and picturesque fishing-boats, and washing the shores of the loveliest bays and of whole archipelagoes of rocky, timber-clad islets; and there, standing out in the sea at the rocky point near at hand, the curious old Mioto-seki, or "wife and husband stones," with their associations and traditions, and the great grass rope that connects them—this, as we see it, is Futami. We know that yonder, across the gulf, we ought also to see the distant silhouettes of Fuji-san the peerless, and Asamayama, and Ontake-san, and Haku-san, and a host of other hill monarchs. There is a warm haze, though, this after-

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noon, which robs us of that treat ; and we may surely, in all conscience, rest content with what we have. Not, however, without a thought of how different this scene, so fair to-day, must have been on that terrible evening, only three weeks ago, when, as the great typhoon of the 11th of September, with its diameter of fully 200 miles, swept over this part of Japan, the very spot we stand on can hardly have been 20 miles from its centre. As for the Hinjitsu-kan, it is the perfection of a Japanese building, chaste, tasteful, and with neither spot nor blemish ; and what more need be said of it than that, except it be to tell of the treasures, well revered of the members, in the guest-room upstairs—to wit, the great scroll in the alcove, which was written by the hand of his Imperial Highness Arisugawa-no-Miya, and the fine bronzes in the same room that are the gift of the Dowager Empress. Later we stroll over to the Mioto-seki, and give an hour or so to that charming historical spot—with its tiny cave-shrine of the Sun Goddess, where the lights are always burning ; and the shops that sell at such microscopic prices the conches and sea-shells and other keepsakes of the kinds which pilgrims love ; and the little temple of the long name beginning with So-min, that good villager who gave shelter to Susano the Moon-god, and who was very properly thereafter guaranteed against pestilence by a straw waist-girdle, the gift of the deity, and assuredly the first cholera-belt that was ever made ; and the rock-niche that once accommodated the whole company of the gods ; and the waves, plashing lazily over the feet of the " husband and wife ;" and the straw rope which binds that ancient couple, rather loosely, together ; and, lastly, the rude wooden altar, with its diminutive *gohei* and *torii*, where, at the hour when the " silver dawn spreads over land and sea," pious devotees of the Sun-goddess are



FUTAMI-GA-URA.

went to gather while the pilgrim season lasts, humbly awaiting the instant when the first flash of sun-beams shall come to them across the smiling sea, right through the gap which separates the Mito-seki, that they may thereupon fall down before their patron luminary, and reverently offer up their simple tribute, which, indeed, besides prayer and praise, consists of nothing but poor circlets of straw.

But, as with us it is now much nearer sunset than sunrise, and as we must before all things be in good time for the great ceremony of the Sengyo, let us hie back at once to the Hinjitsu-kan, and thence, after one more cup of its most fragrant tea, to the deep sylvan glades of the Geku. Six is the time fixed for the assembly of all the appointed functionaries at a building a short way within the second *torii*; and not long after that hour, at the third

beating of a drum, we see the first stage of the ceremony—a procession of the entire phalanx to the old and about-to-be-dismantled shrine, a couple of hundred yards beyond. They are to advance up the great avenue, now shrouded in the double gloom of night and of the mighty pines and cedars on either hand—a darkness that seems to be only made the more visible by the fitful gleams of woodfires planted at intervals along the roadside. But as the column issues forth a blaze of torchlight from the pine-knot brands, ever increasing in strength, better illumines the scene. It even casts gleams into the nearer depths of the grove itself, and here and there shows up the wonder-stricken faces of the devout crowd always peering through the palings of the avenue, where, poor felks, hundreds upon hundreds of them have been patiently waiting, ever since midday or even earlier, for what will be to most of them the greatest spectacle of their lives. Among the leaders of the host are the Imperial Envoy and representative, Prince Kajyo, with the High Priest of the Shrine, and his Imperial Highness Prince Kuni, who is Conductor of Divine Services to the Imperial Family. These and a few other personages, including the Governor of the province and the Civil Controller of Shrines, are clad in Imperial Court robes of the ancient style, swords only being omitted; and they bear in their hands simple sprigs of the sacred *azaki* tree, to which hang little strips of cotton cloth, cut apparently *gizel*-wise. Attended by a swarm of torch-bearers and a great cohort of swarthy-faced, white-clad priests and deacons, they advance, to the weird strains of ancient music, slowly and most solemnly up the time-hallowed forest aisle. Presently the homely forms of the old temple buildings come faintly into view in the growing light, on the right-hand side of the way; and on reach-

ing the entrance of the sacred enclosure the head of the procession turns in thereat, its members as they pass being here purified with salt-sprinkling by an attendant *negi*, or priest. Gradually all file in. Now, for a while, we part from them, it being ordained that none may pass therein save the actual participators in the sacred rites. But that is no reason why we should not find out all that we can of what goes on, as well from the ritual books as from a certain friendly priest of high rank who is apparently off duty for an hour or so, and who obligingly takes us along to his cottage hard by, for rest and refreshment and chat. And thus we learn that, first of all, the great dignitaries will lay their *sakaki* boughs on a table before the inner gate of the shrine, and solemnly dedicate them to the deity, all the rest of the throng humbly worshipping the while. Whereafter, Prince Kuni and his associates, having received the sacred key from its keeper, will advance within the gate to the foot of the steps that lead into the Holy Chapel, or Sho-den, where the Imperial Envoy will reverently speak his master's message that the time for the change of the sanctuary has come. Then, the doors having been opened by two *negi*, the Chief Priest and his deputies will ascend into the chapel, where all is so primitive and quaint, where the gloom is but feebly pierced by the rays from old-time earthen saucer lamps, furnished with wicks of common rush-pith and burning a vegetable oil, and where, in its nests of caskets and brocaded sacks, reposes the Sacred Mirror, which is the venerated emblem of the deity. Meanwhile, those who are to carry the treasures and other symbols in the coming procession will draw near to the foot of the steps, receiving their burdens as handed forth by the priests. And the On-Kinugaki, or silken fence, is also to be borne thither by 20 *negi*, in readiness to receive the divine emblem. This

Kinugaki, we learn, is a single strip of seamless white silk, above five feet deep, so carried as to form a closed hollow rectangle some 21 feet long and six feet wide, and thus to conceal all but the feet of those who may be inside it with their sacred burden. For carrying it, 20 short bamboo rods are affixed at intervals to the upper edge of the curtain, and held by the aforesaid 20 *negi*. The bearers within will be priests of high rank, specially chosen for the august office, who for days have undergone the strictest purification, and whose heads and hands are now closely muffled in white linen cloths; for no ordinary human eye may see, or hand touch, nor may the least breath of inferior man pollute, so much as the outermost casket of the heavenly symbol. At the appointed time of removal, an officiating *negi* at the foot of the steps will shake thrice a fan of pine, in such wise as to imitate "the flapping of cocks when they cry out during the night"—so, at least, our informant says—and thrice will Prince Kujyo offer up at the same place the intimation of departure. Then, after transference by the High Priest into its new receptacles, the emblem will be carried within the Kinugaki, and the latter be closed around it, and the whole procession be thereafter marshalled in its proper order of advance. Such, we gather, are the main features of the rites of departure, according to the oldest and strictest canons, as followed here this day.

Eight o'clock is the appointed hour of departure, and punctuality will not fail, for the "Son of Heaven" and his Consort, in their palace at Tokyo, will at that moment engage in prayer on behalf of this great function at the ancestral worship seat. As the hour approaches we return to our highly-privileged post of observation at the threshold of the Geku, where we are so close to the path marked out



PRIEST OF HIGH RANK.

for the procession that we know we may—though Heaven preserve us from such insolence!—even touch the very hems of the robes of the rank next to us. Clean mats are now laid down in two parallel lines from the *torii* we stand at to that which marks the entrance of the new shrine, a little further up on the opposite side of the avenue; and between these runs all the way a pure white linen strip, perhaps 3ft. wide, which no man's foot may defile, because it is the carpet of the holy symbol alone. Presently, at the stroke of 8, and after a blare of trumpets from a military detachment near by, the van of the procession is seen coming outward from the courts of the shrine, and a subdued, yet, for all that, mighty murmur of excitement is heard from the surging crowd without. As pioneer comes the State-Temporal, represented by the Prefect and the Civil Controller, who are clad in the loose flowing Court robes

of olden days—black gauze over a scarlet tunic, with black silk girdles, purple silk *hakama*, mighty shoes (*kutsu*), apparently of papier-maché, lacquered black, and the quaint, high-curved black gauze head-dresses called *kammuri*. With them are one or two other officials, in costumes that differ but little from the above, as well as a half-score white-clad officers of the buildings, and here, as everywhere, a numerous posse of lay-helpers and torch-bearers, all in garments of white. Next a troop of priests, of many ranks, mostly in loose white silk robes—though some wear them of salmon colour—with white silk girdles, and glimpses of scarlet or purple vestments below, and the quaint, biretta-like, black hats called *yeboshi*, and, for all, the great *kutsu*, except a few of interior grade, who alone go barefooted. All of the above are divided into two equal ranks, advancing along the mats on either side of the sacred carpet, very, very solemnly, and in time with the melancholy dirge of Shinto music that is as yet heard but faintly far behind. Now more priests in scores, bearing the sacred treasures, such as great arrow-shields, javelins, banners, sunshades, canopies, quivers of arrows, bows in exquisite brocaded sheaths or wrappers, and swords in the same; and among them all two pairs of great splendid symbols on lofty poles, one of which—the purple one—we are told is called *Murasaki-no-Ompa*, while the other, which is white, is the *Sugin-no-Shishiha*. Everything in the procession is perfectly new as far as material or fabric is concerned, the Mirror and the brocaded bags that secrete it of course excepted. But, on the other hand, the style and form are of the very oldest, being in each case an exact copy of the original as carried on through long ages from restoration to restoration. The art workmanship, too, is of the finest kind, and no fewer than 36 examples of rare brocade, a high authority assures





A SHINTO DIGNITARY.

us, have been specially manufactured for the various treasures and their wrappings on this occasion. Next to the treasure-bearing priests come musicians, playing on three kinds of instruments, called the *fu*, *sūchiriki*, and *ageta*, the last, apparently, a kind of very old-fashioned *koto*. After them, Prince Kujyo, representing the State-Spiritual, and clad much as the Prefect and Civil Controller, except that his Highness's robes trail for some yards behind him as he walks, and that his *hakama* are of black instead of purple. And then, what a thrill is heard from the multitude without, and what a subdued, devotional clapping of hands and murmur of reverent prayer and praise, as all heads are bowed for the passage of the Emblem of the Godhead, hidden within its simple tabernacle of pure white silk, and borne by six muffled, unseen priests over the pure white carpet already mentioned, which is

being rolled up from behind, foot by foot, as no longer needed. After the Mirror follows Prince Kuni, arrayed like the Imperial Envoy; and then the High Priest and his deputy, in their stately sacerdotal apparel. Then more battalions of *negi*, and more treasures, and quaint canopies made of cedar-fronds, until at last the great procession has all rolled by, long before which its head has passed within the enclosure of the new sanctuary. But into the proceedings that now take place there it is, perhaps, hardly necessary to enter, as their general nature may be sufficiently conjectured from what has been said about the rites of removal.

That the Sengyo ceremony and its accessories were as impressive and solemn as they undoubtedly were rare may be gathered from the foregoing only too feeble attempt to describe that which I take to be, after all, well-nigh indescribable. Nothing, certainly, could well exceed the thorough beauty and picturesqueness of the scenes and the surroundings. The calm and lovely October night; the noble glades, half-illuminated by the glare of scattered torches and fires; the primitive outlines of the temple fabrics; the hushed multitude without, and the stillness within, that is broken only by the faint crackling of the fires or the fainter sounds of ritual in the courts of the shrine; overhead a narrow strip of sky, lit by a moon that is here unseen, yet not so brightly but that you may make out the stars well enough, and even patches of the Milky Way, which is Japan's "River of Heaven;" and then, at length, that imposing sacerdotal procession, with its features inherited from Japan's remote and wonderful past, and which not even the most world-hardened man, I am sure, could behold without true feelings of admiration—and something better. It is, indeed, a rare

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and goodly sight, call it Pagan or what we will. Faith and purity at least are there, with simplicity and high antiquity. And, though it is no easy matter to define the precise degree in which Shinto has affected Japanese national character, few, I think, who are qualified to speak on the subject will gainsay either that its influence for good has been very great, or that it would be hard to name a better people than the masses in Japan.



## LETTER XVII.

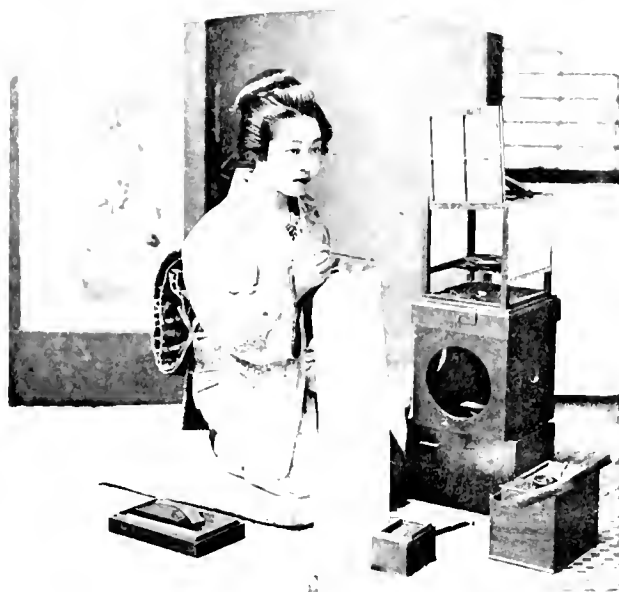
### *JAPANESE WAYS.*

TOKYO, September 21st.

About seven or eight years ago an interesting story was told in English astronomical society, having reference to that which is known among the initiated by the name of "personal equation." Owing to some properties of eye, ear, and brain, peculiar to individuals, it is generally found that with any two observers, however expert, the exact times of their respectively noting the same phenomenon—as, for example, that of a star's passage across the wire of a transit instrument—will differ from one another by a constant or nearly constant quantity, often several tenths of a second, while both will differ from the truth. The latter difference for any individual, at any epoch of his life, is his personal equation, that is to say, his habitual error, plus or minus, in observing such or such a phenomenon. Sometimes a man may be found who has no personal equation; and this rare quality is more easily and certainly detected nowadays than it used to be. Formerly it was assigned to the observer, if any, who among a large group was found to be the mean of them all—an award which might or might not be quite correct. Of late years the use of an artificial star, made to record its actual transit times by electricity, for

comparison with the times recorded by the observer, affords a much more positive means of identifying the man with no personal equation for star transits. To come now to the story. A party of observers was about to be sent on some astronomical service in the southern hemisphere. Their personal equations had been carefully ascertained in the usual way, when it occurred to those responsible that as, in the hemisphere to which they were going, the apparent directions of the celestial movements would be reversed—so that, for example, stars near the equator would advance from right to left instead of from left to right—their equations ought to be reinvestigated for stars moving, so to speak, the wrong way. This was done, with the result, not unexpected, that there were large differences between the new and the former figures. There was, however, one exception—in a mysterious individual to whom it mattered not which way the stars moved, and who had no personal equation in either case. The professors were sorely vexed about this very peculiar being, until at length the key to the riddle was found by the discovery that he was ambidexterous.

It might be a curious subject for inquiry whether, as there are personal equations among star observers, so there may be personal equations among nations—equations appertaining, that is to say, to the everyday ways of doing the same everyday thing which prevail among the world's different peoples, as the result, not of the special circumstances under which they live or have lived, but of independent mental bent. If such an investigation should be now undertaken, it is certain that the personal equation of the Japanese *vis-à-vis* the Western and, indeed, all other races would be found to be a very appreciable quantity. Japanese ways are in many respects unique. It is not



LETTER WRITING.

necessary to put absolute faith in the legend that when the waiters of Dai Nippon first made the acquaintance of bottles and corkscrews, they were wont to twist the bottle on to the corkscrew instead of screwing the corkscrew into the cork. Nevertheless, you may see to this day, at almost any out-of-the-way country inn, a tendency in that direction which seems to lend some truth to the story. The little handmaid who puzzles over the problem of uncorking your claret or whisky has an evident leaning, until corrected, to solve it with the bottle. When your cook bakes a cake in an ordinary cake tin, it is as certain that, if left to himself, he will serve it bottom upwards, and bottom sugared withal, as it is that the butler will open your tins of jam or pâté at the bottom instead of at the top. Japanese books begin at what we call the end. The lines are vertical instead of horizontal, the first being on the right hand edge of the



CARPENTERS.

