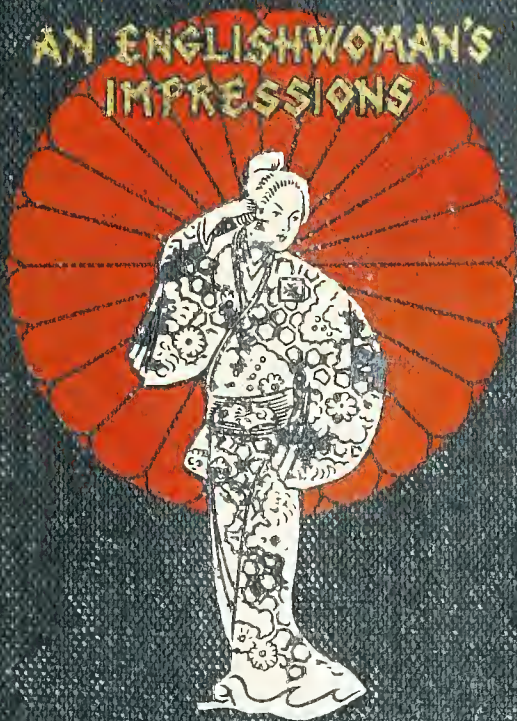


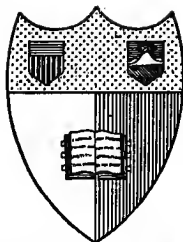
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BEHIND THE SCREENS IN JAPAN

AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S
IMPRESSIONS



EVELYN ADAM



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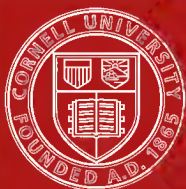
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BEHIND THE SCREENS

AN ENGLISH WOMAN'S IMPRESSIONS
OF JAPAN

BY

EVELYN ADAM
=

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1910

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BY

EVELYN ADAM

(Entered for *ad interim* copyright, under the title of "Behind the Shoji,"
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NOTE

A FEW years ago young Miss Japan, after a brilliant *début*, with her dance card full of conquests, announced her engagement to Mr. John Bull. She now belongs to our family circle, therefore, and it is only natural that we should take an interest in her personal character. We want to know, not so much if her smile is attractive, as if her temper is good. Her taste in dress may be very important, but the mood in which she comes to breakfast is still more so.

Of course she is not likely to tell us herself if she feels irritable in the morning. What she will dwell on are her social graces and her company manners. Her other qualities, not quite so decorative, we will have to find out for ourselves.

One way is to read what travellers have to say about her. But unfortunately, as a general rule, the travellers bring back two kinds of impressions—both very extreme. There are the wild-eyed enthusiasts of the beaten track, poets

and artists, who cannot see anything about her that is not beautiful and picturesque and charming because they only stay long enough to see the stylish and dainty outside; and there are the incurable pessimists who stay too long and end by seeing nothing but the curl papers.

As far as I know, the only satisfactory way to form any real impression, not only of the young lady herself but of her relations of the older generation, is to avoid looking at the obvious things but to look behind the *Shoji* instead. It is inside the house, not outside in the street, that people are most natural.

The following papers are simply the record of the observations of six years. They do not pretend to add anything to the store of knowledge on Things Japanese, or to explain any obscure customs, or to decide any ethical questions; they are written with no ulterior motive—neither to help float a loan nor to help destroy an illusion. All that is claimed for them is a novel view-point since it has been the general habit to observe young Miss Japan from the outside inwards instead of from the inside outwards, and if a good many preconceived theories are shattered by their

statements, it is no more fair to blame the author for them than it is fair to blame the chemist for recording the results of what he sees taking place in his test tubes and crucibles.

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Behind the Screens

CHAPTER I

A BELOVED CAPITAL: ITS INHABITANTS AND ITS VISITORS

FIRST impressions of Japan are always pleasing. A newcomer either steps ashore at Nagasaki, where he is at once charmed by a delicious combination of blue sea, green hills, and quaint grey temples standing between, or else he lands at Yokohama and immediately finds himself surprised and delighted by a fantastic, busy maze of queer, small streets, full of queer, small people dressed in graceful robes of unfamiliar shape. But before he has had time to improve his acquaintance with this dainty world *en miniature*, the guide-book, with an insistence and partiality unusual to it, urges him to visit Tokio. He goes obediently—and receives a first shock of disappointment.

The beloved capital indeed differs greatly from the other cities of Japan. It is like—really, I can think of nothing it *is* like except one of those well-bred Englishmen, who are so stiff when met casually, so forbidding in public places, and who only become interesting after they have been properly introduced. The prevailing impression is one of largeness, of a certain stand-offish dignity, and above all of a curious incongruity. Proportions never seem to match. The streets, which are very wide, look wider still because they are bordered by one-storied houses; the haughty public buildings standing beside low shanties make one think of kid gloves and carpet slippers, or a duet for clarinet and double bassoon, while the grotesque chrys-elephantine figures that advertise somebody's pills or tonic contrast oddly with the real little people who walk past them.

Contrasts, in fact, are the chief characteristic of Tokio. Short streets have long names; toy conveyances move across sweeping open spaces many sizes too big for them. The immense parks in which the nobility and gentry drive in fine carriages with fifteen-hand horses and five-foot grooms are dotted over with tiny dolls' houses in

which the *bourgeoisie* sit on their heels and sip tea. Mediæval moats enclosing the palace are bordered with telegraph poles and tram lines, and fashionable bicyclists ride in bowler hats and bathing drawers.

Moreover, the jarring modern note has an unpleasant habit of intruding at just the wrong places. An ugly chimney of some furniture manufactory will belch smoke across an iris garden, for instance, or a typewriter stand beside a pretty lacquer table in a shop window. Personally, I have never felt safe from sewing-machines and shattered illusions in Tokio, except in the one little oasis of Asakasa. This is the playground of the poor, a dingy old pleasure temple where the common people amuse themselves, without a thought of their company manners, in the cosy intimacy of narrow streets and crowded courts. Toy-sellers set up their rainbow stalls there; shaven-headed priests sell charms and rosaries on the temple steps, and pigeons and babies gather near the cake-man on the chance of being fed. Except, perhaps, at some French country *fête* it would hardly be possible to find so many smiling faces radiant with the exciting business of simple

pleasure. They have thrown aside, these people, any strivings or ambitions which might interfere with their amusement. They have purposely forgotten for the moment that Japan has an international position to attain and that they must help to attain it by wearing uncomfortable things like frock coats, and the bifurcated lower garments, so hateful when compared with the comfortable *kimonos*, and yet so unaccountably popular in the West. Just for the day it amuses them to pretend that life is small and dainty as it used to be long ago before there were big, solemn, ugly aims to think of. But they only pretend, of course—as children do for the sake of a game. Nobody would dream of seriously criticising a change, however unpleasant, which a wise and maternal Government suggests. There are no chronic “grumble-tonians” in Japan. The Government, all agree, must know best.