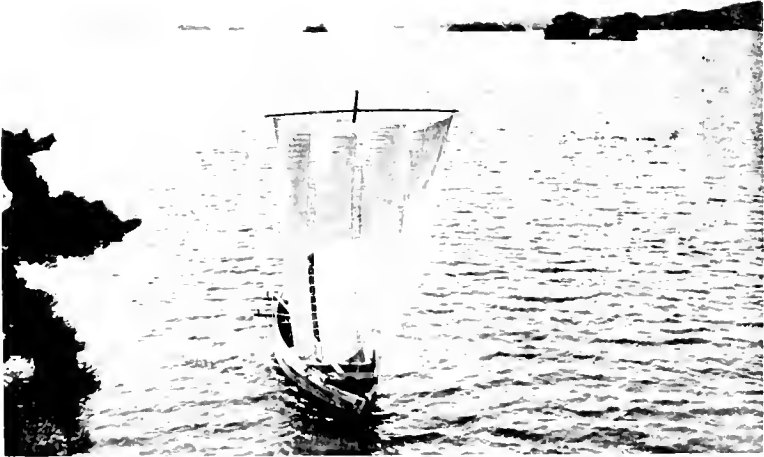
page, and are read downwards from the top. The place for "foot-notes" is at the top of the page, and that for the reader's marker at the bottom. Letter writing, like book printing, advances by vertical lines from right to left, and is always on one side of one strip of paper, which is unwound from a roll as the writer proceeds, and cut off where he finishes. To fold the letter, it is doubled over and over from one end of the strip to the other. The postage stamp is affixed on the closed seal flap of the envelope, instead of on its face. As for the mode of address, it is the exact reverse of ours. Thus, "England, London, Printing House Square, *The Times* Office, The Editor," would be the Japanese way of directing this letter. People in Japan are called by the family name first, the individual, or what we should call Christian, name next, and then the honorific. "Mr. Peter Smith" is in





## CARRYING BABIES.

this country "Smith Peter Mr." The carpenter planes and saws towards instead of from him—the wrong way as we should say, yet his feats of planing are extraordinary. Japanese screws are left handed, and Japanese locks work "the wrong way." At games of cards the dealer deals to the right, and the play goes round in the same direction. When travelling you see the hotel servants soon after your arrival, instead of at departure. Arrows are launched from the left side of the bow. Babies are carried on the back instead of in the arms. Candles are blown out with the hand or a fan, instead of by the breath. The bookkeeper enters his money figures first, his items below them. In place of the hot food and cold drinks in which we indulge at our dinners and luncheons, the Japanese lean to cold food and hot drinks. Sweets make their appearance early in the repast. Your host takes the lowest place. Crests



JAPANESE SAIL.

are worn on the clothing, instead of being graven or painted on the household goods. Horses are mounted from the right side, where also are all the harness fastenings. The mane is trained over the left side. In the stable the horse looks outward from his stall, and is fed from a bucket instead of a manger. The sail cloths in Japanese craft are vertical instead of horizontal, and laced instead of sewn. When it is necessary to reef, the sail is reduced laterally by unlacing one or more breadths, instead of in its vertical dimension, as is the custom everywhere else. Strange, too, in other respects are the ways of Japanese boatmen. They tow their boats stern foremost, and also haul them up stern foremost on the beach. In cold weather, even though on their muscular and splendidly-shaped bodies there be hardly enough clothing to swear by, you may at least be sure of their taking infinite pains to wrap up, of all features, their



FISHERMEN IN WINTER.

noses. In house-building the roof is the first part constructed, only to be taken to pieces again until the sub-structure is ready for it; and the best rooms, as well as the garden, are commonly at the back instead of at the front.

Less pronounced than the foregoing as evidence of "personal equation" are many other Japanese habits and ways which may be said to amount to peculiarities from the Western point of view. Japanese bathe, for example, in the afternoon or evening, instead of at rising as we do. Our lower orders, it is to be feared, pay more attention to the cleanliness of their clothes than of their bodies. The reverse is the case with the lower orders of the Japanese—the most scrupulous bathers under the sun, even though their garments, in winter especially, be quite unworthy of their clean, pumice-stored bodies. Porcelain abounds in

Japan, yet food is for the most part served in polished lacquer vessels, as easily kept clean and much less easily broken. There are seven ranks of chess-players, and of these the first is the worst, a method of enumeration, however, which has its parallel in the forms and classes of our public schools. Small children of the poor, who have the gift of straying and no nurses to look after them, are safeguarded by the simple precaution of hanging labels round their necks which tell their names and addresses. A Japanese is said to be one year old on the last day of the year in which he is born; two years old on the very next day, *i.e.*, the first day of the new year; three years old on the succeeding New Year's Day; and so on. Hence we find the curious anomaly that a child born on the 31st of December is two years old the day after its birth. In other respects also Japanese count of time differs from ours. From Tuesday to Friday, for example, is called four days instead of three, and year periods are similarly spoken of. Unlike the Western householder, who crams his saloons with all the art-objects he possesses, too often giving them the aspect of veritable show-rooms, the Japanese gentleman keeps the bulk of his treasures in a fireproof store-house, taking out a few only—one or two for each room—at a time, and giving them place in the *tokonoma*, or raised recess, which is the place of honour in the apartment. There, for a week, or may be a month, he dwells on their beauties with the undivided attention they deserve, and only replaces them by others when he has fairly gazed his fill. For pocket handkerchiefs the Japanese use little squares of clean paper, a bundle of which is carried in the girdle. Paper, again, takes the place of string, as you find out when the shopman ties together your purchases with a binding deftly rolled up from a strip of paper before your



TOKONOMA.

eyes. Paper also is commonly used for window panes in Japan, alone of all countries in the world. As for Japanese beckoning, it is one of those things that "no fellow can understand"—at, least, until he has had some experience—so much does the gesture resemble a warning to be off, instead of an invitation to advance. Two jinrikishas are approaching one another at speed. One of the men waves his hand to the right or left, and you take it as his signal of the course which the other is to follow. But you are in Japan, where it means, instead, the side he himself intends to take. Lastly, who of us that live here has not had experience of what I have heard described as the Japanese habit of saying Yes when they ought to say No? You ask your guest, "Will you not take some more wine?" or say to your friend in the street, interrogatively, "I suppose there will be no more rain to-day?" In both cases he



JAPANESE PLEASURE BOAT.

answers in the affirmative. He will not take more wine, and he agrees with you about the weather prospects. The Englishman, in both cases, would say No. The question is, Which is correct?

That, too, is the question which suggests itself in respect of many of the idiosyncracies here grouped together under the name of Japanese ways. In the difficulty of answering it, one is tempted to wish that there were some standard nation, like the ambidexterous man of the story, from which, as a datum, the personal equations of the rest might be ascertained. It might then be possible to establish conclusively that certain things ought to be done only in certain ways, and to say—what no one can say now—who is right and who wrong. The foundations of the Western faith in such matters are rudely shaken by

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what we see and know of the Japanese. Accustomed to our own ways, we are apt to speak lightly of Japanese ways as wrong. But the Japanese say the very same about us. As Mr. Chamberlain tells us in the interesting book entitled "Things Japanese," which he has lately published, many of our ways are the ways of topsy-turvydom in the eyes of this country's people. In what respects, among those here cited, we or they have the better of the argument each reader of *The Times* may judge for himself from the foregoing epitome of the most conspicuous of their so-called peculiarities. Possibly some scientist of the future may succeed in throwing light on the subject, and be able to find out the causes of differences which are too great and invariable to be the results of mere accident.





LETTER XVIII.

*THE BIRTHDAY OF JAPAN'S FIRST  
PARLIAMENT.*

TOKYO, November 30th.

Twenty-two years ago the Emperor Mutsahito promised his people a representative form of government. Twenty-two months ago he fulfilled that promise by granting and proclaiming a Parliamentary Constitution and a system of fundamental laws. Yesterday with the ceremonial opening by his Majesty of the first Japanese Diet, the Constitution became an accomplished fact. As a result of the peculiar circumstances of her modern career, as well as of her extraordinary earnestness, Japan has from time to time during the last 30 years presented to the astonished gaze of the Western world a series of advances and reforms so swift and so tremendous that history may be searched in vain to find its like. The ease and success with which these drastic changes have been brought about are hardly less remarkable than their magnitude. Men have at last almost ceased to wonder at anything Japan may do, or to tremble for the possible consequences. But of all the bold experiments on which she has hitherto ventured, this plunge into Parliamentary institutions is perhaps the boldest. With yesterday's ceremony, when the Emperor delivered the first

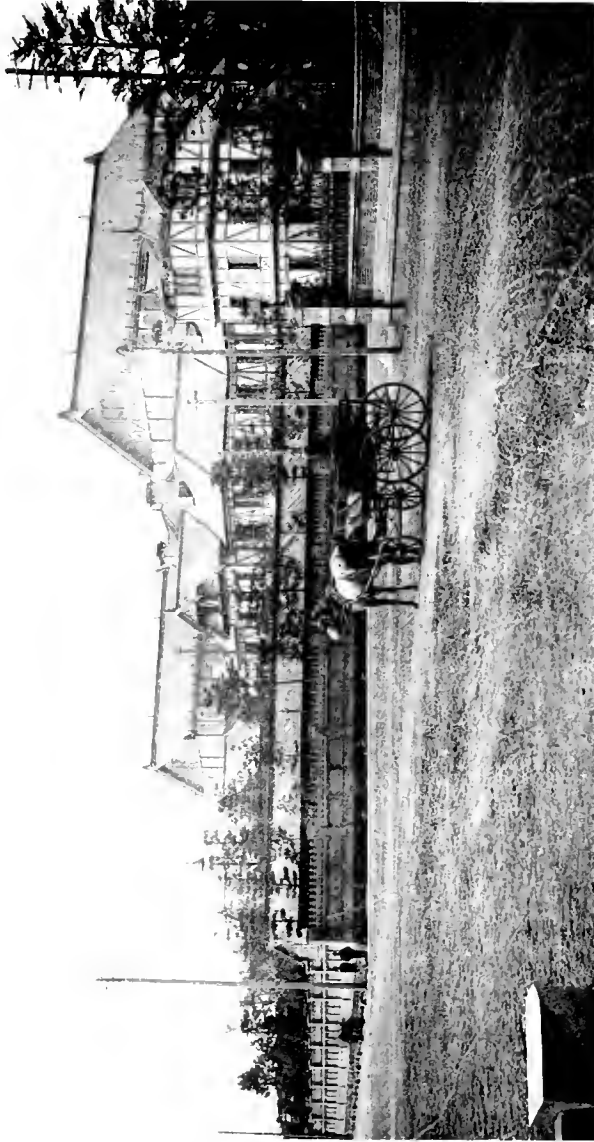
Imperial Message ever addressed by a Japanese Sovereign to a Constitutional Assembly, began an order of things so organically new that its probable issue cannot be argued from anything that has gone before, and fraught with such possibilities of good or evil to the country, that its first fruits will be watched with the keenest interest by all who know Japan, and even by many who do not.

As I explained in *The Times* of the 22nd of March, 1880, the Japanese Diet consists of a House of Peers and a House of Representatives—the former composed of members sitting for life by virtue of their rank, of nobles elected by their respective orders, of Imperial nominees, and of a few elected wealthy taxpayers; the latter consisting only of elected members. The elections to the Lower House took place in July last, and passed off in a quiet and orderly manner, though the contests in most places on behalf of rival candidates were very spirited and keen. Without figures (see *quid*), which are not yet forthcoming, it is impossible to give the exact ratio between the whole electoral body and the number of voters. As far as is known, however, the percentage of the latter indicates high political activity rather than inertness on the part of the electorate. Two or three cases of bribery have since been brought into court, but not established; and, on the whole, there seems to have been a happy freedom from jobbery and corruption. In the House of Peers now sitting there are 252 members, 111 of whom belong to the Imperial family, and 139 to the various orders of the nobility, while 59 commoners have been nominated by the Emperor for meritorious services to the State or for erudition, and the remaining 44, also commoners, have been chosen by their fellows from among the 153,368 electoral taxpayers in the several electoral areas.

Of the nobility, 34 are former *kuge* or nobles of the Court, 64 are former *daimyo* or territorial lords, and 41 are of those who have been created nobles since the Restoration. Thirty-one are princes and marquises, holding their seats by the provisions of the law, and of the lower ranks 105 have been elected by the members of their respective orders, while two are the Emperor's nominees, and one has been elected by the taxpayers as above. The Imperial nominees are largely composed of members of the lately defunct Genro-In, or Senate, and the elected commoners chiefly represent the landed interest. With a few exceptions, the political faiths of the members and their probable attitude towards the present Cabinet are unknown. As a rule, they have not allied themselves openly with any political parties. It is the general belief of the Japanese, however, that the House of Peers will prove to be a spirited, independent, and powerful body, exercising at least its due share of influence in the Parliamentary fabric. Though mostly rather of the old school than of the new, and not proficient in modern learning, they are of maturer average age and greater political experience than the members of the Lower House, and we may certainly expect from them a reflection of the dignity of language and manner, and temperance in debate, which were marked characteristics of the aristocracy of Old Japan.

In the House of Representatives there are 300 members, most of them between the ages of 35 and 55, and recruited mainly from the following classes:—landowners, merchants, lawyers, journalists, and ex-officials. Of *shizoku*, the former *samurai*, there are 108, the rest being of the *heimin* or lower middle grade. Men of the old school, with some admixture of modern ideas, predominate; the rest are

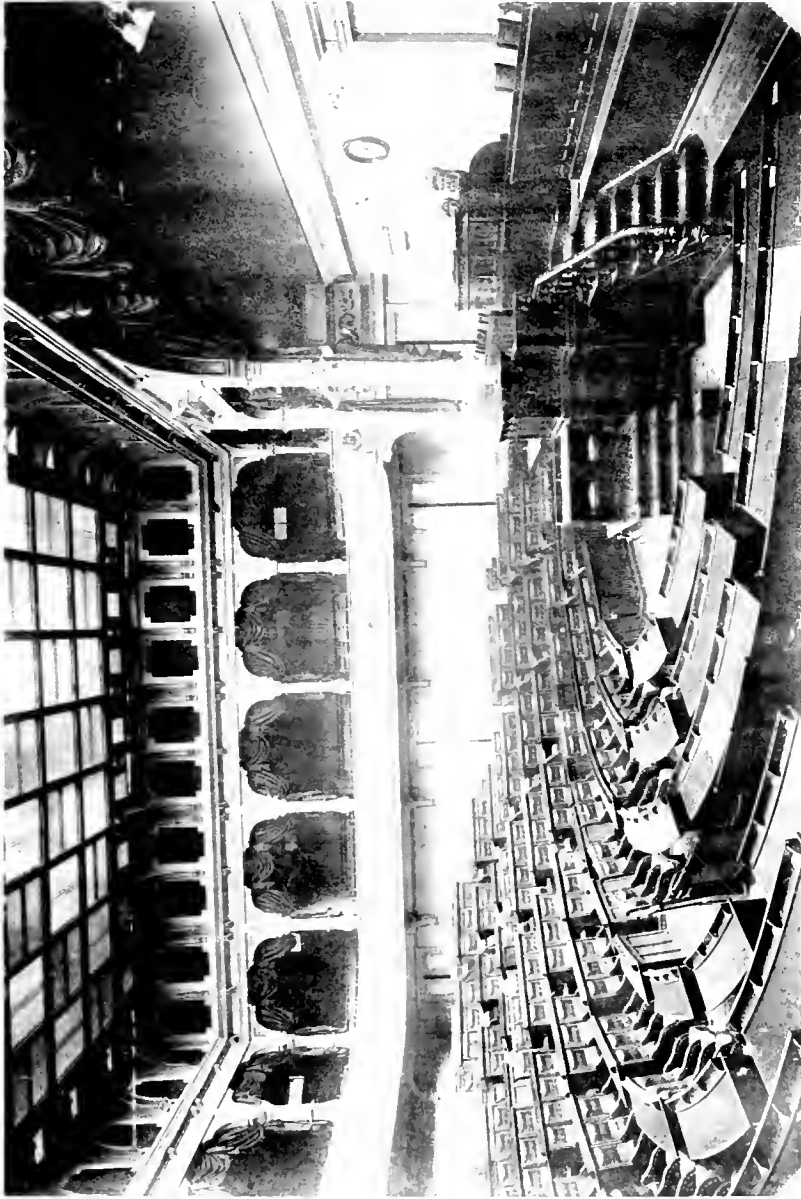
of the new school, a few of them graduates of Colleges and Universities at home and abroad. Without doubt there are some unquiet spirits in the mass, from whom lively things may be expected. But well-informed Japanese anticipate with confidence that the proceedings of the House will be conducted, on the whole, with dignity and order; and, generally, the country seems to be satisfied with the elections and to regard its new representatives as suitable and worthy men. The political body most numerously represented in the House is the *Rikken Jiyu-to*, or Constitutional Liberal party, a recent amalgamation of three sections holding somewhat similar views. Broadly, Liberalism, aimed at maintaining the dignity and prosperity of the Crown, extending the popular rights and happiness, reforming the systems of finance and taxation, and securing equal treaties with foreign Powers, is the platform of this party—a party understood to be generally opposed to the policy of the present Government, though not inclined to factious opposition, or likely to advocate rash measures. Of the whole 300 members, 130 belong to this body. Next in number come the "Independent" members, of whom there are 115, not committed to anything in particular, except a resolve to justify their appellation by standing aloof from existing parties, and to observe moderation in political matters. Including in their ranks, however, many highly-educated and powerful men of the modern school, they are likely to prove a very influential factor in the Assembly, and are expected to give their warm support to all reasonable measures of the Government. The *Rikken Kaishin-to*, or Constitutional Progressive party, of which Count Okuma, not a member of the Diet, is the leader, comes next, with 50 representatives in the House. In most respects the principles of this party and its attitude towards the Cabinet



THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

resemble those of the *Rikken Jiyu-to*, though the former are certainly less Radical in degree. Lastly, the *Hoshu Chusei-ha*, or Moderate Conservative party, sends five members, whose ideas, to judge from the recent utterances of their reputed leader, Viscount Torio, are likely to be rather Utopian than practical, and wholly out of tone with the rest.

Such, very briefly, are the constituents of Japan's first Diet, convoked by the Emperor on the 23rd ult., and occupied till the 28th with matters of organization preliminary to serious work. For the Presidency of the Upper House, the Emperor's choice has fallen on the well-known statesman Count Ito. For the Lower House the President elected by the members and approved by the Sovereign is a Mr. Nakajima, of the *Rikken Jiyu-to* party, an ex-Senator and ex-Prefect, and a staunch follower, by the way, of the Christian faith. Externally, the temporary Parliament House, where yesterday's ceremony took place, is simplicity itself, the Government having made the prudent resolve to defer the construction of permanent buildings till full experience of the Diet's needs should be acquired, and to be content meanwhile with a cheap, unpretentious wooden edifice. A sum of about £40,000 represents the whole expenditure on the present establishment. Its internal arrangements and accessories are, however, most admirable, and it could not be Japanese if it were not surrounded by beautifully laid-out grounds. The Session Chambers for the Peers and Representatives, each measuring about 85 feet by 53 feet, are lofty, well-ventilated, and well-lighted rooms, decorated and fitted up in excellent taste, and illuminated at night by electricity. In the centre of one side rises a lofty podium with the table of the President and Vice-President, before which, a little lower down, is the rostrum



HOUSE OF PEERS—INTERIOR.

for speakers, set immediately above the space occupied by the table of the House and the seats for stenographers. Round these rise, amphitheatre-wise, the benches of the members—each with a table before it—ranged in concentric semi-circles, which are cut by radial passages giving access to the several tiers. In the Strangers' Gallery of each House there is room for fully 400 spectators, besides a large compartment reserved for Royalty. And in the Peers' House provision for great occasions of State has been made by a handsomely designed Imperial alcove, giving on to the centre of the podium and ordinarily closed by curtains. In the gallery of this Chamber was gathered together by 10 o'clock yesterday morning a concourse of some 400 Japanese notables of all degrees, who were privileged to witness the coming spectacle—most of them in civil, naval, or military uniforms, of dark blue and gold. With these were about a score of lucky foreigners, of high grade in the Japanese service or otherwise entitled to special recognition. Below, at the time of my arrival, the body of the House was still empty. The President's table had been removed from the podium already mentioned, and at the back, beneath the raised curtains of the alcove, was seen the throne from before which the Emperor was soon to address the whole Diet. At length there was heard the sound of trumpets without, heralding the Emperor's approach. His Majesty had come in great State from the Palace, attended by the Imperial Princes and the Court, as well as by the Cabinet and other members of the Government, and escorted by squadrons of mounted troops. Great enthusiasm after its kind greeted his progress past the densely-packed masses of Japan's loyal populace. Japanese throngs, however, have not yet learned to cheer as we do. Moreover, in the case of their Sacred Ruler especially, they probably have mis-



givings as to the politeness or propriety of a very noisy welcome; and the Emperor himself still preserves much of the stately frigidity of Japan's old-time etiquette. Partly awed then, and partly doubtful, the crowd subdued their cheering. But their whole demeanour and their intense eagerness to see the procession were proof enough, if proof were needed, that love and reverence towards the Throne are rooted as deeply and firmly as ever in the hearts of the Japanese people.

Alighting at the Parliament building, his Majesty was received by all the members and functionaries of both Houses, and conducted to the Imperial waiting-room. Then the Peers began to file slowly into the Upper Chamber, and to take their allotted places in the right-hand half of the concentric semi-circles of seats facing the alcove. They were of three classes—hereditary peers, who wore the rich robes of their orders; those appointed from official life, who wore the uniforms of their respective ranks; and those nominated from among the highest tax-payers, who were in evening dress. With them came the President, Count Ito, to whom, it will be remembered, is due the chief share of credit in the long task of preparing Japan's Constitution. He took his stand in front of his fellow members, immediately below the balustrade of the podium. A few minutes later, the Peers having all entered, the members of the House of Representatives flocked in from the opposite quarter, and massed themselves in the left hand quadrant. There was more hurry and excitement in the movements of this half of the Legislature, and it was not a little interesting to find here, in this very first gathering together of Japan's first Diet, the same contrast between the eagerness of the Commons and the dignity and leisurely ease of the

Peers that has been characteristic of such assemblies elsewhere since dual Parliaments began. Next came the Diplomatic Body, filling the boxes reserved for them in the gallery. After them, the Cabinet and other dignitaries of Ministerial rank, headed by Count Yamagata, the Minister-President of State. These entered from the right of the podium, and grouped themselves thereon at that side of the throne. Every one was now standing, and the whole assemblage remained wonderfully silent and still. Lastly, as the cannon began to salute and loud cheering was heard from without, the Emperor, preceded by the Chamberlains and high functionaries bearing the Imperial regalia, and attended by the Imperial Princes and the Court, came in slowly and with great state from the left of the podium. Every head was bowed in homage, to which the Sovereign responded as he turned to take his stand before the throne. The Minister-President of State, Count Yamagata, now advancing and making obeisance, handed to the Emperor a scroll, from which his Majesty read in dignified tones, and in a voice that was well heard throughout the whole Chamber, the following speech to the assembled Diet :—

*We announce to the Members of the House of Peers and to those of the House of Representatives—*

*That all institutions relating to internal administration, established during the period of 20 years since Our accession to the throne, have been brought to a state approaching completeness and regular arrangement. By the efficacy of the virtues of Our Ancestors, and in concert with yourselves, We hope to continue and extend those*

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*measures, to reap good fruits from the working of the Constitution, and thereby to manifest, both at home and abroad, the glory of Our country and the loyal and enterprising character of Our people.*

*We have always cherished a resolve to maintain friendly relations with other countries, to develop commerce, and to extend the prestige of Our land. Happily Our relations with all the Treaty Powers are on a footing of constantly growing amity and intimacy.*

*In order to preserve tranquillity at home and security from abroad, it is essential that the completion of Our naval and military defences should be made an object of gradual attainment.*

*We shall direct Our Ministers of State to submit to the Diet the Budget for the twenty-fourth year of Meiji, and certain projects of laws. We expect that you will deliberate and advise upon them with impartiality and discretion, and We trust that you will establish such precedents as may serve for future guidance.*

The Speech from the Throne finished, Count Ito advanced, received the scroll from the Emperor, made obeisance, and withdrew; whereupon the Sovereign, Court, and Cabinet immediately left the Chamber, the rest of the audience remaining a few minutes, till the strains of the National Anthem, played outside, told of his Majesty's departure for the Palace. Brief though it naturally was, the

ceremonial was nevertheless dignified and impressive in a high degree. In every respect—in arrangement, execution, and accessories—it was undoubtedly a success, and worthy of the occasion of one of the weightiest episodes in Japan's modern history. The Emperor, who wore a military uniform, looked in excellent health, and discharged his high functions, as his Majesty always does, with kingly dignity and ease.

Not even the sagest student of the national thought and character could venture to forecast with any confidence, at this epoch, the issue of the momentous plunge that Japan has now taken, after more than two decades of preparation. For the present her friends can only hope the best of her. To judge from the past, there certainly seems to be ground for hope. Nothing has so puzzled even the men who best know Japan as the way in which, despite the worst fears and prognostications, she has conquered, one after another, by some qualities wholly inscrutable to Western minds, difficulties that might well have brought any ordinary country to grief. Most of the rulers and counsellors who have led her up to her present stage are still to the fore in the fabric of the Government, and their influence and experience can hardly fail, for some time to come, to have an effect on the conduct of the national affairs.

It is unfortunate for Japan that any part of a ceremony so memorable in her modern annals, and so happily conducted in all other ways, should have been disfigured by the violent acts of some reckless students, said to belong to the *soshi* class. Mixed up with the struggling crowd at a point already passed by the Imperial procession, a band of these

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fanatics, doubtless thirsting for a row, descried sundry Japanese grooms perched on the roof of a stable inside the wall of the Russian Legation grounds, and, close by, a party of foreigners, chiefly ladies, occupying a pavilion within the same enclosure, where they had assembled to see the procession. Unfortunately, both of these points of view overlooked the road, and it is a fact that all classes of Japanese hold it to be an inexcusable breach of etiquette to look down upon the Sovereign as he passes by. Enraged at the sight of the grooms and foreigners thus posted, the hot-headed students below set to work at stone-throwing, which was instantly responded to by the stablemen with a shower of tiles. A general *mêlée* ensued, in which the pavilion, despite the sex of its occupants, was not spared, though happily none of these were injured before the assailants themselves had been seized by the police. The student-rioters had had time enough, however, to disgrace their nation, seeing that whatever cause of umbrage they had, against their own countrymen in particular, nothing could warrant the hurling of missiles at defenceless women and girls. It is to be regretted that the easy-going, kindly disposition of the Japanese people seems to make them unpardonably tolerant of the acts of roughs of this genus, whether directed against themselves or against strangers within their gates. The *soshi* class, as I have explained in former letters, are the curse of modern Japan, and it is high time that they were extinguished, with a swift and strong hand.



## LETTER XIX.

### *THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF A GREAT JAPANESE NOBLE.*

TOKYO, 26th February.

A prominent figure has just been removed from the stage of modern Japanese history. Prince Sanjo Santomi, Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal, a noble well-beloved of his Sovereign and respected and honoured by all of his countrymen, died in this capital on the 18th instant, after about a fortnight's illness. Influenza, which had only left Japan at the middle of last summer, returned in a graver form in November. It has dwelt with us all through the winter, carrying off many thousands of victims. At the beginning of this month it attacked Prince Sanjo, and it was to inflammation of the lungs, supervening on that attack, that the distinguished noble so quickly succumbed. Prince Sanjo was an exalted member of the proud and ancient order of *Kugé*, an order almost comparable in antiquity with the Japanese Throne itself, from which, indeed, its members are directly sprung. From early times—which means a great deal in Japan—while the sons and grandsons of Emperors bore a title equivalent to that of Prince, the princely appellation went no farther. The great-grandson became the head of a *Kugé*, or “noble house,” his rank

descending to the eldest son, from generation to generation. Later, in the feudal era, when lands and titles came to be bestowed as rewards for military or other services, the order of *Buké*, or "military house," grew into existence. Originally selected, with hardly an exception, from among the *Kugé*, the representatives of this new order became the feudal barons, more familiarly known to us as *Daimyo*. Thus, the two classes, *Kugé* and *Buké* (or *Daimyo*), have been described, respectively, as "Court nobles" and "Territorial nobles" by English translators of Japanese annals. During the middle ages, the ranks of the *Daimyo* were from time to time swelled from external sources. But the ranks of the *Kugé* have ever been restricted to men of Imperial lineage, from which fact, as well as from the distinction appertaining to their position, as Court nobles, in close proximity to the person of the sacred Sovereign, the order is still, as always, held to be the cream of an aristocracy which, in point of antiquity and unbroken genealogy, surpasses every other similar body in the world. When the nobility of Japan was reconstituted in 1884, to Sanjo was awarded the modern rank which is rendered as "Prince," and which may be said to correspond in degree with the English "Duke." But it is as a great *Kugé*—as an eminent scion of the Fujiwara, perhaps the greatest and noblest of all the noble houses in Japan, whose founder, Kamatari, was born in 626 A.D.—that Prince Sanjo has always figured in the eyes of the Japanese people. From Kamatari sprang fourteen out of the sixteen leading *Kugé* families of the present day. And, while on this subject of Japan's aristocracy, it may be interesting to mention that of the 473 members of the old nobility—namely, 193 *Kugé* and 280 of *Buké* rank—who form the bulk of the present peerage, more than 400



are of Imperial kith and kin, with authenticated pedigrees of at least thirteen or fourteen centuries.

From early youth an ardent Imperialist, Sanjo became prominent, while yet in his teens, as one of a half-dozen intrepid leaders of the then growing party of protest against the subtle and overshadowing despotism of the military Shogunate. All of these leaders worked in the common cause of restoring the lustre and reality of the Imperial throne by the overthrow of the Tokugawa dynasty; and all of them, like Sanjo himself, were destined to become famous in Japanese history. After fourteen years of struggle, danger, and vicissitude, their task was accomplished, as the world knows, by the restoration of the Emperor at the close of 1867. From that time Sanjo rose rapidly to power. In 1871, when only 34 years old, he was appointed to the highest administrative post in the Government, namely, that of *Daïjō Daijin*, or Chancellor of the Empire. Gifted not so much with genius as with rare tact and sound judgment, he held this post till the close of 1885, when, on the reconstruction of the fabric of the Government, he retired from political life and became Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal. There are few cases in history of a Prime Minister retaining office uninterruptedly for upwards of 14 years. And what is yet more remarkable in Sanjo's case is that the period of his long and highly successful tenure was one during which Japan entered upon a completely new phase of existence, and underwent the throes of tremendous political and social changes, beset by tumult, intrigue, and civil war. The Emperor's confidence in Prince Sanjo was almost unbounded, and was attested in an emphatic and touching manner at his dying servant's bedside. It is an old and oft-observed custom in Japan

to confer steps in rank on those whom the State desires to honour, when they are seized by death—generally after death has taken place, but sometimes as a solace in their last hours. Learning, on the 18th instant, that the Prince's case was hopeless, the Emperor hastened to his residence, and personally conferred on him the highest rank attainable by a Japanese subject, accompanying the bestowal with the following words, which were uttered in a voice broken by emotion and sorrow:—"In the early years of my reign, while I was yet a youth, you were my chief aid. It was you who, not shrinking from a post of weighty responsibility, lent me assistance so constant, so steady, and so true that you were to me as a teacher and a parent. Never, from first to last, did you falter or fail in the discharge of your large trust. Your services are a model for all subjects of our time. In recognition of your noble fidelity, I confer on you the First Class of the First Rank." More than eleven centuries have passed since a Japanese subject was similarly honoured, the last recipient of the rank of *Sho-ichi-i* having been one of Prince Sanjo's own Fujiwara ancestors, who died in the year 738—in the days, that is to say, of the Saxon Heptarchy.

The State funeral of the lamented noble, which took place yesterday, was conducted, as far as the set ceremonial went, in strict accordance with the simple and ancient rites of pure Shintoism. White is the prevailing colour at Shinto funerals—white wood for coffin and bier, white robes for priests, deacons and bearers, white crape garments for the sorrowing womankind who follow. Pomp and pageantry are conspicuously absent, no matter how great be the dead man's rank and fame. But, though the



A SHINTO FUNERAL.

actual burial cortège was, therefore, striking only in its rigid simplicity, a more imposing aspect was given to the procession through the streets by the large bodies of troops in its van and rear, and by the host of carriages following the bier, which were occupied by nearly all the men of note in Tokyo. These formed a column about two miles long, accompanying the cortège proper over the route from the Prince's death-place to the Gokokuji Temple, where he was to be buried—a route of between five and six miles, passing through some of the best parts of the capital. The most striking feature of all was the hushed and sorrowful crowd which lined every foot of this long way and filled every spot that looked on to it. The whole city, in fact, seemed to have turned out to do honour to the dead noble, whose gentle dignity of manner, loyal and blameless life, and meritorious services to the State, had made him beloved and admired by all classes of the people.

There are few spots of greater natural beauty in the immediate vicinity of Tokyo than the grounds of the Gokokuji Temple, whither, yesterday morning, the long funeral procession wound its way. But for the shrines and other buildings dotted about, the visitor might imagine himself in a Japanese garden of exceptional size and perfectness. Trees, old and young—gaunt pines, comely cedars, and a large variety of lesser growth—with rocks and fountains, crags, ponds, and running water, are disposed in picturesque array over a charmingly broken slope of the hills where salubrious country on the northwest border of the capital. Yesterday, though wintry tints were still upon the foliage, the place was warmed and gladdened by a bright spring sun, while the fine outlines, and deep, rich colours of the main edifice, its gates, and lesser shrines, lent the scene a

charm of their own. It would be hard to imagine a fitter spot than these lonely and lovely grounds for the resting-place of a nation's honoured dead. On the arrival of the head of the procession, the troops were halted on either side of the main gate of the temple. But the rest, passing in on foot, ascended the hill, with its long flights of stone steps, that leads up to the Hondo, or principal chapel, advancing between deep, compact ranks of officials, ecclesiastics, diplomats, and other privileged spectators, who had assembled earlier in the day. In succession, and to the melancholy strains of Shinto music, came eight white-clad bearers of branches of the sacred *Sakaki* (*Cleyera Japonica*), followed by a like number carrying banners of red and white. Next, a plain white wood chest, containing the offerings to the dead, was borne past, after which came a cohort of white-robed Shinto priests and officials, preceding the High Priest and his deputy clad in purple and white. Then, a great white banner, inscribed with the Prince's name and titles; and a band of musicians playing the saddest of dirges on old-time Shinto instruments. To these succeeded more *sakaki*-bearers, others carrying silver-bladed halberds, others with immense floral emblems, composed of artificial plum-blossoms, pine-branches, peonies, and maple sprays, and others carrying the dead noble's eight Orders on silken cushions—every bearer being robed in simple white. The chief servants of the deceased came next. Then the lofty bier, with its fifty white-clad bearers, at the passage of which all heads were uncovered and bowed. The bier, not unlike a Japanese temple in form, was made of pure milk-white *hinoki*, or Japanese spruce, adorned with gold-plated mountings, and having its window-like openings closed by pale-hued bamboo blinds. Within it lay the coffin, consisting of an outer and an inner shell,

both of white *hinoki*. After the bier followed the young Prince and Princess Sanjo, as chief mourners, and their four young sisters. The Prince was dressed in flowing white robes and black *hakama*, his feet shod with common straw sandals, and on his head the black *kammuri* of old-time official costume. The Princess, also sandalled, wore a long black cloak over a white robe and brown *hakama*; while the younger ladies were clad from head to foot in soft white crape, with their hair pendant and tied by a single white binding. Next came the relatives, among whom were many ladies in Japanese garments of sober hues. All these mourners passed forward behind the bier, which was now deposited on a stand beneath a spacious temporary porch, draped with curtains of black and white, that had been erected immediately before the entrance of the Hondo. The dead Prince's Orders were disposed on stands of white *hinoki* about the bier; and the flowers and banners were planted on either side of a wide aisle of immediate approach which had been formed by two large pavilions erected for the accommodation of all present. In their appointed places in one of these pavilions the principal mourners seated themselves and were soon followed by the Princes of the Blood, the Cabinet, Nobles, Members of the Diet, and other dignitaries, and finally by the general body of invited spectators, altogether some 2,000 in number. The two high officiating priests, and six of minor degree, now did homage before the bier, with much bowing, hand-clapping, and recitation. Other sacerdotal ceremonies followed, with accompaniment of Shinto music. Then, the Chief Priest, standing reverently before the bier, received the offerings of fish, fruit, rice, and other edibles—passed to him devoutly from hand to hand of the ministering priests—and disposed them on white wood stands, placed to receive them. This done, he

read aloud, facing the bier, two long valedictory orations, the whole assembly standing uncovered the while, except the Imperial Princes. "May your soul have eternal rest and peace in heaven," were the words with which, after a recital of the dead statesman's deeds and virtues, both of these addresses ended. The last ceremony of respect was now begun. Receiving each from the priests a sprig of *sakaki*, the young Prince, and the Envoys of the Emperor, Empress, Crown Prince, and Dowager Empress, successively advanced to the bier, and bowing lowly, laid before it the sacred boughs. They were followed in like manner by the young Princess and her sisters, and other chief family mourners. The Imperial Princes Arisugawa, Komatsu, and Kitashirakawa next made offering. Up to this point the whole procedure had been remarkably solemn and impressive. But, as the members of the Cabinet and the Diplomatic body now advanced by groups to perform the similar rite, and were followed, *en masse*, by the rest of the pavilion occupants, eager to pay their last tribute of respect to the remains of the distinguished Prince, the simple dignity of all that had gone before was abruptly and completely changed.