Having found by experience that the policy of fifty years ago is out of date, that nothing can now be gained by isolation or obstinacy, this Government says to the people, “We are determined to make our country—our sacred Japan—a first-class power. What that is you cannot understand

—yet. You are too ignorant—therefore you must not even ask. You must simply leave everything to us and do exactly as we tell you. And first of all you must try and become like the white nations as quickly as ever you can; learn to eat what they eat, and wear what they wear, and manufacture what they manufacture—only manufacture it more cheaply.”

Everybody proceeds to obey at once. In any other country the very fact of being told to do a thing would probably make half the inhabitants protest against doing it. Not so the Japanese. They like to obey, in fact they clamour to obey. Any one who has time and opportunities can look behind the *shoji* and watch them doing so—and laugh a little sometimes at the comical struggles after new, half-understood ideas, or feel sorry now and then at the pathetic haste with which the simpler souls are rushing after a new civilisation that will only make them unhappy when they overtake it.

“Clear vision” in this case does not “go with a quick foot,” in spite of what Stevenson says, and only after some weeks, or even months, spent in Tokio does the traveller realise that the guide-

book was right after all; that nobody should miss seeing the biggest experimental station in the land where the latest innovations are being put into practice—nobody, that is, except poets searching for the picturesque. The beloved capital is absolutely useless for poets. Lafcadio Hearn, who knew every corner, said so long ago. “A hopeless blot of ugliness on the land,” he called it. This was a bold statement—too bold—and revenge came quick and sure. Less than a year later the Japanese Government reduced his salary, giving as their reason for so doing that, since he had become a Japanese subject, he must earn wages on a Japanese scale. I gravely doubt whether the excuse was genuine. It sounds beautifully convincing, but the Japanese always have two reasons for their official actions. One they display in the shop window for passers-by to admire, and the other they drop down the well, where Truth lives. In Lafcadio Hearn’s case the real reason for the persecution was certainly his dig at the beloved capital, for the Japanese are not a people who forgive easily, and he pricked them on a very sensitive spot, almost the most sensitive they have, except perhaps the Imperial

Family. He tried to shake their pleasant feeling of contentment about their beloved capital—in the days before it had grown so strong that shaking could not affect it. He deliberately held the best thing they had up to ridicule. He even attempted to dim the pride and pleasure with which so many of the population would answer, when asked whence they came, "From Tokio." But it is comforting to know that his wicked purpose was confounded, his subtle cruelty without effect. Our Little Brown Allies enjoy the question still and take it as a sign of polite interest rather than impertinent curiosity, from the most casual acquaintance. I always make a point of putting it within the first five minutes of a conversation, and always my reward is immediate. First, he who is questioned smiles a pleasant smile, then bows a deferential bow, and finally answers, with a proud aftersmack of the lips, "I come from Tokio."

Once I used to take the answer literally—and wonder if there was any population left for the other cities of Japan. But now I know better. "From Tokio" may mean "living in Tokio,"—the proudest boast of all—"born in Tokio," "schooled in Tokio," "temporarily employed in

Tokio," or, in its most literal sense, "just returned from a business or pleasure trip to the beloved capital." Those who do not succeed in getting themselves born or employed there console themselves by yearly visits. Even if the journey from their own native town is long, they do not consider it a hardship. On the contrary, the end alone justifies the miles, and besides, the Japanese are inveterate travellers. Their trains, which crawl from one end of the country to the other like little brown caterpillars, are always full of passengers; their villages, no matter how lacking in other essential things, always boast a railway station where every train on the line stops to pick up a few peasants.

At least, to be strictly accurate, I should say every train except one. The overland express connecting Kobe with Tokio disdainfully races past all unimportant townlets at the fearsome rate of twenty miles an hour, and, as it whizzes by, wayside station-masters come out on their platforms and bow deferentially, much impressed by its speed and its ultimate destination.

Physically, however, this Japanese equivalent of our "Flying Scotchman" is very disappointing.

An ordinary little engine and some very ordinary little cars bump along over tracks too narrow for comfort. Outside they look cramped, inside they feel cramped. Corridors seem built for thin trippers only; seats are the width of a pew in Barrie's "Auld Licht Kirke"; sleeping compartments are little pens the size of packing cases—in which an inhuman guard packs four "separate and divided entities," without regard to age, sex, or social position. Futhermore, all the small luxuries which our travellers look upon as necessities are conspicuous by their absence. There are no lamps for reading, no facilities for writing, no tables for card-playing, no furniture or conveniences of any kind except rows of aluminium spittoons—and yet this express corresponds to what in any other country would be the *train de luxe*.

One consolation is that Japanese travellers pay very little for the bad accommodation. Railway fares all over the country are absurdly cheap. A first-class express ticket for a journey of 250 miles costs about £1; a second-class ticket about half that sum; a third-class ticket considerably less—even with the new war tax added. Regulations

and notices, which the Japanese like as much as the Germans do, are included free of charge.

It is amusing to see how thoroughly this harmless national foible has been humoured in the stations, for instance. Everything in sight is labelled—even the most obvious things—the station itself first of all, the station-master, the pump, the way out, the way in, the next stopping-place, the drinking-fountain, and the nearest bench. Then, lest some point still remain hazy, the station-master combines a Question Bureau with his other functions. He even has—at least a sign says he has—some English at his command for the benefit of European globe-trotters. But in reality his English commands him and he is the servant of a few phrases which sometimes play him impish tricks. Suppose I ask him if the next train is due at five o'clock, he invariably answers, "Yes, in five minutes," no matter at what time I put my question. The little man's word combinations I find appear and reappear not as the natural result of questions at all, but in prescribed order, like the figures in a kaleidoscope.