For most of those present the ceremony was now ended. Only a few of us remained to see the body carried to its last home. In the near neighbourhood of the Hondo, a large masonry-lined vault, about fifteen feet deep, had been built, and over it an exquisite canopy of white *hinoki*, in the purest and simplest Shinto style. Prepared and adorned as it was yesterday, the wide matted approach to this sepulchre of the great *Kuge* was in a high degree attractive. It also well illustrated the rare taste of the Japanese in preferring brightness to gloom for the externals

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of even death itself. For some sixty yards on either side, the approach was decked, many ranks deep, with a lovely display of great floral and other tributes from the late Prince's countless friends—among the contributors being the Foreign Representatives—which presented a mass of brilliant colour, in happy contrast to the wooded scene around. Beyond these was a small white-railed enclosure, containing pavilions for the few who were to be present at the burial ceremony. And beyond this again were two goodly cryptomeria trees, between which, as a fine natural portal, were seen, immediately behind, the graceful outlines of the canopy above the tomb. Presently, the sound of music told of the commencement of the last act of the funeral. The offerings and the piles of *sakaki* springs were removed by the priests; and the bearers, approaching, once more shouldered the great ark-like bier, and bore it, headed by the titular banner, the white umbrella and foot-gear, and other emblems, along the bright and beautiful approach to the grave, whither none but the principal mourners and a highly favoured few were allowed to accompany it.



## LETTER XX.

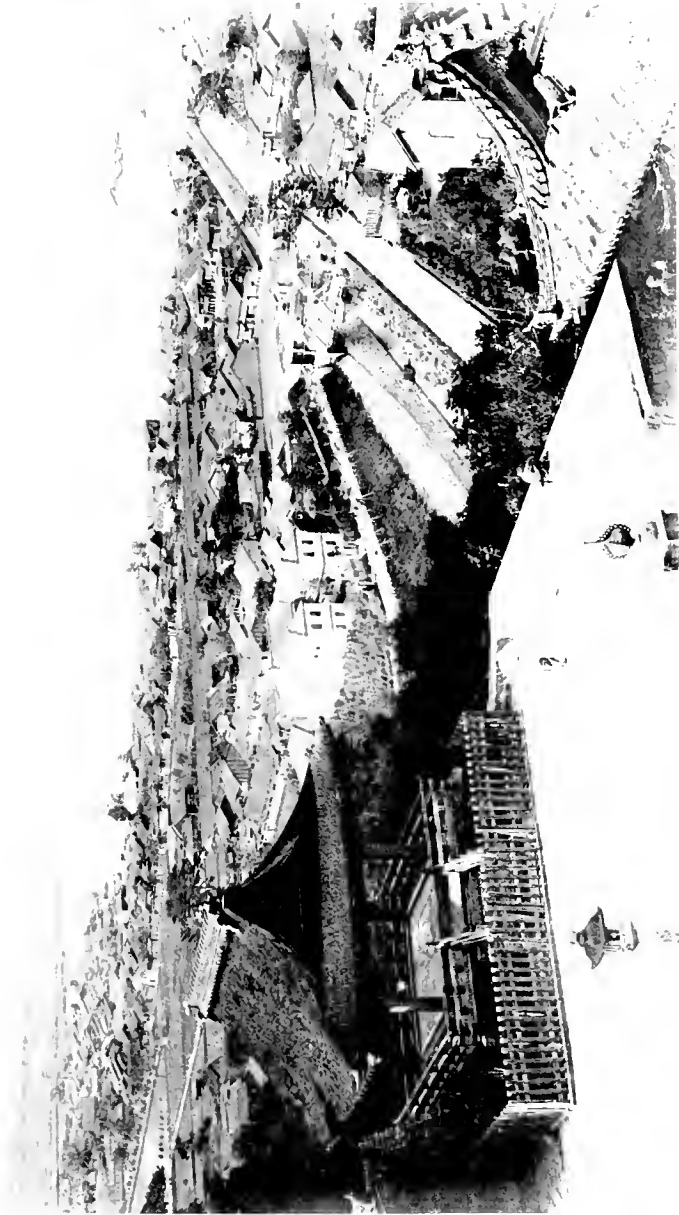
*THE ATTACK ON THE CZAREVITCH IN  
JAPAN.*

TOKYO, May 15th.

No modern event in this country has so painfully agitated all classes as the attack on the Russian Prince Imperial which was made at a town called Otsu, near Kyoto, four days ago, by a frenzied Japanese police constable. The Prince, with his cousin and fellow-traveller, Prince George of Greece, reached Japan from China on the 27th ulto., attended by a squadron of Russian war-vessels. Great preparations in honour of this visit had been made by the Japanese Court, Government, and people. The Imperial tour, by sea and land, was to occupy a month, was to extend from Nagasaki in the far south to Awomori at the northern extremity of this island, and was to include most of the chief cities and places of interest in the length and breadth of the land. Russia's policy towards this empire has latterly been of a friendly kind; and, glad of the opportunity now afforded of manifesting Japan's own regard for her great northern neighbour, and of cementing the bonds between them, the country was prepared to give the Heir Apparent to the Russian throne a magnificent welcome, marked by the heartiness, grace, and

novelty which the Japanese are so well able to impart to these occasions. That such a guest, at such a time, should have been the object of a murderous assault at the hands of a Japanese was in itself a fact sufficiently horrible to paralyse the heart of the nation—not to speak of its certain grievous effect on Japan's good name before the world. It had the further sting that Japan's annals were thus for the first time made to wear the stain of an attack by one of her own people on the person of Royalty. The incidents of the affair are as follows.

After a short stay in Nagasaki, followed by a visit to Prince Shimadzu at Kagoshima, the Imperial guest made for Kyoto, the city of cities in Japan, arriving there on the 9th instant. To go to Kyoto on pleasure means, for a certainty, a trip to Lake Biwa, a few miles away—one of the historical beauty-spots of the empire. Thither, accordingly, the Crown Prince and party proceeded on the morning of the 11th. After lunching with the Prefect of Shiga, at Otsu on the lake shore, they set out in jinrikisha to see the sights of the neighbourhood, it being impossible to take carriages on an excursion over the country roads. The way through the streets of Otsu was lined with police. Evidently suspecting no danger, and apparently sharing in the belief, established by universal experience, that in no country are travellers safer from molestation than in Japan, the Prince led the way, and was thus in a position especially favourable to the fanatical attack which was presently made upon him. Among the police on street duty was one Tsuda Sanzo, formerly a serjeant-major in the army, who joined the police force six years ago at the end of his term of military service, wearing a decoration earned by distinguished conduct in the suppression of the



OTSU.

Satsuma rebellion in 1877. Though a man of taciturn and bigoted disposition, he always did his duty thoroughly, and was well thought of in the force. Suddenly, however, as the Czarevitch passed, Tsuda drew his sword and darted upon him before prevention was possible. Happily, one imperfect blow only had been delivered when the assailant was seized by one of the Prince's jinrikisha-coolies, and thrown to the ground with such violence that he dropped his sword; whereupon, the other coolie, instantly seizing the sword, disabled him with two serious but not fatal blows, just as the guards from behind rushed up to secure him. The Prince's wounds—two were effected by the one cut—were fortunately very slight. His hat and hair saved him by so deadening the blow that the sword-edge did not harm the bone, merely inflicting on the side of the head two shallow cuts about three inches long, of not at all a serious kind, and producing neither faintness nor suffering. By three o'clock, his wounds having been attended to, the Prince was able to go by jinrikisha to the railway station, and thence return by special train to Kyoto, conversing freely with his suite the while. Intense, however, were the horror and shame which the event gave rise to throughout the empire. Even when the slight character of the Prince's injury had become known, there remained the galling fact that a cruel stain had been burnt into Japan's escutcheon. It was also known to be almost certain that the Czarevitch would at once renounce his tour and leave the country, and that the period which was to have been a gay festival of welcome and rejoicing would now be passed only in national humiliation and mournful regret.

At half-past two the distressing news of the outrage reached this capital by telegram. The Emperor was pro-

foundly affected, while the Empress broke down completely and has been more or less prostrated ever since. A Cabinet Council was instantly summoned. Within two hours the Imperial Prince Kitashirakawa, with Court surgeons and messengers, were on their way to Kyoto, and were followed at nightfall by Count Saigo and Viscount Aoki, Ministers of State, and a relay of medical men; while the Emperor himself started at six o'clock next morning on the journey of 300 miles to the Western capital, to visit the wounded Czarevitch. Everything, in short, was done that could be done to make amend for the shocking incident, and the following Imperial rescript appeared in the *Official Gazette* on the evening of the day of the outrage:

*It is with the most profound grief and regret that, while We, with Our Government and Our subjects, have been preparing to welcome His Imperial Highness, Our beloved and respected Crown Prince of Russia, with all the honours and hospitalities due to Our national guest, We receive the most unexpected and surprising announcement that His Imperial Highness met with a deplorable accident at Otsu whilst on his journey. It is Our will that justice shall take its speedy course on the miscreant offender, to the end that Our mind may be relieved and that Our friendly and intimate relations with Our good neighbour may be secured against disturbance.*

As to Tsuda, the doer of the dastardly deed, one theory alone seems possible. There is not the least reason to suppose that he was fired by indiscriminate hatred of foreigners generally, or by any of the crazy creeds of the

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*soshi* or other reckless political gangs. Nor is there any ground for believing that he was instigated by others to his crime. It has been established, however, that madness has prevailed in his family for generations. Further, there exists a certain class of men in this country who entertain strong and morbid feelings about Russia, who cannot divest themselves of the belief that Russia is the natural enemy of Japan, or forget or forgive the cession of Saghalien to that Power in 1875, in exchange for the Kurile Islands—constituting as this did the first instance in history of alienation of any part of the dominions of the Sons of Heaven. There are men here, and even some newspapers of no good repute, that have of late spoken freely and strongly on this very visit of the Russian Prince Imperial, as the visit of a secret enemy and an indignity to the empire. One such fanatic lately committed deliberate suicide, rather than live to see his country so dishonoured. Others have professed to believe that the Czarevitch only came here to spy out the land, or perhaps to create occasion for some entanglement with Russia. That the wretched Tsuda was of the above class, or at least in sympathy with it—that he suffered from what may be termed "Russia on the brain," and that this disease created in him a predisposition to evil—seems to be the only reasonable hypothesis by which to approach the interpretation of his crime. For the rest, we have the fact that the malefactor is of a silent and moody disposition, probably one of those men, to be found all the world over, whose brains can be brought by brooding over a single idea to such a tottering state of equilibrium that any irritating incident, however slight, having relation to the leading idea may upset the mental balance and induce temporary frenzy and delirium. There can be little doubt that Tsuda was thus constituted, and that the

sight of Russia's Heir Apparent and his brilliant retinue extinguished in him all sense of duty, right and wrong, and turned him for the moment into a madman. This—for the culprit was apparently in his right mind before the deed—is the one conception by which, to the Japanese themselves and to us who live here and have good means of judging, his atrocity is intelligible. It is not to be expected, however, that the world at large will judge other than harshly of the matter, or trouble its head with details. Last Monday's outrage will certainly be construed in a sense unfavourable to Japan and highly injurious to her reputation. Men will, rather, remember that Japan's annals have always been more or less disfigured by the stain of blood. They will say, rightly or wrongly, that this was a case of the old Adam breaking out, and that the embers of feudalism are not yet cold, nor yet dead the instincts of the long era during which, it may almost be said, might was right and the sword the law. Meantime, the grief of the nation is outspoken and profound. If the press be any gauge of public opinion, keen regret on the Prince's account, detestation of the criminal, and the deepest shame at the national dishonour, are the sentiments that fill all hearts. Of Tsuda, says the *Mainichi Shimbun*, "Whether sane or insane, he is the foe of his country's honour, a traitor to his Emperor and his Government." The *Fiji Shimpō* writes, "Apart from the shame to Japan and the indelible stain fixed upon her history, no greater calamity has ever befallen her;" and all the leading journals comment in a similar strain on the crime and its author—on "the disgrace that cannot be wiped away in a night and a morning," and the shame that "such a man should be a unit of the Japanese nation." In private circles the same lament is everywhere heard. Nearly every public association in the country has sent its

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representatives to Kyoto with messages of regret and condolence, and the theatres, exchanges, and wine-shops were closed for a time after the receipt of the news. There can, in short, be no question at all about the depth and genuineness of the national feeling.

The one crumb of comfort in the whole of this sad affair is the Prince's extraordinary escape. A Japanese sword is a very ugly weapon, and the police are trained to use it with terrible skill. It is little wonder, then, that people feared the worst when the nature of the attack reached their ears, and were afterwards as much amazed as relieved when its marvellously slight consequences came to be known. As a matter of fact, His Imperial Highness has not suffered at all in health or spirits from his wounds, which are doing so well that evil consequences are now out of the question. At an interview with the Emperor which took place on the 13th, it was arranged that the Czarevitch should rejoin his squadron at Kobe the same day, and His Majesty resolved to accompany him to that port, there, for the time at all events, to bid him farewell. Whether he will continue his tour in Japan is not yet known, but the probabilities are against his doing so.



## LETTER XXI.

*THE DEPARTURE OF THE CZAREVITCH  
FROM JAPAN.*

TOKYO, May 27th.

It was to be expected, as I said in my last letter, that, after the attack made upon him at Otsu on the 11th instant by the fanatical police-constable Tsuda Sanzo, the Russian Prince Imperial would have to abandon the rest of his projected tour in Japan. When, therefore, an announcement to that effect, made ten days ago, crushed the lingering hope that His Imperial Highness might yet come to this capital, if only for a few hours or a day or two, the general feeling was hardly one of surprise, though the grief and mortification exhibited by the whole country attested the depth to which Japan had been stirred by the greatest disaster that has befallen her in modern times. All that the sorrowing people could lay to their comfort was the manner in which the Russian Court's decision had been made known; and certainly nothing could have been more gracious and genuine than the tone of the following message, addressed by the Czarevitch to the Emperor of Japan on the subject of his departure:—"The Emperor, my father, considers that, before undertaking a journey through Siberia, it is necessary that I should rest for some

time at Vladivostock, and has directed me to leave Japan. I have consequently determined to set out on my return voyage to Russia on Tuesday, the 19th instant. Now that the time has come for taking leave of Your Majesty, I have to express again my sense of gratitude for the friendly reception accorded to me in this country by Your Majesty and Your Majesty's subjects. I shall never forget the warm kindness shown towards me of late by Your Majesty and Your Imperial Consort. It is a source of deep regret to me that I cannot have the honour of expressing my gratitude personally to Her Majesty the Empress. Your Majesty, let me entreat you to understand that not the slightest sentiment of estrangement is mixed with the feelings which I carry away with me from Japan, and that my sole regret is my inability to proceed to the capital of Japan, there to have the honour of meeting Your Majesty and the Empress." Plainly from this message, the Crown Prince, so far from harbouring any ill-will on account of the incident of the 11th, sought to bury all recollection of it to the best of his power, and to show by language of the heartiest friendship his appreciation of the really extraordinary *amende*, almost amounting to self-abasement, that had been so eagerly rendered by all Japan, from its Ruler downward. It is known also that telegrams in the same friendly strain had been exchanged between the Courts of St. Petersburg and Tokyo, and that the Czarina's very natural anxiety on her son's behalf was the chief determining cause of the Prince's departure. Further, a special Japanese Embassy, headed by the Imperial Prince Arisugawa, which was to have been despatched immediately for Russia, has been dispensed with by desire of the Czar, on the ground that he is fully satisfied with what Japan has already done. In these ways the Russian Emperor and Prince have mitigated as far



#### THE COOLIES WHO SAVED THE CZAREVITCH.

as possible the bitterness of the main blow. Cordiality, in fact, has been maintained throughout, and the Emperor Mutsuhito's last act of courtesy in the matter was to go and bid farewell to the Czarevitch on board of his ship at Kobe, immediately before the latter's departure thence for Vladivostock, on the 19th instant, under the escort as far as the western mouth of the Inland Sea of a squadron of Japanese war-vessels. It had been arranged that the Crown Prince should lunch on shore with the Emperor, and there say his adieux, but this programme was suddenly changed at the last, in accordance with medical advice.

In proof of the intense feeling which was excited throughout the country by the untoward incident at Otsu, it may be interesting to mention that several thousands of telegrams of condolence from all parts of Japan were

delivered at the Crown Prince's hotel in Kyoto in the first 48 hours after the attack. Callers to the number of more than 20,000 poured in during the same period. Each mail brought letters in corresponding profusion, and the trains were filled for days by delegates from nearly every public body in the Empire, charged with addresses and messages of sympathy and lament. Many costly and beautiful gifts were also showered on the injured Prince. To acknowledge all these attentions separately within any reasonable time was, of course, impossible, and the Czarevitch was finally driven to expressing his thanks, through the General of his suite, by means of a cordially worded communication to the chief vernacular newspapers. Special recognition was, however, bestowed on the two jinrikisha-drawers, Mukobatake and Kitaga, who, as I explained in my last letter, so courageously rescued the Prince from the scoundrel Tsuda. On the 18th these heroes were rewarded for their conduct with a regal liberality that must have utterly astounded them. From the Czar was granted to each man a life-pension of 1,000 dollars a year, while at the hands of the Crown Prince each received a Russian decoration and a present of 2,500 dollars. By the side of this munificence, Japan's earlier award of a decoration and life-pension of 36 dollars per annum stands in very humble contrast. But Japanese have their own way of doing things, and we may be sure that even that little was fully up to the standard of the national custom and ideas. When the two men, after going on board of the Russian ship, had been decorated and enriched for life beyond the wildest dreams of their class, and had heard words of kindly appreciation and advice from the lips of the Czarevitch himself, they were gleefully pounced upon by the sailors, chaired, toasted, and cheered, and in every way made much of; to all of which the

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simple fellows, bewildered and abashed, humbly made answer that they had done only what any Japanese would have done under the circumstances. In painful juxtaposition to this happy incident, the measures meted out to the Governor and the Chief of Police of the province in whose capital town the attack on the Crown Prince took place seem in foreign eyes to be exceptionally harsh. The Governor, one of the very best officials in Japan, has been deprived of his office, while the Chief of Police has been degraded as well as dismissed. The former, newly appointed, had been but two days at his post; the latter, also a new man, a week only; and it is believed that the Governor would have been degraded also if the Czarevitch, with kindly appreciation of the cruel ill-luck of his case, had not interceded with the Emperor in his behalf. Even the modified sentence, however, seems more than severe. Japanese practice evidently sanctions no lax interpretation of the word responsibility, but enforces it with inexorable rigour. It is impossible, nevertheless, to believe that, the forms of stern justice having been once complied with, the eclipse of so excellent an official will be more than temporary. As for the prisoner Tsuda, his fate is not yet decided. Though Japan's Penal Code awards punishment by death for assaults on members of the Japanese Imperial family, it is doubtful whether this provision can be applied to attacks upon Potentates of foreign States. Nor does the spirit of the Code warrant any special treatment or enactment for the purpose of meeting cases of the latter kind. Tsuda will probably, therefore, have to be tried only under the existing law of the land—tried, that is to say, under the provisions relating to murderous assaults upon ordinary individuals. There are, however, provisions of law by which in certain cases, of which this is held to be one, special sessions of the

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Supreme Court of Japan may be convened in District Courts. Such a session has been ordered to be held in the Otsu District Court for the trial of the present offence. Before that Court Tsuda is to be arraigned to-day, and we may expect that in a day or two his fate will be known.

Of the Otsu outrage itself some fuller particulars have come to light since my last letter. It is now established that the Prince Imperial, instead of heading the procession as was at first understood, was in the fifth jinrikisha from the front, the leading vehicle being occupied by the Governor of the province, the second by the Chief of Police, and the next two by police-inspectors. When the assault took place, the shafts of the Prince's jinrikisha were, of course, instantly dropped by the drawer between them, and the Prince, leaping out, ran off towards the head of the procession, where he was stopped by the Governor and led into the nearest house. I find also that there is no truth in the story, at first circulated, that Prince George of Greece felled the assailant Tsuda with his stick.

Without doubt, the Czarevitch's abandonment of his tour has been a very bitter thing for Japan. It is to be hoped, nevertheless, that good will come of it. Probably nothing could have better brought home to the Japanese people the great lesson which they have not hitherto sufficiently learned, namely, that the sole means of preventing any future recurrence of the humiliation they are now undergoing lies in the hands of the nation itself—of the whole public, that is to say, rather than of any unit of the body politic. It is not at present possible to fathom with certainty the motives of the fanatic Tsuda, though, as I showed in my last letter, there are very strong grounds

for the belief that he belonged to the party of Russophobists, a considerable and highly bigoted element which looks upon Russia as the natural enemy of Japan. But, whatever his motives may have been, the way in which he gave expression to his views at once identifies him with the *soshi* and other unworthy modern exponents of the old Japanese creed of feudal days, according to which it used to be more or less pardonable to enforce political protests with even extreme forms of violence, provided that the actors therein voluntarily took upon themselves all the consequences of their deeds. Against the survival and, above all, the growth of this mediæval creed, Japan is bound to take immediately the strongest steps in her power. It is a sorry thing that a country thirsting for equal recognition by the Western world should suffer disgrace at the hands of such miscreants as Tsuda, and be afflicted by the presence of such pests as the cowardly *soshi* who planned and carried out the attempt on Count Okuma's life in 1889. The remedy, however, if not easy, is plain enough. In the first place, as I have before stated in your columns, the public at large has all along shown itself curiously tolerant of the misdeeds of ruffians of the above classes. This tolerance is, no doubt, largely attributable to the easy going and kindly disposition of the Japanese people. But, that it needs to be replaced in such cases by a sterner mood is a fact which the recent disaster must have stamped with painful force on the mind of the nation. In the second place, there are certain groups of men in the country who, if they do not actually create the malcontents and malefactors that are the curse of modern Japan, at least give encouragement more or less directly to the production of them and their crimes. Of such are the hare-brained editors who seek to revive the old spirit of

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national isolation; reckless political demagogues who airily preach the same doctrine, and let slip no chance of saying ugly things about foreigners; the Russophobists, whose inflammatory appeal probably drove the wretched Tsuda to his desperate deed; men of standing and repute who harbour and support the *soshi*; and some few public men, *literati*, and even professors, whose whole attitude towards aliens is as bad as it can be, and a shameful example. These are the men who are Japan's worst enemies—worse even than the actual perpetrators of crimes of violence like that of the 11th instant—because they prove themselves traitors to the spirit of true patriotism which is the nation's pride, by persistently educating in various ways among the dangerous classes a temper the serious manifestation of which may at any moment bring grave disaster upon the empire. If the recent outrage at Otsu have the effect of staying the mischievous utterances and doings of these madmen and their followers, and of inciting the gentle, order-loving, and thoroughly respectable mass of the people to stamp them out by the resistless force of public opinion, Japan will wake up from her present depression to a far happier condition of things. Then the Western world will see and admit that the grief and abasement so intensely manifested during the past fortnight have been no mere passing hysterical fit, but the forerunners of sturdy and successful effort to uproot the evils which now constitute a standing menace to the empire's tranquillity and status.



## LETTER XXII.

*PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, April 29th.

It is, no doubt, safe to say that of all that Japan has done and undone during the process of being born again, which she has undergone during the past 25 years, and is still undergoing, the feature of chief interest for Western minds is her recent adoption of representative institutions. The birth of the first Oriental Parliament would be, under any circumstances, a landmark in history. But, coming as it has done in the train of all the swift and picturesque changes with which Japan has surprised the present generation of onlookers, it cannot but arouse an exceptional degree of curiosity and interest in the mind of every intelligent watcher of far Eastern affairs. Thirty-five years ago, Japan was, practically, a hermit nation. Till 1869 she was still in the bonds of feudalism. To-day sees her under the full sway of constitutional government, and able to look back with satisfaction on the doings of the first session of her first Diet. I do not propose to deal in this letter with the legislative work of the session which ended last month—further than to say that, in spite of a few blemishes which were only to be expected, the Parliament acquitted itself well, got through some useful work, and

gave evidence of a capacity only needing time and experience to bring it up to a high level. Speaking generally, the press and people, if not exactly enthusiastic about the first issue of Japan's great experiment, seem to be of opinion that matters have gone a good deal better than the nation had any right to expect. What English readers, however, will chiefly care to hear about is the way in which things are carried on in the Japanese Diet—the rules and procedure, the debating, the demeanour and capacity of the members, the shorthand reporting, and other details. To the task of sketching these I, therefore, now address myself.

In *The Times* of the 6th of last January, I described the constitution of the two Houses of the Diet, as well as the temporary Parliament buildings. The latter were burned to the ground on the 19th of January. But new buildings on the same site, and on nearly the same plan, are already begun. In each Chamber the seats of the members occupy a space shaped like the silk-covered part of an open folding fan, the ribs of which answer to radial passages that divide the area into nine equal blocks, composed of tiers of arc-shaped benches with tables before them, concentric with the general curvature. This system of benches slopes down to a raised dais, whereon stand the President's table and chair, and immediately before these, on a slightly lower level, the rostrum for speakers. At the President's elbow sits the Chief Secretary; behind him other secretaries and clerks. Right and left of the rostrum are seats for Ministers of State and Government Delegates; and the reporters' table is on the floor of the House, directly under the rostrum. The division of the members' benches into nine blocks is a part of the system under which members themselves are divided into nine Sections. A peculiar

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feature of this distribution is that, being determined by lot, it results in a thorough intermingling of members of all shades of political opinion. Its conveniences are that it facilitates voting by ballot, as well as the formation of the Committees by which much of the work is done. These always number nine or some multiple of nine, and are made up of members elected, in equal numbers, from and by each of the nine Sections. The President, corresponding with the Speaker of Western Parliaments, has, of course, high powers. He determines the Orders of the Day, grants the right of speaking in cases not already covered by those Orders, checks irrelevancy, and takes care that movers and introducers do not abuse their privilege of addressing the House more than once in a debate, or that members do not glide from explanation into argument when asking questions. He decides whether a member shall speak from the rostrum or from his seat, the latter being usually allowed if brevity can be counted on—except at moments of excitement, when the intending speaker's advance from his seat to the rostrum is insisted on, and has an admirably soothing effect. The President may also extend the sitting beyond the usual hour, which is 6 p.m., and may even close the day's proceedings at any time if things look uncomfortably stormy. A milder way, at his disposal, of stilling excitement is to order a short recess; and hitherto this has been found to answer. If any speaker transgress in speech, the President may warn him, stop him, or order him to withdraw his remarks; and, if he be contumacious, may prohibit him from speaking for the rest of the day, or direct him to leave the House, or hand his case over to the mercies of the standing Disciplinary Committee, whose authority extends to reprimand, suspension, and even expulsion. Among

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other powers vested in the President are those of deciding disputed interpretations of the Constitution, the Law of the Houses, or the Rules of Procedure, and of determining when a debate is ended. In practice, however, the opinion of the House is usually taken on the former, while debates are nearly always terminated by means of the closure. This, if moved and supported by any two members, must be put to the House without discussion—a system which would place almost tyrannical power in the hands of any majority if it were not to some extent safeguarded by provisions under which precedence is given to members who have notified their intention of speaking in time to have such intention included in the Orders of the Day, and which also prescribe that discussion shall be carried on alternately by supporters and opponents of the proposal before the House. Lastly, the President, though actually receiving his appointment from the Emperor, is, in the case of the Lower Chamber, one of three candidates nominated by the House itself from among its members. Absolute impartiality is, of course, expected and required of him in everything appertaining to his control of the procedure; and it is only fair to say that this quality was most happily displayed by President Nakajima throughout the session lately ended. But the President is not required to divest himself wholly of the exercise of a member's functions, seeing that he may, after announcing his intention, take part in debate and also vote, if he vacate his chair in favour of the Vice-President until the debate is finished. From the fact that the President is virtually the House's choice, it follows that, as now, so in the future, he may be expected to belong to the party most numerously represented in the Chamber. The ballot for the Vice-President follows that for the President; and, unless the principal

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party pushes its advantage for the second place also, it will usually happen, as happened last November, that the Vice-President will be he who runs second for the Presidency, and will belong to the party that stands second in numerical strength. In the Peers' House, on the other hand, the President and Vice-President are purely Imperial nominees. Next in importance to the offices above named comes that of Chairman of Committee of the whole House, an unsalaried functionary, elected by the members at the beginning of the session, for that session only, whereas the President and Vice-President sit for the life of the Parliament, namely, four years. I have already referred to the Law of the Houses and the Rules of Procedure. Those constitute the Standing Orders. The former is a part of the Constitution. The latter form a volume containing 213 rules, which were drafted by the Government before the Diet was assembled, and adopted by both Houses after examination by Committee. On the whole they have worked well, and, though there has been some talk of amendment, they still stand as drafted. Naturally, looking to the extreme novelty of the situation, the Diet in its first session had all its work cut out --to master the details and meanings of the Law and Rules, to evolve an intelligent and orderly procedure, and, besides, to deal with the pressing business that had to be despatched in a period of three months, with sittings of five hours per diem. That all this was well accomplished is generally allowed. If the doings in the Peers' Chamber were marked by greater sobriety, dignity, and self-restraint than were those in the House of Representatives, the contrast has ample precedents elsewhere, and it cannot be said that the proceedings in the Commons ever passed the point of permissible excitement.

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One of the things that at once strike a visitor to the Japanese Parliament is the extraordinary coolness and *aplomb* of the speakers. I have sometimes heard with amazement young Japanese graduates address a great assembly of, perhaps, 2,000 spectators as calmly and with as little self-consciousness as if speaking to friends at home. Just as calmly have I often seen any—even of the youngest—of the 300 members of the Diet advance to the rostrum and therefrom literally talk to the House, sometimes with good-humoured, smiling ease, and always without a sign of nervousness or hesitation in manner, voice, or matter. Perfect self-possession before an audience seems, indeed, to be one of the national gifts. Powerful and soul-stirring oratory is rarely heard, a Japanese speaker's extraordinary coolness conducing rather to logical than impassioned exposition. The former, however, finds little favour with Japan's legislators. Nor, indeed, does the Japanese language readily lend itself to eloquence or oratorical display as understood by us. The styles best liked here are two in number—one, that of the polished scholar, with its even flow of well chosen and artistically grouped words; the other, appertaining rather to the modern schools of exact learning and thought, in which grace and scholarship are ruthlessly sacrificed to brevity, directness, and, above all, to lucidity. Another feature which attracts a stranger's notice is the evident earnestness of the proceedings. There can be no mistaking the attentive interest bestowed by the members generally on the words of the speaker, the papers covering their desks, and the volumes of the Rules. In aspect the assemblies are of a motley order. One-half, perhaps, wear foreign dress, the rest the statelier and more becoming Japanese robes, which might, indeed, have been expressly designed for Senators.



A MEMBER OF THE DIET.

All grades and styles of the upper and middle classes are represented—from nobles of ancient and august lineage, and grave, gray men of the old *samurai* class, to sturdy, mild-looking landowners, and bright-eyed juniors with the wild hair, intense look, and careless dress so much affected by some of the modern *literati*. Spectacles are worn by about a-third of the members; hats by none. Attached by a hinge to every desk is a low square black block, having painted on it in large white numerals, on each face, the member's number, which can thus be read from any part of the House. This block is kept erected during the member's presence, and lowered when he leaves his seat. But the intention of the arrangement—namely, that members should be referred to by their numbers only—has practically broken down. Japanese politeness soon rebelled against so chilly a system, and, except from the mouths of a few pre-

cisionists, or when seeking the President's leave to speak, names now take almost always the place of numbers. In respect of what we call "catching the Speaker's eye," Japanese practice is peculiar, and to the uninformed spectator produces an effect which not only savours strongly of disorder, but seems almost cruel in its tendency to utterly crush effective peroration on the part of the speaker who "has the floor." No sooner are the well-recognised phrases heard which in Japanese oratory herald the end of a speech than perhaps a half-dozen members, rising hastily and grasping their blocks, get up something very like an uproar in their vehement efforts to secure the right of speaking next. Such cries as "President, No. 52," or "President; Suyematsu Kencho," fill the air; and it is not until the *Gicho*, or President, has made it clear whom he favours that the hubbub subsides. The whole effect is unfortunate, and greater dignity of procedure would certainly be gained by recourse to some less noisy system. Votes may be taken in any of four ways, which, to quote from the *Japan Daily Mail's* masterly exposition of the whole subject, are as follows:—

*First, by requiring the "contents" to stand; secondly, by calling the roll and requiring members to vote aloud from their places; thirdly, by ballot without names; and, fourthly, by ballot with names. The President may decide which of these methods shall be employed. It need scarcely be said that he generally selects the first, but, if a motion having at least 20 supporters is made in favour of any of the other three, the sense of the House is taken. The result of a vote by standing may be challenged by one member, and recourse*



*must then be had to one of the other methods, at the President's discretion; but no objection to the vote by roll-call is valid unless it finds at least 20 supporters. In the case of written ballots, white and blue papers are employed, each member writing his name. For unwritten ballots, black and white balls are used, accompanied by the cards of the voters.*

In both Houses the general procedure is nearly identical, and in both much of the business is done by Standing and Special Committees. Of the former there are, for each House, besides the Disciplinary Committee already mentioned, a Petitions Committee and a Budget Committee; and the Peers have also a Qualifications Committee, charged with examining into all questions relating to the qualifications of members. To the Petitions Committee belongs the task of receiving petitions and abstracting their main points for the information of the Chamber, with which it rests whether to reject them or transmit to the Government. The Committee may also make recommendations to the House. Debating on petitions is not required, unless the Committee or at least 30 members urge that course. The Budget Committee has 15 days in which to examine the Budget sent up by the Government, and to prepare its report and recommendations thereon; and Delegates from all the State departments attend the Committee's meetings, to give information in detail. Government Bills, and, in general, Private Bills, are examined and reported on by special Committees after the first reading, at which, in the case of the former, Ministers of State or Government Delegates attend, to make explanations and answer questions, while the later stages are watched throughout by the Dele-

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gates, who may speak at any time during a debate on the Bill if they do not interrupt the speeches of members, and who are obliged to answer all questions put by the Committee or in the House. Government Bills take precedence of other measures, and Private Bills cannot be introduced unless supported by at least 20 members. Amendments to all Bills must also have not less than 20 supporters before they can be debated, though for amendments to Committees' reports one supporter is enough. A Committee's report, if agreed to by more than a two-thirds majority, is held to be unanimous, but, if one-third dissent, a minority report may be submitted. Debate ensues, at which the House votes for or against a second reading. This may be opened after two days' delay, or after a shorter interval or at once if the House so decide. The same rule applies to the third reading, if not dispensed with. But on this occasion amendments are forbidden, except in cases of obvious necessity. Government Bills may be presented to either House first, as the convenience of business suggests. The Budget, however, must go first to the Commons, and no amendment on it can be debated if not supported by at least 30 members. So much of its appropriations as may be required for the exercise of the Imperial prerogatives can be neither reduced nor rejected without Government assent, which must be sought before either step is voted upon. To receive Imperial assent, all Bills must pass both Houses; and, provided that neither rejects a Bill, a special arrangement—namely, a conference of ten Managers from each Chamber—exists, for bringing the two into harmony in respect of any amendments on which they may have disagreed. Adjustment having been effected by the Managers, the Bill is returned to the Houses, to be accepted or rejected *en bloc*. Besides

the projects of law to which the foregoing particulars chiefly relate, each House may present Addresses to the Throne and make Representations to the Government, provided that in every case they are brought forward with the support of at least 30 members. Only by one or the other of these can Parliament approach interference in matters falling within the scope of the Imperial prerogatives. Questions may also be asked of the Government, if signed by at least 30 members and submitted through the President to the proper Minister of State, who must either answer them or give his reasons for declining.

The above is a broad outline of Japanese Parliamentary procedure. To describe it in complete detail is impossible within any ordinary compass. It will be seen that the Cabinet occupies a peculiar position towards the Diet, being nominally independent of its votes, and having no recognised supporters among the members. The Ministers of State and Government Delegates, having the right to sit in the House and speak at any time, though not to vote, constitute the link between the Administration and the Legislature. It will be gathered, moreover, that the framers of Japan's Constitution, with the world's successes and failures as their guides, have aimed at elaborating a system combining the liberty proper to Parliamentary institutions with due safeguards against licence. They have borrowed from the fabrics of the European Continent, the United States, and England, adapting what they borrowed to existing conditions in Japan. There is no slavish copying of any one model. If the Constitution of the Japanese House of Peers much resembles but is simpler and less autocratic than that of the Prussian Herrenhaus, it corresponds even more closely with that of the Spanish

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Senate. Scarcely anything has been adopted without modification. From England was inhaled the spirit of liberty which permeates the whole, while the Sectional division of the Chambers was inspired by examples from the Continent, and the Committee system embodies the best features of the United States' practice. It remains to be seen what measure of final success will attend these efforts to strike a happy mean, with special adaptation to the country's circumstances and to the capacity and character of its representatives. Augury from the results of a first brief session would be premature. Meantime, the particulars presented above may serve to whet the interest with which the gradual working-out of Japan's tremendous experiment will be watched by students of representative government all over the world.