He spends his spare moments between trains

laboriously adding to his knowledge, and during these seasons of concentration there is but one way to draw him from his pigeon-hole and his dictionary. That is to try and cross to the opposite platform by the simple method of running over the tracks instead of the complicated one of going round by the overhead bridge provided for the purpose. With no train in sight I always feel an irresistible temptation towards the short cut. The long climb up and down two tiresome flights of steps is thereby avoided, and surely nothing can be simpler than to outwit the absorbed scholar. But I find myself mistaken. The Eye of the Law is evidently constructed on the principle of the Brazilian beetle's. It has several facets, only a few of which are employed on the dictionary. One immediately detects my first step in the wrong direction. The Voice of the Law is raised immediately in wrath and hisses "No, no, no, no, *no*," in my ear. A minute more and the Arm of the Law is on mine, gently restraining. Quite a little crowd of "Red Caps" (porters) collects, and, frantic with excitement, they all talk at once, till by sheer weight of words I am overcome and abandon my evil purpose. The climb cannot be

more fatiguing than the discussion, so I quietly turn back and go over the bridge, leaving the little station-master to resume his studies in peace.

In the trains themselves there are just as many directions as in the stations. A list of Regulations even lurks behind the seat, waiting for the auspicious moment when that seat, with a volcanic upheaval, becomes the roof of a berth, and the occupant, as he lies helpless and horizontal, reads:

“Passengers by their behaviours will not be annoying other passengers.”

“Passengers will not be throwing food or other solid articles from the windows as they be injuring passers-by.”

“Those who have the intention” (this phrase, like the ever-recurring present participle, is a dear divinity) “to alight will do so when the train is not in motion.”

Further detailed directions concern the disposal of arms and legs. The first must not go out of the window; the second must not go on the seats. Last of all a sentence in italics emphatically states that *geta* must be brought into the carriages. Now

strangers to Japan might think this a superfluous direction—might imagine that surely people could be trusted to bring their shoes wherever they themselves went without having to be reminded. But, as a matter of fact, a Japanese and his shoes are soon and often parted. Whenever he enters anything—or is it anywhere?—that has a roof, walls, and, presumably, a floor of spotless mats, etiquette says to him, “Shoes off”—which is the reason why in front of every temple, theatre, and private dwelling one sees empty *geta* standing beside empty elastic-sided boots. Travellers in the early days, when railways were still new toys, thought the same rule applied to trains, and consequently left their clogs in neat rows on the platform whence they departed, and then felt mightily aggrieved not to find them on arriving at their destination. Hence the notice—in case they should forget again.

The Japanese, like every people accustomed to a rigid etiquette which tells them what to do and how to do it under nearly every set of circumstances, degenerate into rudeness as soon as an unprovided-for combination arises. This, I think, accounts for their discourteous behaviour when

they travel in conveyances introduced so long after their code of manners was framed. The whistle of a locomotive seems to release them from all obligations, and the veriest stickler for politeness at other times may suddenly turn squatter in a train, acknowledging no law but "every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." He may elbow others away from the ticket-office window; he may push into a car and spread his rug over as much of the seat as it will cover, arrange bags, boxes, and baskets in a barricade at both ends, remove his boots, blow up his air cushion, and stretch himself out at full length. What if more passengers enter at way-stations? That is no business of his. If they are foolish enough to board a train at the place where they happen to be instead of the place where it starts can they expect him to move either himself or his bags? The proposition is too absurd to consider; he considers his newspaper or his novel instead.

I remember once seeing a woman enter a first-class car at some country town. She was evidently weary. The car was full—that is, half the seats were occupied by passengers and the other half by their portmanteaux. Several men looked

up at the intruder when she came in but none attempted to make place for her, and she stood meekly in a corner trying to balance herself against the jolting, till presently, with the superior manner of a person who goes out of his way to do a kindness even at some personal sacrifice, one gentleman spread a sheet of his newspaper on the floor and motioned her to sit on it—which she did gratefully.

Another time I saw a still more audacious piece of selfishness in a railway carriage. It was the depth of winter, bitter weather, and our train, though doing an all-night journey, was not provided with sleeping-cars. The travellers had therefore curled themselves up as best they could on the seats—all but one man, who seemed wakeful and uneasy. The atmosphere was becoming too warm for his taste, still he had no wish to lower his window and have the freezing outer air blow directly in upon him. What did he do? Simply waited until his neighbour on the opposite side of the car was fast asleep and snoring, then quietly leaned across his sleeping *vis-à-vis* and opened *his* window. Next morning one traveller woke refreshed, the other found himself half buried under a light snowdrift.

The frozen one seemed to accept his pneumonia cheerfully. He had, in any case, no redress, since there is no law, and never can be one, obliging a person to do unto others as he would be done by. Equally there is no law enforcing consideration for other people's feelings in those cases where the offender lacks similar feelings himself. If there were, Japanese travellers would not throw their apple parings and peach remains in the passage-way lest they arouse the violent wrath, instead of the silent disgust, of European fellow-passengers. They would not overturn tea-cups or beer bottles in the same place for the same reason. They would refrain from diving their knives first into the common butter-dish and afterwards into the common mustard-pot, would treat table-cloths destined to serve several relays of diners with a proper respect, and avoid too-audible excursions with their toothpicks. Last, and most important of all, they would learn that thoughtful people in those countries which they try to imitate never dress or undress in public conveyances.

A Japanese thinks nothing of removing his garment whenever he feels so inclined—at any time and in any company—for he seems to have

no instinct which would incline him to suppress his personal affairs in the presence of others. To quote a case in point. I remember seeing a train waiting in the bustling station of Yokohama for its engine. Passengers were already stepping on board, and amongst the rest a native gentleman of portly and prosperous appearance, who entered a first-class carriage where several foreign ladies were already seated. As soon as he had settled his belongings he began disrobing. Socks, shoes, coat, shirt, and finally even those garments which we consider indispensable to a public appearance, were removed and gingerly shaken out of the window. Their owner, meanwhile, in a state of complete nudity, stalked a flea which had been annoying him.

Does not this little episode go to prove that the malady of Orientalism is deeply rooted in the heart of Japan, far more deeply than she will allow, or than the world imagines?