The very novel and interesting subject of stenographic reporting of the speeches in Japan's Diet, delivered as they are in an ideographic language, must be reserved for another letter.

## LETTER XXIII.

*PARLIAMENTARY REPORTING IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, May 16th.

To complete the sketch of the Japanese Diet and its procedure which was undertaken by me in a recent letter, it is necessary to say something further about that which I therein referred to as the very novel and interesting subject of the shorthand reporting of the debates. The novelty consists in the fact of its being the first case of the application of stenography to an Oriental language: the interest will, perhaps, be gathered from what I have now to say. When Japan's statesmen first approached this subject, they had before them an important question and a serious difficulty. The question was as to the exact line that had best be taken—should the reporting be strictly official and verbatim, or should it be entrusted to private or semi-official enterprise, under stipulations in respect of fulness as conditions of Government support. Great Britain offered them an example of the latter plan. There they found that, apart from the admirable system of reporting which is pursued by *The Times* and some other journals, the work of semi-official reporting is carried out by the Hansard Union, under a contract forbidding the abbreviation of any speech by more than one-third, and providing that the published

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speeches, revised as far as practicable by the speakers themselves, must be in the hands of members a week after delivery. Elsewhere, however, the general practice was found to favour official and, consequently, verbatim reports, subject to correction in grammar alone. Next, as to the difficulty above referred to. This lay chiefly in the character of language, which was known to offer terrible obstacles to stenographic reporting. To make the nature of the difficulty clear, some explanation is necessary. The Japanese language has contained for more than a thousand years a large admixture of so-called Chinese words. By this it is to be understood, not that the actual Chinese sounds have been adopted in such cases, but that, when Japan took to the Chinese ideographic method of writing, ideographs representing such and such things were alone appropriated, Japan giving to their expression sounds of her own, different from the Chinese sounds; from which it follows that, though a Chinese and a Japanese may be utterly unable to converse by speech, they can do so readily enough if both of them have a sufficient knowledge of the ideographs. Now it happens, further, that this admixture of Sinico-Japanese words has of late been growing with great rapidity, and is still growing, in consequence chiefly of the introduction into Japan of many novelties from the Western world, under which it has come to pass that a number of technical and scientific terms, not previously represented in the language, have been manufactured out of Chinese and adopted into Japanese, somewhat as we employ Greek or Latin for the same purpose. Again, as a result of this increased use of Sinico-Japanese words by the educated and student classes, it has lately become the fashion to employ words of that character more freely than before in the

conversation of daily life. It may seem strange that the language of such a nation as China should be resorted to for the expression of the most modern ideas. But the explanation is simple. Chinese, with its thousands of monosyllabic roots, of precise and fixed meanings, out of which an almost infinite number of words may be built up so as to give fairly exact equivalents of pretty well any idea whatever, offered a ready channel for conveyance of clear notions to the Japanese mind, even in technical matters, whereas words in an unknown tongue would convey no meaning at all. To take the word *telegraph*, for example, which has no equivalent in true Japanese. Its Japanese pronunciation would be *te-re-gu-ra-fu*, a meaningless aggregation of syllables. The Sinico-Japanese words *den-shin*, "lightning communication," on the other hand, are almost self-explanatory. But, when we come to the question of stenographic reporting, the greater the proportion of Chinese words the greater is the difficulty. This is because of the abundance of homonyms. In Chinese, the same word-sound may mean a dozen or more different things. There will be a separate ideograph for each of the dozen, but only one sound for all. One of the broadest contrasts between the language of China and the more purely phonetic tongues of Europe and America is that the former, with its myriads of ideographs on the one hand and its distracting homonyms on the other, does not lend itself to simple and intelligible record by means of any syllabic or alphabetic script. Japanese suffers from a like disability, but perhaps hardly in the same degree, because, though Japan employs the Chinese ideographic system of writing, her language is only partly of Chinese origin. Nevertheless, to the extent by which Chinese has affected the Japanese language, to the same extent at least does

the homonym difficulty prevail. It would be tedious to explain the exact cause of this result, but by persons familiar with the subject it is well known that an inevitable consequence of the process of constructing language out of Chinese ideographs is a reproduction of China's perplexing homonyms. In this country, however, a palliative has been in operation for many centuries. As far as is known, Japan never possessed a completed method of writing that could be fairly called her own; and, after the advent of Buddhism from China in the seventh century, the Chinese system was gradually adopted. But the thralldom of that system was soon found to be terribly irksome; and, to escape from it, at least in some measure, Japanese scholars before long devised a syllabary called the *kana*, consisting of highly abbreviated forms of those 47 Chinese characters which correspond with the 47 syllabic sounds that enter into the Japanese spoken language. The *kana* has proved an enormous boon to the Japanese people. Though it left the difficulty of the homonyms unsolved, and to the scholar was no real substitute for the wearisome study of Chinese, it was at least a valuable aid to the acquisition of knowledge, and brought the arts of reading and writing within easy reach of the masses.

In this *kana*, it will at once be seen, lies the sole chance for Japanese shorthand reporting—the *kana* syllabary, that is to say, affords the only available basis for a shorthand script. But the *kana* pure and simple fails, as already explained, in the crucial matter of the homonyms. There is yet another special difficulty. To follow and report intelligently the speeches in the Diet or in any cultivated circles, it is necessary that the stenographers



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themselves be not only scholarly men, well versed in Chinese, but men able to keep at all times abreast of the style of language in vogue among the most highly educated classes. This, as we have seen, is undergoing changes almost from day to-day, in obedience to the exigencies of the time. To keep pace with it demands, besides mere scholarship, at least some knowledge of Western science and philosophy, and familiarity with the newly-coined words and phrases that are employed for their discussion. With such obstacles confronting it—as well as many others appertaining, in the nature of things, to the fabrication of a shorthand script—the successful application of stenography to the Japanese language came to be well-nigh despaired of, long ago, by foreign sinologues. To the Japanese, however, or at least to one Japanese, the problem seemed less desperate. Many years back, a poor *ex-samurai* scholar, named Minamoto Koki, went to work upon it at his cottage in this capital, at first silently and alone. By 1879, he had succeeded in devising a stenographic system and had organised a class to study and elaborate it. It is impossible to help admiring the fortitude, almost amounting to heroism, with which Minamoto and his fellow-students, toiling patiently and bravely, year after year, at length wrought out in some inscrutable way of their own the result of which Japan has now such good reason to be proud. Theirs was a gallant fight against heavy odds—the tremendous difficulties of the task itself, their own straitened means, and for all their reward scarcely anything more tangible than the knowledge of having achieved success. Till last autumn so little were these men in request that they could hardly earn better wages than those of a common labourer. It was generally understood that an efficient stenographic system and a staff to work it existed, but the

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experts themselves, unheeded and unrewarded, struggled on in poverty and obscurity.

That was the state of things with respect to shorthand in this country when Mr. Kaneko Kentaro, then Secretary of the Privy Council, returned, last summer, to Japan, armed with the results of a long investigation into Western methods of Parliamentary procedure, on which he had bestowed much painstaking research and the powers of a highly intelligent mind. Mr. Kaneko's enquiries had led him to favour very strongly the adoption, if possible, of official shorthand reporting for the proceedings in the Japanese Diet. The great point to be determined was whether the system already existing could be safely resorted to. With that object he gathered together at his house, on a certain evening in September last, about a dozen of Minamoto's disciples, and tested their capacity to record accurately from his own lips a lecture on his Western travels. The result of two such evenings of trial was a genuine triumph, leading later to the assemblage of a sufficient staff for the Diet's work, and to the elaboration of an organized system of reporting. Thus, the labours of Minamoto and his little band were at last to bring forth fruit and reap reward. Mr. Kaneko could now produce the system and the men; and the Government, advised by him, adopted the principle of official verbatim reporting and established a stenographic bureau. As a result, the proceedings, day by day, of each House of the Diet, all through the session, appeared in print in the *Official Gazette* at six o'clock the next morning; and with such fidelity were the speeches reproduced that many a country member is said to have been fairly aghast at finding his very provincialisms literally taken down, and published in the enduring pages of the Govern-



MR. KANEKO KENTARO.

ment journal. Twelve is the standing number of reporters for each Chamber. On account of the great difficulty of the operation, two work at a time, so that one may be a check on the other; and they are relieved every fifteen minutes. Each man has, thus, 75 minutes in which to translate his script into long-hand. There are six spare reporters, as a reserve and for extra work in Committee; also three stenographic revisers, eight fair copyists, and a half dozen general officials. The orthographic revision is carried out by secretaries of the House and the head of the Stenographic Bureau. The two chief men of the stenographers' guild—formerly Minamoto's leading experts—have permanent posts, the rank and file being employed only for the period of the session, but at ten times the salaries they earned before. Mr. Kaneko himself is now Chief Secretary of the House of Peers.

Such is the story of an undertaking long thought to be hopeless—begun in drudgery and privation, achieved only to meet at first with the poorest recognition, but at length crowned with a measure of success so great as to have placed Japan in the enviable position of being able to stereotype the utterances of her earliest parliamentary legislators from the first hour of their very first assemblage. It is also said by scholars that the new stenography bids fair to confer an inestimable blessing on Japan, by bridging the gulf which now separates the written from the spoken language. Meantime, its author, the sturdy Minamoto, will take neither office nor reward. He is a Japanese of the old school. He worked for his country and for a cause; he succeeded; and that, for him, is enough.

## LETTER XXIV.

*THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE IN JAPAN.*

TOKYO, November 7th.

Ten days ago, as the world has doubtless been told briefly by telegram, the whole of Central Japan was convulsed by an earthquake of very uncommon severity. The particulars of the phenomenon, of its fearful potency and far-reaching effects, are gradually coming to light, and enough is now known to make it only too clear that the catastrophe of the 28th ult. must be ranked as one of the most terrible in seismic records. No fewer than 31 provinces of Japan were more or less violently agitated. In other words, the earth's crust was smartly shaken for several minutes together over an area equal to that of England. Beyond this area the shocks were slighter. Yet sensible movements extended to the far north of the main island, 400 miles from the origin, and again to a similar distance south-westward, where the earth-throes, passing under the sea, invaded the neighbouring island of Kyushu. Even here in Tokyo, distant some 170 miles, as the crow flies, from the centre of disturbance, the earthquake was the greatest that has been experienced since the founding of the Observatory in 1874; there has, in fact, been nothing like it since the great Yedo earthquake of 37 years

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ago. It lasted 12 minutes, and the ground surface at the Observatory attained a *maximum* horizontal or back-and-forth movement of 2 in., combined with a vertical movement of three-eighths of an inch. Happily little harm was done hereabouts, as the vibrations, though of great amplitude, were of an easy, swinging kind. A few chimneys were wrecked and roofs injured, and there were the usual stopping of clocks, swinging of lamps and pictures, and upsetting of small movables. But people in the capital and in Yokohama were more frightened than hurt, and not a life was lost. From the region of greatest activity, on the other hand, come woful accounts of wholesale destruction of life and property, rendered all the more impressive by its appalling suddenness. There, within an area of some 500 square miles and in the space of half a minute, more than 3,500 people were crushed to death under the ruins of falling houses, and about 4,500 others were more or less injured; while the buildings totally overthrown had to be numbered by tens of thousands. Heavy as is this record of death and havoc, it was enormously swelled, later on, by the fall of tiles and other wreckage, and of tottering buildings, under the effects of subsequent milder shocks, and especially by the ravages of fire, which is always such a terrible concomitant of great earthquake calamities in Japan. Hundreds upon hundreds of lives were sacrificed by burning to death, before rescue was possible, of sufferers entangled or buried beneath the ruins of their dwellings. Loss of property was swelled from the same cause, fire proving in some cases as fatal to property as even the earthquake itself. Roughly speaking, the area of *maximum* disaster measures 25 miles from north to south by 20 miles from east to west, and is contained in the provinces of Mino and Owari, the whole of



OSAKA.

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which suffered more or less cruelly by the catastrophe. But death and devastation were by no means confined to them. In Echizen, for example, bordering Mino on the north, the number of killed and wounded amounts to 68, while some 700 buildings were demolished or badly damaged. Again, in Osaka, 75 miles to the south-west, where the horizontal surface movement is said to have reached four inches, there was serious destruction, and the fall of a cotton-spinning factory killed 35 work-people and wounded 220. To sum up the whole fruits of this latest manifestation of the earth's plutonic energy, the figures thus far arrived at show that fully 8,000 people have perished by horrible deaths, the wounded numbering about 10,000; and that, to 84,000 houses demolished by the earthquake, must be added 5,000 afterwards destroyed by fire, and at least 20,000 reduced to various states of dilapidation. More than 300,000 people have been suddenly rendered homeless, and to many of these the calamity means, for the time at least, virtual destitution. Viewed side by side with these dismal totals, the effects on life and property of the great Bandai-san explosion, which I described in *The Times* some two years ago, are dwarfed to insignificance. Death or some form of misery has in the present case fallen on perhaps half-a-million souls. Parents and brethren, wives, husbands, and children, have been lost, and the ruined survivors, desolate and houseless, "mourn," as a Japanese writer puts it, in thousands "by the wayside." Nor do the facts cited above by any means tell the whole tale of disaster. To them must be added damage of almost incalculable value inflicted upon roads, bridges, railways, embankments, and the land and crops in general. In some places landslips have dammed the streams, creating lakes or producing inundations; hundreds of wells have been

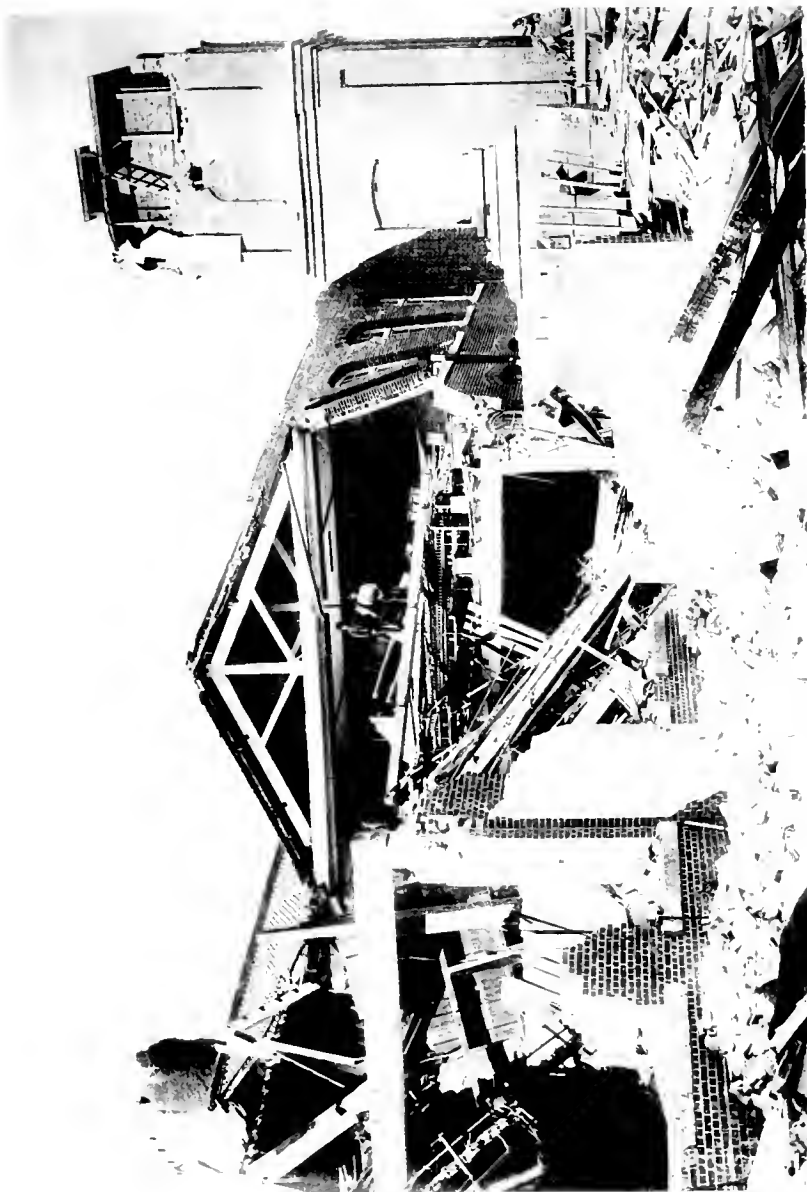




KASAMATSU

destroyed; springs have ceased flowing; and the embankments of the larger rivers have been so grievously damaged that a heavy rainfall might at any time lead to disastrous flooding of the adjacent lowlands. Involved in the widespread ruin are the famed potteries of Owari and Mino. By their destruction the chief porcelain-making colony in Japan has been brought to a condition of idleness, which must be of some month's duration.

The area of *maximum* effect to which I have referred is a part of the great fertile and thickly-populated plain which lies between the Mino hills and the head of the Owari Gulf. Near its southern border is Nagoya, the fourth city of Japan, with a population of 162,000. Near its northern border is Gifu, till the other day a busy manufacturing town of some 30,000 inhabitants. After these come Ogaki, Kano, Kasamatsu, and other lesser towns, and scores of villages and hamlets, many of which, since the fatal 28th, have existed only in name. The seat of origin of the earthquake is believed to be about 12 miles from Gifu, where a large area is reported to have subsided bodily and to have undergone other great physical changes. This remains to be verified. It is early to write on that part of the subject. But that the focus cannot be far from Gifu is established by the fact that there and thereabouts the destroying power was greater than in any other peopled district. Nagoya, nevertheless, and its suburb Atsuta, suffered very heavily indeed. Thousands of houses collapsed, and there are few without damage of some kind, while death and injury reigned in every quarter. The great earthquake began at about 6.30 a.m., and it came without previous warning. As far as can be gathered from the accounts of survivors who were present, its chief features



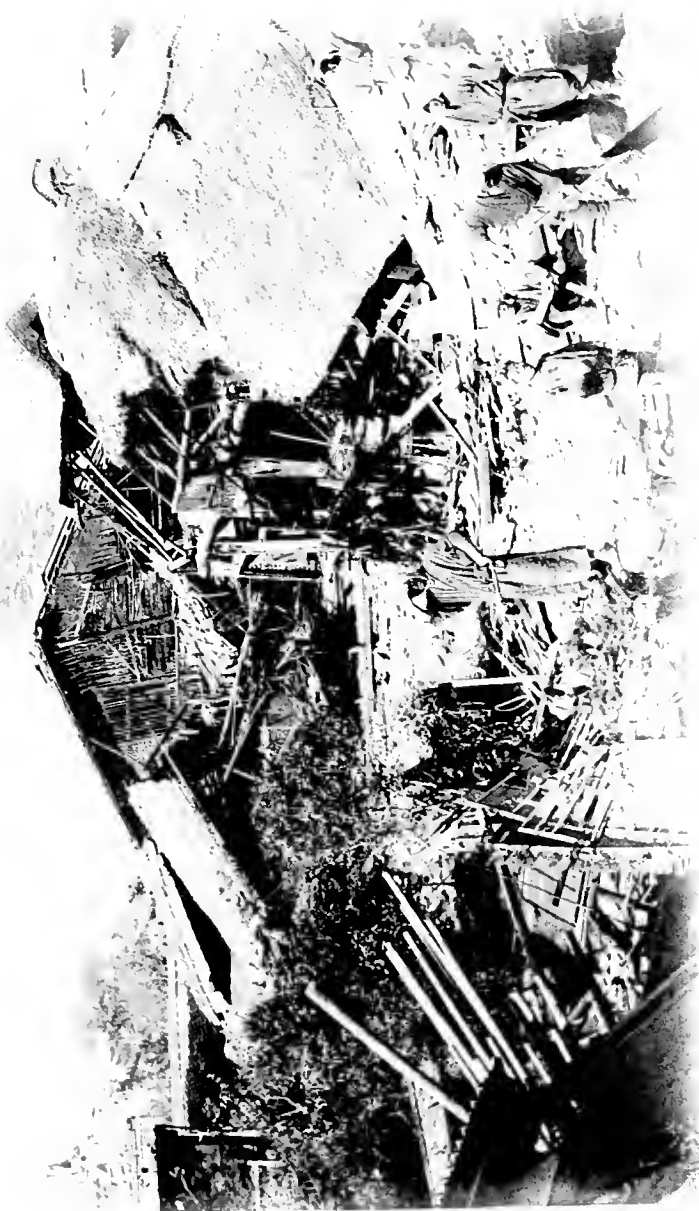
NAGOYA SPINNING MILL.

were two very severe shocks in quick succession, with an eastward throw—the second greater than the first—followed immediately by a yet stronger return wave, or back-throw, directed westward. It was this third shock, they say, that wrought most of the earlier mischief. But so violent and awfully sudden were the phenomena that the scared folk who experienced them can hardly, in the nature of things, be expected to have very clear ideas of what took place. On the other hand, as observatories and apparatus in the area of chief disturbance were overwhelmed in the general ruin instrumental records of the nature and exact times of the movements there unfortunately do not exist. Some people tell how they were thrown headlong downstairs; others that they could neither walk nor stand. Numbers of girls and women seem to have burst out crying. An American officer who was staying in Nagoya at the time had to grasp the frame-work of his bed to prevent his being thrown out on to the floor. An Englishman, jumping up from bed, was pitched through the sliding windows of his room into the verandah. That there was violent heaving as well as vibration is certain. One observer claims to have determined a vertical motion of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  in. and a horizontal motion of a foot. But this statement must be received with caution. The great shocks at the outset, and the chief shocks for several days after, were immediately preceded by a deep rumbling booming, as from distant ordnance down in the bowels of the earth. The fact of this sound preceding the shocks indicates that the velocity of propagation of the latter through that part of the earth's crust was less than the velocity of sound. Sometimes there was sound without shock, showing that the latter lacked either energy or direction to reach the hearers.

The painful scenes in the streets directly after the great shocks may be imagined, but can hardly be described. Though the demeanour of the survivors was sober and reasonable to a degree impossible to any people but the gentle and sunny-hearted Japanese, the groans of the wounded and dying under the piles of wreck, the lamentations of those who were left over those who had been taken, and the further death and ruin that were ever being dealt out by shock after shock in rapid succession—less severe than the first throes, yet strong enough to finish much that they had left undone—made up a scene of horror fit indeed to appal the stoutest hearts. It was a scene, nevertheless, in which even the most dazed and grief-stricken of the afflicted survivors bore themselves with wonderful fortitude, resignation, and patience. The same qualities were throughout displayed by the townsfolk and villagers generally during the days and nights of terror and wretchedness that were inflicted upon them, in Nagoya and everywhere in the devastated region, by the protracted manifestations of plutonic activity which, indeed, are still going on. Upwards of 6,600 earth spasms of great or less energy were felt in Nagoya during the 206 hours after the first outbreak. That is to say, there was an average during that period of more than 30 shocks an hour. And, inasmuch as the intervals between the shocks steadily increased, the frequency in the earlier days of the period probably amounted to about a shake every minute. It is little wonder, then, that not only the houseless, but thousands who, though their dwellings still stood, had not the courage to re-occupy them as long as the earth kept quaking under their feet, were driven to camp in the open in the streets. There, in the rudest of shelters, made with screens, shutters, mats, and even mosquito curtains, men and women, maidens, youths, and children,

dwelt, despite discomfort and cold nights, for a full week after the disaster—sad at heart no doubt, yet outwardly contented and even cheerful, quietly biding the time till mother earth's tyranny should be overpast.

On advancing from Nagoya towards Gifu the signs of ruthless havoc are seen to grow in number and intensity, and the surface is found to be seamed with long fissures, running mostly north and south. It is curious, nevertheless, to see that the worst effects were partial, areas comparatively unscathed being mixed up in the strangest way with scenes of awful destruction. The long road of 19 miles, most of it lined formerly with houses and villages, is now for the greater part of its length a mere lane between heaps of ruins. Gifu itself is one big wreck, looking as if it had undergone a fierce bombardment. Here the destruction by fire was terrible. Fully one-half of the houses are gone. Ogaki, nine miles to the west, fared even worse. There, of 4,434 houses that constituted the town, 3,556 were destroyed and 765 were partly ruined, leaving only 113 unscathed. The killed and wounded numbered about a tenth of the population. In one temple alone, all but two of a congregation of 150 assembled for the early service, were crushed or burned to death. The whole region, indeed, about Gifu and Ogaki bears the marks of fearful convulsion. Many villages and small towns were absolutely wiped out, not a house being left standing. In places the soil sank several feet over considerable areas, sometimes carrying down with it houses and their inmates. Earth-fissures are seen everywhere, some of them as much as six feet wide and twenty or more feet deep. The effects produced on engineering structures are in many cases extraordinary. One brick railway-arch between Nagoya and Gifu collapsed



ON THE ROAD FROM NAGOYA TO GIFU.

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in consequence of its abutments, 14ft high and 5½ft. thick, having been thrown apart in opposite directions. The roadway beneath has a transverse crack four inches wide. Three great railway bridges within a radius of six miles from Gifu, crossing the rivers Kisogawa, Nagaragawa, and Ibigawa, have suffered badly, the massive piers of brickwork or iron having been broken across, though the iron girders, of English make, withstood their terrible treatment wonderfully. All of these bridges were thoroughly good, strong structures, and have been in use for five years without suffering in any degree from such potent destructive agencies as the fierce typhoons and river floods of Japan. The minor bridges throughout this district have also been wrecked in various ways and degrees. And generally, from its effect on engineering and other structures, the earth-movement on the 28th seems to have been at least as violent and extreme as that of any earthquake in the history of mankind.

If anything could aggravate the horrors of the great catastrophe thus described, it would be its wholly unexpected advent. Seismic convulsions are seldom, if ever, forecast, even in districts where more or less risk is always present. But in this case the circumstances were such as to place the anticipation of danger beyond the bounds of ordinary human foresight. The Nagoya plain lies in a region essentially non-volcanic, and for more than a thousand years that part of Japan has shown a marked falling off in seismic activity—so much so that it had come to be regarded in recent times as a practically safe area, free from liability to any but unimportant earthquake throes. Upon a population lulled into this belief the outburst on the terrible morning of the 28th—when Nature almost seemed





RUINS OF OGAKI.

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bent on the bold attempt to produce a volcano itself in that non-volcanic region—must have inflicted a shock of surprise proportioned to their previous feeling of security. And it found them, of course, even more utterly unprepared than they might have been if the locality had been more open to distrust. It is already recognized that, had such precautions as the building laws proper to earthquake areas been in force, much of the damage might have been averted—not in the central region of disturbance, where the destroying powers were so irresistible, but at least in the outer area where it is found that destruction has been practically limited to old, rickety, or rotten edifices. Generally, the effects of the earthquake confirm accepted theories in some respects, and in others teach new lessons. Taper mill-chimneys, for example, were broken across the middle—which was to be expected, their tops being free to sway—just as a carriage whip may be snapped in half by violent back and forth-jerking. Bridge-columns, on the other hand, being of uniform section and loaded, went, naturally, at the base. The fine old Castle of Nagoya is almost unharmed—a fact due, doubtless, to its shape, which is somewhat that of a pyramid in decreasing stages, as well as to the immense strength of its walls, and to the girdle of protection afforded by its deep, wide moat. Many of the more solidly-built temples also showed wonderful powers of resistance. Among the lessons taught by the earthquake is an important one bearing on seismometry. The experience on the occasion, Professor Milne tells me, confirms an idea he has long entertained—that whenever vertical movement takes place it means that ocean-like waves are passing beneath our feet, and that what have to be measured in order to determine this motion are the angular tips of the surface, for which a new class of instru-



RUINS AT BIWA-JIMA.

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ments must be devised. It would have been interesting if means had existed for ascertaining the times of propagation of the great shocks to distant points in the surrounding region. But, for the reason already given, no trustworthy time records at or near the origin were possible. A curious feature observed at Nagoya is the heaping of the tiles, on some roofs still erect, in waves with their crests lying approximately north and south—that is, in lines perpendicular to the direction of the earthquake-throes. The behaviour of buildings and of the fragments thrown from them also affords an interesting field of research, and gives evidence of extraordinary twisting and rotation. Gradually, full information on these and kindred matters, already being investigated by experts on the spot, will doubtless be given to the world. The opportunity of adding to our knowledge is a rare one, and it is to be hoped that engineers and architects at home will avail themselves of the valuable *data* that will soon be put before them. Not only are some of Great Britain's possessions liable to serious seismic agitation, but English professional aid and English capital are largely employed in engineering concerns in the earthquake-ridden territories of other nations.

It only remains to say that the relief of the distress and bodily suffering caused by this great national calamity is being actively and liberally carried out, in part by public funds held available for such purposes, and in part by a national subscription, to which will be added substantial contributions by the foreign residents. The Emperor and Empress generously gave \$20,000 for the same purpose as soon as the terrible scope of the disaster became known to them.

## LETTER XXV.

*THE FLOWER-ART OF THE JAPANESE.*

TOKYO, 3rd October.

A new and delightful page of the great book of Japanese art has lately been opened and interpreted to the Western world by a very competent hand. Of the national love for floral beauties, as manifested in the national customs and art, no one having any knowledge of this country can fail to be well aware. Rich from ancient times in a fine art instinct, the Japanese have always loved flowers, and spared no pains to cultivate them. With nearly every month and every great national festival are identified the chief flowers and flowering shrubs and trees of the season. Flower-viewing excursions to the displays of plum and cherry blossoms, wistaria, peony, lotus, chrysanthemum, and other floral delights, that are to be found in and about all of the principal cities, rank among the best-loved of Japanese holiday pastimes. Even in card-playing, the most fashionable game—*Hana-awasé*, or the "the pairing of flowers"—has its twelve suits named and decorated with the chief flowers that are associated, severally, with the twelve months of the year. And in the nation's art-products generally the favourite themes are the ordinary and familiar flowers endeared to the popular taste by long custom and

association. But, that the flower-charm which thus pervades the national life had found a deeper and more refined expression in the development—during the last four or five centuries especially—of a highly artistic cult of flower-arrangement, was a fact till lately unknown, or at least known only to residents in Japan and a few amateurs of her-art abroad. Even these, however, barely knew more than that such a science existed—that it was one of the polite accomplishments of the Japanese, that it was specially cultivated by priests, philosophers, and *dilettanti*, taught to the ladies, girls, and even boys, of the middle and upper classes, and governed by strict rules of ceremony and etiquette. By some of us the happy discovery had been made that there lived in every Japanese city flower-artists who, for a trifling payment, would attend at our houses regularly and arrange flowers for the rooms and table with a degree of grace and skill beside which everything of the kind in our previous experience seemed paltry and almost vulgar. But that was all. Though we could, and did, admire enthusiastically the matchless charm of the finished work, the details and principles of the art that produced it were a dark and seemingly hopeless mystery. At length Mr. Conder approached the problem, bringing to his task, besides the necessary qualification of a sound knowledge of Japanese, considerable artistic qualities on his own part. A paper on the Theory of Japanese Flower Arrangements, read before the Asiatic Society of Japan in October, 1889, was the first fruit of his researches, and that has now been elaborated into the very thorough and attractive quarto volume,\* rich with illustrations, to which I devote this

\* "The Flowers of Japan, and the Art of Floral Arrangement," by Josiah Conder, F.R.I.B.A., Architect to the Japanese Imperial Government. With illustrations by Japanese Artists. Yokohama, Kelly and Walsh, 1891. London Agents, Low and Sons.

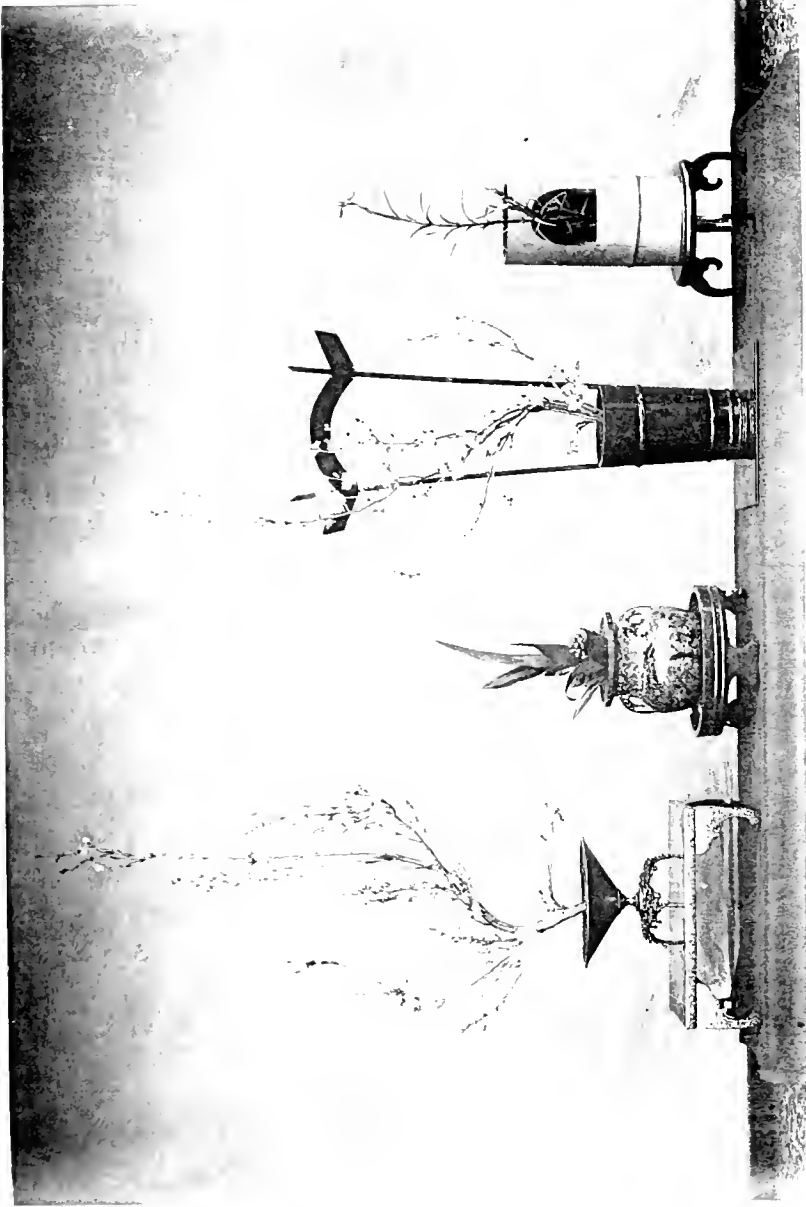
letter. Mr. Conder, it is to be observed, has made the subject of Japan's floral art peculiarly his own. He is its sole foreign apostle and expounder. Everything published about it since 1889 is simply Mr. Conder's original paper at second-hand.

Of the interesting book now before the public it is not too much to say that it is a revelation. In it every detail of the delicate and ancient craft of flower-arrangement in Japan is laid bare and explained. The origin of the cult is apparently religious, its first teachers in this country having been the priests who introduced Buddhism from China in the sixth century. Underlying it, moreover, is the Buddhist doctrine of the economy of life. By the Japanese, who are deeply imbued with that doctrine, flowers and plants, as living things, are held to deserve the treatment due to sentient objects. Growth and vitality must, therefore, be expressed in the floral adornments of interiors; and the surface of the water in which the flowers are set is conventionally regarded as the soil from which they spring. The main idea, in fact, is to achieve designs in which all the components shall seem to be really and healthily growing. It follows that at least as much attention must be given to the stems as to the foliage and blossoms. Life and vigour at the "up-spring" are *sine qua non* of all compositions. Further, in order to keep up the conception of growth, there must be no breach of the rules as to seasonableness. Things floral within the house must correspond with those that actually exist without. Only the plants proper to the time of year, as classified in authorised lists for each month, may be used for indoor floral displays. The number of species in those lists is about 240. But then, considering Japan's floral art, it is necessary to remember that the

Japanese word *Hana* has a wider meaning than its nearest English equivalent, "flower." It includes, for example, the pine, willow, and bamboo, freely used in floral decoration in this country, as well as other evergreens and flowerless shrubs. The maple also, when its leaves are reddened, is one of the chief "flowers" of autumn. Another characteristic of the floral kingdom is the abundance of blossoming trees and shrubs—such as the wild camellia, azalea, magnolia, plum, peach, and cherry—all of which figure largely in Japanese floral arrangements. With this abundance there co-exists an apparent paucity of the lesser flowers of the field, forest, and garden, so lavishly produced by the soils of many other countries.