CHAPTER II

IN PURSUIT OF PLEASURE

THERE are a few things in Japan so well worth seeing that most people cheerfully overlook the discomforts of getting to them. Personally, I am willing—and anybody desirous or capable of being thrilled would be willing—to suffer many cramped hours in company with broken eggshells and overturned beer bottles for the sake of the Nikko temples, sacred Miyajima, the ghostly feudal castle of Nagoya, Fujiyama burning like a cone of Moxa in the sunset, or the grey Kamakura Daibutsu smiling inscrutably under a full moon.

But the other “sights” of the country I think the great majority of travellers would prefer brought to them on a tray or a tea-cup—except, of course, the Japanese themselves, with their talent for spreading attention and interest out thin over wide and trivial areas. They will patiently

visit all the insignificant temples, all the prosaic relic collections,—whose only concession to variety is a helmet the more or a sword the less,—all the unoriginal tombs. Or give them a shrine with a nice steep ascent chosen without the least reference to the legs and lungs of tourists, and they will flock to it. If attached to that shrine there is an elderly official with a talent for making them feel utterly subservient, and a sing-song voice in which to chant, with the indifference of habit, many uninteresting details, so much the better. The price of the large wooden ticket of admission should not be more than two sen—about a penny—as Our Little Brown Allies take their pleasures cheaply, both from necessity and preference. Even Japanese millionaires seldom own motor cars! They would rather sit all day in one spot watching a trickling waterfall in a picturesque valley than be rushed past a dozen waterfalls. They prefer a garden of flowering plum trees to a yacht, or a prancing thoroughbred made of chrysanthemums to one made of flesh and blood—and perhaps something might be said for their less exacting point of view. It is not only free from extravagant expenditure but also compara-

tively free from worries. Not altogether, however. When spring comes the Japanese nation is filled with anxiety—and the newspapers are filled with bulletins—concerning the state of the about-to-be-flowering cherry trees. A storm at which a yachtsman could afford to laugh would kill the buds. A week of cold rain or wind and the worst might happen—the pleasure of a people be damped at one blow. But usually, to tell the truth, all goes well; the sun knows his duty and does it. One especially golden morning all the trees burst into blossom as if at some mysterious word of command—and in the *Court News* a paragraph states that the Prime Minister has left for Kioto in order to compose a sonnet and hang it on a certain famous weeping cherry tree in Maruyama Park. Imagine Asquith journeying twenty-four hours to tie an epic to a thistle, or Lloyd George seeking out a particular rose-bush and pinning an ode to one of its blossoms. The very suggestion is ludicrous! The street arabs would laugh.

And yet, in Japan, when the Financial Adviser sips tea under the famous Wisteria Trellis at Kameido and hangs his little couplet on to the longest purple tassel, nobody laughs. Somehow

it is not half so funny as it ought to be anyway. Neither are the breakfast parties given at day-break by respectable fathers of families to watch the lotuses unfold as ridiculous as they sound. I wonder why? Perhaps because the simplicity and seriousness with which grown men enjoy these childish things saves them from absurdity. Persons who have earnestly cultivated their imaginations until everything in Nature holds for them a world of symbol and suggestion, and moats afloat with lotus buds suggest the Infinite Mysteries of the soul at 5 A.M., cannot lightly be accused of affectation or foppery.

It seems strange that among a nation of nature-lovers like the Japanese outdoor games have found so little favour. True, cricket and football have been transplanted, but they have taken no very deep root. Tennis is only played by school-boys—and villainously. Polo, the sport of kings, is entirely out of fashion. A popular amusement of feudal times, it disappeared with the bamboo armour and embroidered war coats.

The old indoor amusements have stuck better, passing from generation to generation practically unchanged. Take the geisha dances for example.

The costumes are as they were in the beginning, so is the music, and so are the gestures; the whole performance, in fact, is air-tight against innovations. Only the dancers themselves are young—so absurdly young that one feels they should still be going to kindergartens instead of amusing guests at banquets. They are also quaint with the quaintness of marionettes or coloured ivory carvings, and their distorted posturings are curious, even interesting, at first. But, after a little while, they pall, like the temples and the tombs, for want of variety. Three geishas dancing three dances will bore the average European in three quarters of an hour, and thirty-three will bore a Royal Personage—who is proof against any ordinary boredom—in three hours. I can vouch for the correctness of the arithmetical progression because it was lately proved in Tokio by a visiting prince who left a grand Cherry Dance after the third hour, much to the grief and consternation of his hosts. One anxiously asked another whether it was the combination of lobster and melons at the dinner, or whether His Highness's Government meant to convey a change of policy towards Japan. The idea that their guest might have

been bored in such a short time never entered the heads of these little gentlemen, who habitually sit at the play from noon until midnight.

It is only fair to add that the real Japanese theatre is most interesting. I have seen comedies written in dialects of which I could not understand a word, and yet laughed heartily at the lively gestures and the wonderful skill with which an actor contracted or expanded his face to suit the character he happened to be portraying—making it very short and broad for a toothless old woman, for example, or very long and narrow for a modern dandy. The tragedies are, perhaps, a little heavy for our taste. No time is wasted over portraying emotions which the characters find out in the last act that they never had. A Japanese audience clamours for incident and plenty of it, for unlimited noise and a murder every now and then to liven up the proceedings. In fact, I believe when Hamlet was adapted for the Japanese stage ten of the characters had to be sacrificed within an hour. But even in the most bloodthirsty play it was a continual delight to watch actors like Danjuro and his friend Kukogoro, whether they were slashing at their enemies with their eyes,

like the poet's, "in a fine frenzy rolling," or simply soliloquising to a sick child.

Danjuro, by the way, was the only Japanese actor to receive any courtesy from society with a capital S. He, and he alone of all his class, succeeded in partially overcoming the prejudice against actors—a prejudice still strong enough to keep some old-fashioned aristocrats away from the theatre. The Emperor and the Empress and the Court people never go, and if they should even "command" a troupe of players to amuse them in the palace a revolution would certainly break out.

When Their Majesties want relief from the cares of state a safe and simple safety-valve is, however, at hand. They can have a *Cha No Yu*. This very curious amusement was invented by a wise emperor hundreds of years ago to dispel the tedium of uneventful days and keep his idle nobles out of mischief. It must have succeeded beautifully—judging from the hours it occupies. Moreover, nobody has the right to say, "Thank you, we have had enough; we find we are not very thirsty after all," in the middle of the performance. Original conversation is not encouraged, and the only remarks permissible are such as have been

hallowed by years of repetition—some stiff-necked compliments about the flower in the *Tokonoma* perhaps. But really nicely-brought-up guests find sufficient amusement in watching the composed correctness of the lady tea-server as she takes out of brocade bags—the very pattern on which is fixed by inflexible rule—the hallowed wooden spoons and bowls which appear to my untutored eyes very like those sold in Tokio bazaars for ten sen apiece—but are really vastly and subtly different. As she does this she turns and twists her wrists to the verge of dislocation. Her fingers are pointed north or south; the right thumb always bears a fixed relation to the left thumb, and the position of both hands taken together is a “seven line arrangement,” like the flowers in the vase.

To serve tea in the ceremonial manner is anything but easy. Four years, experts tell me, is the shortest time in which one could hope to acquire any proficiency in the art; young ladies of good family in Japan usually devote five to it. Then, when they are on the point of leaving the Finishing School, a great party is given, and friends are bidden to see the results. I remember

once going to one of these functions. It was a very grand affair given at a peeresses' seminary and heaps of people were invited. A very terrifying old lady, matron or proprietress, or perhaps both—a parched and wizened person with short hair—marshalled us into line as we arrived, and led us in solemn procession through cold, empty apartments to the little tea-room where the “sweet girl graduates” giggled gently in a corner or screened their faces with the end of their long sleeves to hide their nervousness. We knelt, at a given signal, upon the mats in a long line. When she considered us sufficiently composed, mentally and physically, the duenna joined us. Instantly smiles vanished from the faces of the pupils, eyes fell, the nervous and twitching behaviour disappeared; each young lady regarded the teacher with the expression of a pretty poodle waiting for a cue from his trainer.

She bowed, then they bowed; she glided over to one corner; they glided too. Exactly what went on near the little brazier I cannot say; staring on such a solemn occasion was out of the question. But presently a bowl of something that looked like spinach soup was set down before

me by a little maid in a mouse-grey kimono. The moment she had deposited the liquid safely, she drooped gracefully, spread out her little palms, began gently knocking her forehead on the mats, and refused to go away. It was most awkward and embarrassing. I felt sure she ought to move on to the next person, that she was delaying the whole performance on my unworthy account, but how was I to get rid of her? A kindly neighbour, with a humanity foreign to the spirit of the entertainment, whispered, "Bow, as she does, in return." So I made a most ludicrous effort to get my nose on a level with the floor without an undue elevation of my heels. The composure of the assembly remained unbroken, and she moved away to fetch more bowls and cakes of white and green and yellow sugar. When all were served we drank the bitter spinach-like mixture in three loud, gurgling sips to show our appreciation and then wrapped our cakes in the rice paper provided for the purpose, stowing them away in pocket or flowing sleeve, according to our costume. That was the whole entertainment. Still enveloped in the same subtle atmosphere of ceremony, we bade one another good-day, complimented the school-

mistress on what we referred to as the "admirable skill of her exalted pupils," and she referred to as "the miserable performance of my mean students," and returned home, having had what the Japanese consider a wildly exciting good time.

Sometimes Japanese aristocrats vary the monotony of the *Cha No Yu* by an incense party—a function still stiffer and more complicated. Or their ladies meet together and make sand pictures on lacquer trays. These, in addition to occupying many idle hours, have the merit of being really beautiful. It is extraordinary what dainty landscapes, what natural imitations of mountains and streams and gardens and trees can be made by the deft fingers of some quaint old professor whose tools are an eagle's feather, a dozen little pepper-boxes filled with coloured sands, and a few pebbles for the wilder scenery. The class watches while the master sprinkles, and treats not only his picture but himself with the most profound attention, remembering the old Chinese adage that "Even the shadow of a teacher must not be trodden on."

Of course the poorer classes have no money to waste on expensive professors. What little sur-

plus they have goes for sport—not sport as we understand it, but still sport of a kind. Most of the men are fairly good shots—with air-guns at targets ten feet off—and into the pocket of the keepers of shooting-galleries go the savings of Japan. Fearful contests take place every afternoon all over the empire at each toy rifle range; young men and old contend for the prizes. Those who have arrived at what we would call years of discretion struggle the most fiercely, and smile the most fatuously when they carry off a molasses rat. Even soldiers throng the “target shops” and fight their battles over again for some such useless, tasteless, and sticky animal.

A small minority enjoys fishing—for fat, well-trained carp who allow themselves to be hauled out of artificial ponds and placed in small tubs beside each fisherman, on the distinct understanding that at the end of the afternoon they are to be thrown back into their natural habitat. This sport is rather cheaper than the shooting. About five sen an hour to the owner of the fish-pond covers wear and tear, with perhaps two sen extra for bait.

But the one amusement in Japan which every-

body enjoys, rich and poor alike, is bathing. When ill, when tired, when gay, when sociable, whenever in fact they can, Our Little Brown Allies pack their carpet-bags, blow up their air-cushions, and start off for some hot spring or another. The rich travel by train, the poor walk, sometimes for many days, with their wives and babies after them, till they get to some little mountain village with bubbling hot springs that will boil themselves and their eggs at the same time.

A typical bathing resort has a sulphurous atmosphere and one street, generally steep. On wet or wintry days this is dreary beyond words, for all the houses look as if they were built of cardboard and only meant—as indeed is the case—to be used in summer and sunshine. But in the season, July or August, everything looks delightfully picturesque. Then all the tea-houses are gay with lanterns, and all the public bath-houses resound with merry splashings. Like the Casinos of European "Spas" these public tubs in Japan are social centres. The poor may use them for motives of economy, but the rich use them for the sake of companionship. A well-to-do Japanese does not see why his worldly goods should force him,

as it were, into a privacy he does not appreciate. Our dog-in-the-manger policy about bathing does not appeal to him in the least. To shut oneself up in a little room, forcibly keep one's friends out, then jump into a tub, very probably filled with cold water, scrub oneself painfully with a brush or a rubber sponge, jump out again in two minutes, rub furiously and feel tingly for an hour, where is the pleasure in that? He much prefers to saunter with an acquaintance down to a big sunken tank into which the delicious hot water runs through a bamboo pipe, sit on the edge for a few moments enjoying a last cigarette or cooling with a plank the particular corner he fancies, and finally slowly and luxuriously slip in. Meanwhile he can chat with any acquaintances who may have begun to boil before him, or with any passers-by who, looking through the slats of the window, recognise a neighbour and stop to pass the time of day. A comical scene often ensues when the bather and his acquaintance bow to one another. The outsider can, of course, put in his usual graceful flourishes, but the insider is at a disadvantage; he is almost sure to look like a porpoise about to dive, and if he is not very careful his polite inquiries

after the health of his friend appear only as air-bubbles on the surface of the water.