It being the Japanese conception of flowers that they are to be regarded and treated as living things, not merely the blossoms but all the characteristics of the plant or tree producing them are lovingly studied by the flower-artist of Japan. For him, the Western nosegay, wreath, or garland, made of lovely buds and blossoms huddled together in a mass, with ferns or other greenery amongst them, has neither beauty nor artistic merit. In his eyes, indeed, such treatment almost savours of ruthless butchery. Taught in a far different school, he gives his attention alike to the lines of branch and stem, the forms and surfaces of leaves, and the distribution of buds and blossoms, and seeks to produce as faithfully as may be in his design the semblance of veritable growth. Hence, Japanese floral compositions have a more or less open, lineal character, in which the individual forms of stems, branches, leaves, and flowers are all clearly expressed. They are, in fact, "synthetic designs in line," as Mr. Conder puts it; and the choice of directions for the different stems and branches is the





SPECIMEN OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT.

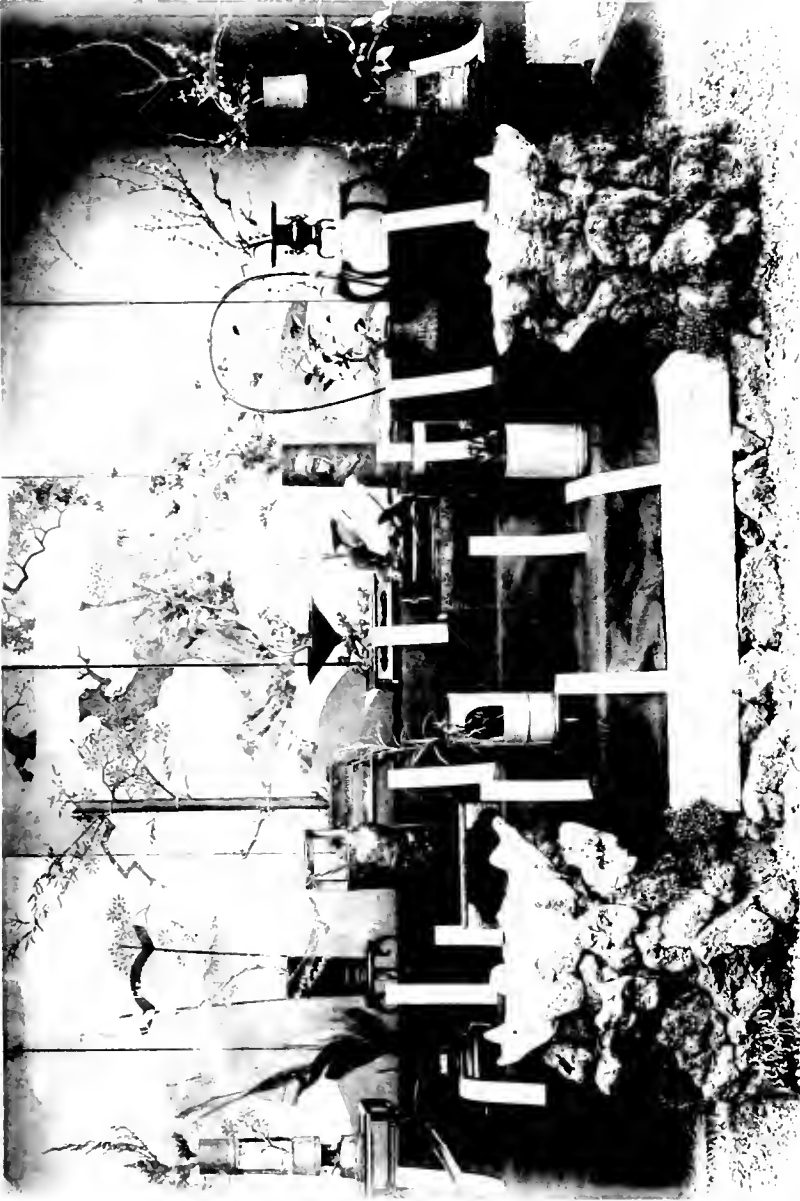
fundamental part of every arrangement. Two points may be noted here. First, that the character of many of the Japanese "flowers" is admirably suited to this system of lineal composition, in which form is at least as important as colour. Secondly, that the special art-genius of the people—to wit, their signal faculty for appreciating lineal beauty—tended in the same direction, and found within the limits of the precepts laid down by the early masters a splendid scope for the play of artistic fancy. No one can examine the plates that illustrate Mr. Conder's chapter on Lineal Distribution without admiring the masterly strength and grace of the lines that forms the basis of the recognised style of flower-arrangement. Nor, without seeing the book or actual specimens from life, is it possible to appreciate worthily either the extent to which the Japanese have elaborated their unique and exquisite art, or the value of the lessons therein that we are now at liberty to learn. Balance and harmony without repetition, and a studious avoidance of symmetry, are the guiding rules in these compositions—rules, it will be seen, which, while conforming to Nature its self, afford scope for endless variety of design. A trilineal arrangement, consisting of three stems of different lengths disposed in bold curves, is the simplest and most rudimentary form. An appearance of strength at the up-springing is obtained by adherence to established canons, and the idea of vertical growth is commonly subserved by giving to the main or central line a double curve, somewhat in the shape of a bent bow, having its extremities in or near the same vertical. The secondary and shorter curve is made to branch from the convex side of the bow, low down; and the tertiary, or shortest, from a yet lower point on the concave side. By changing the directions and shapes of these curves, while at the same time sticking to broad principles

the artist can evidently command a wide range of designs of this class. When it is sought to suggest floral growths leaning laterally from the edges of cliffs or banks, the whole design is so disposed that the string of the imaginary bow becomes horizontal instead of vertical. In rare cases a single-line composition is used. More rarely a bilineal device, when the arrangement is to consist only of a single flower and a single leaf. There are, again, five-line and seven-line compositions, all governed by precepts aimed at preserving artistic balance and harmony, and capable, of course, of almost infinite variation, considerable latitude of azimuthal deviation of the members being permitted, in addition to changes of position, form, and length.

Turning, next, to the selection and grouping of materials, we find in the Japanese system a code of precepts framed for the most part in the purest art-spirit, though some of them are more or less conventional. Sometimes the composition is made with a single species, sometimes with two or three. In every case appropriateness and, as already said, seasonableness are rigidly observed, as well as certain distinctions between trees and plants, between land and water plants, and between the products of mountain, moor, and valley. When more than one species is used, variety is sought by combining trees and plants—always, however, with due regard to fixed æsthetic principles. Thus, in a trilineal composition, there must be no sandwiching of a tree between two plants, or *vice versa*, lest weakness and insipidity should be the result. Colour-sandwiching, it may be added, is also forbidden—as, for example, the placing of a white blossom between two red blossoms. Spring compositions must be powerful in line, to suggest the vigorous growth of that season. Those of summer

should be full and spreading; those of autumn spare and lean; those of winter withered and dreary. With certain rare exceptions, no flower-bearing plant may be used when it shows leaves only, nor may plants or trees that bear leaves at blossom time be used with their flowers alone. Among other prohibitions are the arrangement of large blossoms in regular steps or rows, the use of feebly drooping leaves, and the placing of any flower that has leaves on either side of it so as to directly face the spectator. When the composition has but one kind of flower, the full blossoms are generally used for the principal stem, half-open flowers for the secondary, and buds for the tertiary. Leaves are classified as the young, the full, and the reddening or falling—each having its proper sphere to fill. Straight leaves are accounted strong, and curled or bent leaves weak; and, in thinning out a composition, at least two strong leaves must be left for every weak one. In the above and a host of other details, harmony and fidelity to nature must be always observed. No one, in fact, can properly cultivate the floral art of this country without acquiring an intimate knowledge of the nature and growth of the whole array of trees and plants that may come under his hands, and even of the varying characteristics of such of them as are allowed to be used in more than one month of the year.

As for the flower-vessels of the Japanese, they are remarkable alike for variety and beauty. Each is a work of art, capable of distinct artistic expression. The same is true of the flower-arrangements. Hence, in choosing the vessel for his composition, or *vice versa*, the artist seeks appropriateness and aesthetic harmony of the two—not in proportion alone, but also in the spirit which they breathe.



SPECIMEN OF FLOWER ARRANGEMENT.

In the latter respect, however, this accord need not be complete; it is even produced sometimes by a well-judged contrast. For the materials of the flower-receptacles, wood, porcelain, pottery, bronze, brass, iron, and basket-work are used, and wrought into multitudinous forms of vases, bowls, tubs, boxes, dishes, baskets, boats, cylinders, and other objects. Vessels for standing, for hooking, and for hanging form the three great classes. One of Mr. Conder's most attractive chapters is that in which he has described and bountifully illustrated this part of the subject, as well as the fantastic varieties of flower-chariots, flower-fasteners, trays and stands, the rules as to the use of water, and the employment of stones and rocks as accessories in certain compositions. An important detail which the flower-artist of Japan needs to master is the position in the room that properly belongs to each class of his handiwork, under such and such circumstances. Except however, as a mark of the refined consideration which has been extended to every branch of this chaste and gentle cult, that part of the subject has little direct interest for Western readers. Nearly the same may be said of the subtle code that sets forth the recognised affinities between floral arrangements and etiquette, depending largely as this does on the flower-symbolism peculiar to the country, which is begotten of tradition, superstition, Chinese philosophy, fancy, and other elements. Under that symbolism 24 of the whole series of 240 permissible flowers are deemed suitable to felicitous occasions, and of these there are seven which enjoy specially high rank. On the other hand, some 50 species may not be used at times of ceremony and congratulation, and for various reasons are not used at any time if other flowers are to be had. "Ominous" flowers—those, namely, that are believed to have poisonous pro-

perties—are wholly forbidden. Some flowers and compositions are held to signify good luck; others evil; others sundry ideas, sentiments, and virtues. In these expressions, the flower-vessel is often an important factor. And, inasmuch as the chief object of domestic floral displays is to give pleasure or pay compliment to visitors or guests, the possibilities of this charming art in adroit and gracious hands will be readily understood. For all of the great national festivals and pastimes, as well as for betrothals, weddings, comings of age, promotions, farewells, times of sickness, anniversaries of death, house-warmings, tea ceremonials, and other occasions, there are clear precepts governing the arrangement of flowers. As an example of the appositeness and grace of sentiment embodied in some of these, I cannot refrain from quoting the brief injunctions as to Flowers for Old Age celebrations:—“Old moss-clad branches, flowers late in season, and second flowerings, are suited to such occasions. Withered branches, and flowers which are faded or failing, must on no account be used.”

But—not to dwell longer on these aspects of the art, which in the main have a more or less exclusively local colouring—the broad and inevitable conclusion from Mr. Conder's revelations which most directly concerns the people of the Occident is that in the whole cult and poetry of domestic floral arrangement Japan is a head and shoulders above the rest of the world. A Japanese critic has well said of Mr. Conder's book, that in treating an art subject its author has himself given us a work of art. To this it may be added that he has opened up a realm the very existence of which was well-nigh unknown, and has expounded one of the most remarkable accomplishments that the whole East

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has to offer. Founded as it is on the principle of fidelity to Nature, the flower art of the Japanese can never die, but, rather, is assuredly destined to serve as a model for other countries. From Mr. Conder's exhaustive work alone great practical lessons may be learned; and the introduction of the system which it teaches into, for example, some of the chief art-schools of Great Britain—especially if supplemented, as it might very well be, by the services of a small corps of Japanese flower-artists themselves, provided with all the appurtenances of their craft—would soon serve to sap the crudities of our present methods, and to replace them gradually by all that is pure and beautiful in one of the most potent and refining factors of domestic life. It would also inculcate the close study of flowers and their ways, the love of Nature and art, and perhaps even some of the higher attributes that are claimed for devotees of the floral cult in Japan. "A religious spirit," Mr. Conder tells us, "self-denial, gentleness, and forgetfulness of cares, are among the virtues said to follow from the habitual practice of the art of arranging flowers."



## LETTER XXVI.

*THE GREAT JAPAN EARTHQUAKE.*

TOKYO, 2nd February.

Bit by bit during the last three months there have come to light some more exact particulars of the great earthquake of the 28th of October than could be given when I wrote to you directly after its occurrence. These show, among other things, that the magnitude of the catastrophe was at first a good deal underestimated, in nearly every respect. The number of people killed and burned to death, for instance, is now found to have been about 10,000 instead of 8,000, and the number of the injured to have been 15,000 instead of 10,000. The area of the severely shaken district—taking as its measure that in which brick buildings suffered—is estimated by Professor Milne, in a recent monograph on the subject, at 4,400 square miles. The same authority adds that the disturbance distinctly shook about 92,000 square miles of Japan's territory; that tremors were noticed at Shanghai; that delicate instruments may possibly have been affected even at our antipodes; and that, if Japan had been surrounded by terra firma instead of water, the land-area directly agitated would have been as many as 400,000 square miles. It is now certain that the focus of most potent energy was in the

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Mino mountains, to the north of Gifu, as suggested in my former letter. The Néo Valley in that region, happily containing but few inhabitants, presented to the bewildered gaze of the half-dozen adventurous spirits who hurriedly visited it soon after the disaster a scene of past havoc so tremendous and terrible as to have changed almost the whole face of nature. Unfortunately, the circumstances of the time and the difficulty and danger of travel forbade any thorough examination of the valley and its environs. Explorers, however bold and ardent, could hardly be expected to stay long enough for that purpose in a region where the still palsied earth kept groaning and quaking under their feet, and where the shattered hill-sides over which they had to scramble were from time to time breaking away, with a deafening roar, in stupendous landslips, themselves great enough to produce local earthquakes on a small scale. A little later the first snow of winter fell, and blocked the upland glens. Deliberate research was thus prevented, and cannot be undertaken before the coming spring. Enough, however, was observed by the early explorers to establish that the chief lines of destructive agency converged towards some quarter of the hill-region in or near this Néo Valley, and that the surface convulsions thereabouts must have been of almost inconceivable violence. At some points, indeed, upheaval and depression had wrought abrupt changes of the ground-level amounting to as many as 50 feet. By the peasantry it was even said that the neighbouring mountains had here and there subsided bodily, thereby opening-up to view from certain points remoter peaks that had been before invisible. Without doubt, then, this whole district will well repay further investigation, as that in which they earthquake forces exerted their greatest energy. Meantime, it is hardly to be supposed that efforts so gigantic



RUINS IN NEO VALLEY.

as to have set the earth's crust in motion over a region greater than the Empire of Japan can have resulted from an underground explosion at any small volcanic centrum. We must rather believe, as Mr. Milne suggests, that they proceeded from some very powerful cause operating over a large subterranean area. Among the causes, apart from volcanic efforts, that may be regarded as instrumental in producing seismic disturbances, interruptions of the general process of secular elevation or subsidence of the land or the ocean floor are mentioned by Mr. Milne. Just as conditions of delicate equilibrium may be brought about by a balance of subterranean steam pressure and rock resistance, so may they be brought about by a balance between the elasticity of rock masses and forces opposed thereto. Any cause that serves to destroy this delicate balance—as, for example, such comparatively slight agencies as periodical barometric fluctuations, the influence of the moon when in perigee, and possibly even some special meteorological conditions, or states of atmospheric electricity—may result in a sudden yielding of extensive rocky masses, the jar thereof creating primary earthquake shocks, while the after-shocks result from the gradual settlement of disjointed strata. Plainly, if this be true, systematic observations directed at determining slow changes in the level of the land might be of service towards the solution, in part, of the problem of forecasting earthquake disturbances. They might also, Mr. Milne points out, throw light upon the mysterious movements that are found to affect the piers of astronomical instruments, as well as on the perplexing results sometimes encountered in geodesic operations.

As to the exact nature of the cause of the great earth-



RUINED BRIDGE IN THE NÉO VALLEY.

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quake under discussion, expert opinion has not yet been clearly declared. Geologically, the beautiful and garden-like Nagoya plain—supporting a population of, perhaps, 800 to the square mile—that was so terribly devastated three months ago is, according to Professor Milne, a bed of alluvium lying in a basin of Palæozoic hills; and it is in the northern quarter of those hills that the disturbance had its origin, there generating and sending forth the wave-like movements of the ground which disported themselves so freely in the soft alluvium of the adjacent plain as to wreck towns and villages, bring death or injury to 25,000 people, streak the face of the land with fissures, and shatter the strongest engineering structures. There are, however, neither volcanoes nor volcanic rocks in that section of the country, nor is the district at all near to any of the three great lines of volcanic weakness which traverse other parts of the empire. Earthquakes, on the other hand, are tolerably frequent. There has been on the whole, as I said in my first letter on this subject, a marked falling-off of seismic activity in the Mino-Owari region generally during the last 1,000 years. Not, however, without interruptions at long intervals. In 1826, 1827, and again in 1859, for example, severe disturbances were experienced in the Gifu district. It has been found, also, from modern records at earthquake-observing stations in the plain, that the number of shocks there per annum, which was only four in 1886, jumped from 15 in 1889 to 36 in 1890. In one locality, Mr. Milne adds, near to the centre of the late disturbance, 19 shocks were observed in 1888, and a point of weakness was indicated. The above degrees and variations of frequency were, nevertheless, small in comparison with the constantly observed phenomena at other places in Japan. In this capital, for instance, we had 51 shocks in 1885, 115 in 1889, and 93 in

1890. Changes of activity, in fact, and points of seismic weakness, declare themselves so often in this very unstable domain of the earth's crust that, as far as previous experience went, the numerical increase of slight earthquakes in the Nagoya-Gifu district between 1885 and 1890 could hardly be said to afford grounds for special apprehension. But the importance of regarding carefully all such indications has now been established by the terrible lesson of last October; and Japan, with her 700 earthquake-observing stations scattered over the empire, is well equipped for profiting by that lesson. That she sorely needs to pay close heed to all that observation and research can teach her is established by ages of bitter experience. Not only are her people shaken up by fully 500 earthquakes every year—some of them more or less destructive—but at intervals there comes a great disaster, amounting, as in the present case, to a national calamity. No fewer than 29 of such disasters have been recorded in Japanese annals during the last 1,200 years.

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