Should anything interesting happen in the street, the bathers slip out *au naturel* and watch it quite unconcerned. I know a jolly old shop-keeper in one sulphur village who always leaves his little stall to be tended by his grandchildren till a customer appears. One of them runs over to tell him when this happens. If the deal be trifling he shouts his price from the depths of the tub; if important, he climbs out of the "honourable hot water," and either bargains serenely from the doorway, clothed in a towel four inches square, or comes home, a picture of ruddy contentment, to close the matter.

The good old man is a relic of the days of Japan's innocence, before she ate of the Tree of International Knowledge—the days when father, mother, son, daughter, neighbour, man-servant, and maid-servant bathed together in a happy family party. Nobody saw any harm in it; it was convenient, and it was customary and had been done from time immemorial. The Japanese see nothing wrong in it yet—even in this ultra-civilised century. But tiresome Western nations do. They

think the habit lacking in modesty. So the Japanese authorities, following their usual policy, have looked modesty up in the dictionary and found out what it means, and immediately ordered all the bath-houses to be divided into two compartments and labelled "for men" and "for women." Now when the obedient little Japanese wives soap their husbands' backs and pour water over their heads to save their lords from apoplexy, they must scurry across when the officious little policeman is not looking.

They do it every day, of course. I myself have seen them very, very often. But so sensitive are the Japanese to Western opinion that in Tokio people become quite angry if I venture to hint that the old sociable bathing customs prevail in the country districts. "It is quite impossible. No Japanese woman would do such a thing," one Japanese gentleman told me with a very cross face. He thought I was trying to prove his civilisation inferior to mine. Just as soon as he was out of sight I remembered another bit of crushing evidence that I could have given him if only he had lingered a moment longer. It was the experience of the modest young curate who, having but

lately arrived in Japan, was shown into a hotel bath, almost went into hysterics when the little servant-maids offered to soap his back, and suffered a shock to his nervous system (from which it is doubtful if he will ever recover) when two lady guests entered the room, bowed to him charmingly, leisurely disrobed, and slipped into the big sunken tub beside him. I wonder what the priggish little man's answer would have been had he only stayed to hear *that*?

CHAPTER III

OF INNS, HOTELS, AND THE SERVANT QUESTION

A LAND of travellers and trippers, Japan is also naturally a land of hotels. In a town of a hundred houses, thirty will be full-fledged inns, and twenty more will be *chayas* (tea-houses), which amounts to almost the same thing. In fact, the only difference between them is the difference that exists between the chicken with one wing and the chicken with two—the difference of “a pinion.” Both varieties are picturesque; both have a poetic view of a dainty garden from a verandah so narrow that to sit there and enjoy it is impossible; both have an unpleasant odour of food pervading their queer passages, and both have matted floors, papered windows, and a common bath instead of a common board. Moreover, either will do equally well as the subject for the home letters of foreign globe-trotters. The clack-clack of wooden clogs on garden paths goes

down as "musical," the constant tap, tap, tap of the tiny metal pipe against the *hibachi* (firebox) as "quaint," and the shadow pictures of the guests silhouetted against the *shoji* by the light of the tall *andons* (night lanterns) as "charming."

Well, so they are—for the first few days. But when the clatter of *geta* sounds too often before sunrise, when the tap of the tiny pipe just beyond the paper partition goes on unceasingly from dawn to dusk, and the shadows on the *shoji* sway and chatter all through the round of the clock that we are accustomed to devote to darkness and silence, it is less easy to be enthusiastic. Familiarity breeds contempt.

I can, alas! no longer look on floors of spotless mats with my old trusting admiration. Too often have I slept, or tried to sleep upon them, on broiling summer nights, tormented from below by those ubiquitous little creatures that hop, and tormented from above by those still more ubiquitous creatures that fly. The underhand nuisance cannot, I find, be combated with any marked degree of success, but the overhead plague may be kept at a distance by a *kaya*. There is a certain mystery about the name; it suggests possi-

bilities, but in reality it is nothing but a mosquito curtain, arsenic green and about the thickness of flannelette. A pneumonia patient might safely take shelter under it in a typhoon for all the air that comes through. Not that this imperviousness matters much in a *chaya*, however. If the curtain was of tulle no air would come through either—simply because there is none to come. The *amados* (wooden blinds) which shut in the verandahs effectively shut any stray atmosphere out. They are a cautious people, the Japanese. Whenever I have suggested to a serving-maid that she might leave a crack, a little breathing hole, in the shutters, her invariable reply has been, "Only think if thieves should enter." "Only think if your precautions suffocate your guests," I then retort. Do you suppose that the heartless girl is impressed? Far from it. She simply shakes her head; this lesser risk is none of her concern, and it does not prevent her from closing up the house hermetically.

At daybreak, just as I have grown accustomed to do without oxygen and fallen into an uneasy sleep, she decides that the dreadful danger of robbery is over, takes out the fastening bar, and

slides each shutter the whole length of the verandah into the little box fixed in one corner to hold the thief and draught preventers. The noise of this operation is as the noise of thunder. All the inn-mates are awakened and, seeing that the bright sunshine streams through the white *shoji*, there is nothing for it but to roll out of the *futons* (wadded quilts) and face the problem of how and where to wash. The common bath, though patronised by the best families, is a trifle unconventional for my taste. I accordingly decide for the outhouse in the garden, which is unsatisfactory as regards conveniences and hardly more private. The door has neither bolt nor lock. The basin, a bronze finger-bowl with a wooden dipper in it, stands in full view of passers-by, who stop and stare with frank curiosity, their much-vaunted manners breaking down under the unusual temptation. It is not pleasant to play the part of the monkey in the zoo, but the only alternative to washing in full view of the public is to remain unwashed. On no account will water be brought into my room. Tea is the only spillable thing I can have, and the little *nesan* brings me some as soon as she has finished her tussle with the *amados*

and tucked the *futons* and wooden pillows away in a cupboard. "Honourable morning meal augustly condescend to receive," she says as she presents me with a tray containing a teapot full of a bitter greenish concoction, and a plate of cakes that look like chrysanthemums, taste like blotting-paper, and weigh like lead. These constitute breakfast.

The menu for luncheon is little more sustaining. There are, to be sure, plenty of dishes served on little tables six inches high. But all they hold does not make one square meal for the average European, who can neither take walks nor do justice to sights for any length of time on a diet of raw fish, dried fish, steamed sea-weed, pickled shrimps, mashed pumpkin, or even rice. At first, perhaps, he thinks he can, but as each meal comes round he finds himself less and less able to write the picturesque letters for which these dolls' feasts are such excellent subjects, till, at the end of a month, he is scarcely strong enough to write at all. Hollow of cheek and peevish of temper he then abandons the charms and delights which, according to Lafcadio Hearn, he ought to have found in the *chaya*, and betakes himself to the

“flesh-pots” once more in some “foreign style” hotel.

The “foreign style” hotel has grown up specially to provide for travellers of just this kind—men who prefer beef to lotus bulbs, who are willing to pay for more chairs than they can sit on, more mirrors than they can look into, and more tables than they can cover with the superfluous possessions out of their superfluous trunks. Those in Tokio—the hotels, not the travellers—are very grand. I think one of them was originally intended for a House of Peers or a Museum, so vast and splendid it is, so rich in noble stairways, covered now with grimy drugget, so gaudy in gilding now half worn off. But those in the country—at seaside and mountain resorts—seldom have any architectural pretensions. Like Topsy, they seem to have “just growed,” putting out their arms in all directions to grasp more and more tourists. The best part of them is the entrance—always nobly planned whatever else is skimped. A portico, perhaps, a verandah surely, and a flight of steps leading from a fine sweep of driveway into what the Americans call a “living hall” should go far—so the proud proprietor thinks—

to impress a newcomer. But, to make assurance doubly sure, he fills the last three with a retinue of servants who march out in double file, like the supers in a circus, to meet each guest. Everybody in the house is requisitioned for this grand *entrée*—even the barber—and sometimes, to add to the impressiveness of the scene, students who are learning English in Tokio schools are allowed to hang about the place free during the summer vacation on condition that they wear their school uniform and swell the crowd.

The manager himself, wearing an expression of perpetual bewilderment and, as like as not, a Norfolk jacket, acts the part of ringmaster, but a ringmaster shorn of much authority and of surprising meekness. When he shows me upstairs it is with a deprecatory gesture, as if to say, "You who want so much will find little." I do. The upstairs is mean—a distinct disappointment after the grandeur of the entrance. Halls are uncarpeted and his shuffling footsteps echo with a low rumble, while mine shake the house. Walls are thin, so that every word we speak, even in whispers, reaches the neighbours. Bedrooms are small and uncomfortably furnished. Beds are

hard, pillows harder still, table-covers ink-stained, looking-glasses like pieces of polished tin, and wardrobes inclined to the exasperating habit of opening as fast as they are shut.

No need for him to tell me, with misplaced pride, that the furniture is made in Tokio—which is ten times worse than being made in Germany. I can see at a glance where the tables and chairs get their weak constitutions and why they are in their present state of gentle dilapidation. Several damp seasons have slowly swollen their cheap wood, unglued their cheap glue, faded their cheap upholstery—and nobody has troubled to affix the patch in time which might restore them to a further career of healthy usefulness. The little manager argues that having bought the things he has done all that can be reasonably expected of him. I know one hotel where the piano has been out of tune and sticking badly since 1900. Every time I go I ask, "Not tuned yet?" smiling as though the joke were good. And every time the manager smiles back with an equal conviction of its goodness and answers, "Not yet, perhaps next year!"

With his dilatoriness and his indecision this

man is typical of his class—impossible to get from him a straight answer to a straight question, still more impossible to make him exert any of the authority he should have. Children may race up and down the corridors during the hour of the afternoon siesta but he never attempts to deter them. Merry parties may sit in the bar and make whole nights hideous with their noisy dissipations, but even when the other guests complain he is “very sorry,” but he does not interfere. The worst case of disorder I ever saw was the case of a cook who got gloriously drunk and insisted upon sitting on the front verandah after dinner, clapping his hands and singing at the top of his lungs. “Really, Komai San,” I remonstrated with the master of the house, “this is too much; the man makes a quiet game of bridge impossible. Send him away.” “I cannot,” he explained helplessly. “The cook is a shareholder in my hotel and he must sing where and when he pleases.” So, securely holding his shares, the cook continued to sing, his face convulsed with *saké* and enthusiasm, and his body swinging in a general gesticulation.

Japanese servants, whether shareholders or not,

must, it seems, be treated with tact however trying they may be, and often they are very trying indeed—especially the *nesans*, who are usually untidy, cross, and lazy. Yet the dear little things have admirers that praise their kittenish ways, their tiny hands, and even, of all things, their artistic temperaments. A certain writer solemnly says, “A Japanese *nesan*, any *nesan*, even one in a hotel, will set out your hair-brushes, clothes-brushes, nail-scissors, collar-box, and tooth-powder tin on the average hotel dressing-table and make a design of them, a picture, an artistic whole.” All I can say is, no *nesan* has ever arranged studies of still life with the nail scissors and the tooth-powder tin for me, though, possibly by way of compensation, one has started little lakes of boiling water on my carpet when I rang for *oyu*, or toppled over the morning tea-tray and arranged the fragments in an unconventional design on my bed-quilt, or dragged a table, with scrapings in a minor key, the whole length of the verandah.

If corrected roughly the maiden will first cry and then leave. The little manager is well aware of this—aware with all the nervous perception of a person whom one hasty or ill-considered sentence

can throw into a situation seriously threatening his comfort and prosperity. Hence his attitude of habitual meekness. He dares not let his little lecture slide over the line which divides it from a scolding, and is careful to deliver a necessary exhortation with a smiling face and frequent laughs just to show that it is really not a scolding at all.

Sometimes even this is more than a servant will bear. A lady friend of mine possessed a very good man-servant—a perfect treasure. She happened to be an artist, and every day when she went to paint in the woods this treasure carried her easel. One afternoon he returned without an important piece of it. Though greatly annoyed she said nothing, knowing that her “pearl” was sensitive to criticism like most of his race. But the effort at self-control was entirely wasted as things turned out, for the man came next day to formally “give notice.” “Why do you wish to leave?” the mistress asked in deep distress. “Surely you are not upset over the easel? I said nothing about it, did I?” “No,” the man admitted, “but you made a difficult face.” And he went before luncheon.

A man and his wife who were with me for six

years departed at an hour's notice because I told Madame one day that she must not throw my sauce-pans at the head of her husband. He seemed almost as much upset about my refusal to sanction her use of weapons in the marital combat as she—queer, perverse mortal that he was. But as soon as they made up their quarrelling in making common cause against me, I must admit that this fighting couple had the grace to be ashamed of themselves and their unceremonious departure. The landlord was chosen as peacemaker. All day long I watched him sitting about the garden in his best clothes trying to screw his courage to the sticking place. Then finally, when he could stand it no longer, he came as far as my door with a rush, entered with well-feigned indifference, and remarked casually, "If some people desired to come back, would you chase them away?"

The maid-servants, like all women, are proverbially unreliable, but most hotels and private houses keep them because they are gentle and cheap—while they stay. Unfortunately, they are particularly fond of playing the vanishing trick on their mistresses. A lady of my acquaintance in Tokio possessed a valuable *nesan* of somewhat

mature years who rejoiced in the poetic name of "Oharu San"—The Honourable Miss Spring. One day Miss Spring brought in luncheon as usual. All seemed serene; there was not the shadow of a cloud in the domestic sky. But at tea-time no tea appeared; neither, in answer to calls at first patient and afterwards impatient, did "Oharu." After a time the lady herself went to the back regions and found—desolation. The charcoal box was filled with grey ashes, the kettle cold. Half the luncheon plates lay immersed in a bowl of soapy water, the other half stood on the sink ready to be put away. Oharu herself simply "was not." Next morning, however, she reappeared, very much on her company manners, with a clean kimono and her hair done in a shining bun to denote the state of a matron, demanding the fragment of wages due to her since the beginning of the month. The lady expostulated and asked why the servant was leaving thus suddenly. "Oh," replied Oharu, "just as I was washing the plates yesterday I remembered that Saito San, the pawnbroker, wanted a wife. Therefore I went out and married him." Apparently this particular pawnbroker was by way of being a

Bluebeard. Seven wives he had already clasped to his too ardent bosom, and then as soon as he grew weary of their charms he managed to get rid of them quite easily, thanks to the accommodating divorce laws of his country, without the fuss and muss of beheading them. Oharu knew these circumstances perfectly, weighed the risks well, decided to accept them, and thought—with much good sense—that as she meant to be wife number eight she had no time to finish her dishes. Any idea of duty towards her employer never entered her shining head. If the lady of the house had been out or away, do you suppose Miss Spring would have remained to protect the household goods left in her charge? No, indeed, she would have gone to the pawnbroker as serenely and as suddenly. I speak with authority, for a similar desertion once occurred in my own bird-cage *maisonnette*. Last summer, when Tokio felt as hot as the inside of a kettle, I decided to take a little holiday in the coolness of the hills, leaving in charge of my domain a plump, nice-looking woman of over thirty. She seemed, in her simple, faithful way, to adore me, and almost wept because I refused to allow her to walk six

miles across the city to Uyeno Station just for the sake of standing on the platform and making me a last bow. As I wandered among peaceful temples in the hush of the trees my mind, no less peaceful and serene, pictured this paragon watering my flowers and feeding my goldfish. These were indeed idyllic days, filled from morning till night with the "peace on earth, good-will towards men" feeling that usually only comes on rainy Sunday afternoons. But they could not be expected to last for ever, and at the end of the fourth week I wrote to the paragon to prepare her mind and the house for my return. My answer, instead of being from herself, was written by a friendly neighbour. It said, "Your Miss Kishi is not at all at your house. Indeed I must tell you that four days after you went to Nikko, Miss Kishi left to marry a selfish (shell-fish?) merchant." A little later I discovered that the staid-appearing Miss Kishi was liable to these all-of-a-sudden matrimonial flights. She had done it five times before and all five husbands were alive.

The men-servants, I must say, when they marry, do it out of office hours and seldom let their domestic affairs interfere with their duties. Their

manners, too, are much better than those of the maids, and they brush their hair oftener—a habit which is alone worth the extra wages. Their great fault, however, is envy and jealousy of one another. I knew a lady who had an excellent cook—and also a jinricksha coolie of whom she was very fond because he was an unusually willing fellow with a bright, sunny nature. Occasionally it was her habit to buy toys for his babies or give him little presents of bright crapes for his wife, which caused the cook horrible pangs of jealousy. When the war with Russia broke out, Riki, the jinricksha man, was sent to fight in Manchuria. Then the cook had his innings. Never a boy came running by with *Gogai* (extras) that the cook did not make an excuse to see his mistress, and never did he fail to slip in quite cheerfully, “The *Gogai* says there has been a big battle. I am sure Riki has been killed this time.” But, much to his disgust, Riki finally returned alive and well and was feasted like the hero he had proved himself.

There is a strange, determined, treacherous streak in the character of Japanese men—a streak which only rarely appears, which we cannot ac-

count for, and which makes them difficult to handle as servants. They are sensitive, and given to brooding on imaginary insults. But their impassive expressions make it impossible for Westerners to guess what is in their minds. Every one knows the story of the man-servant who had been long in the service of a princely master and always seemed the happiest of mortals. He laughed when spoken to, always looked delighted while at work, appeared to know nothing of the troubles of life. Imagine his master's surprise when one day, as he caught a glimpse of the man without the fellow's being aware of it, he saw a relaxed face full of startling misery. Hard lines of pain and anger were written round the eyes, making them seem twenty years older. But when the master coughed gently to announce his presence, at once the face smoothed, softened, lighted up as by a miracle of rejuvenation—a miracle indeed of perpetual, unselfish self-control.

One more true story comes into my mind *à propos* of this strange red streak in the Japanese character. Not exactly a servant, the man concerned, one Kosaku by name, was the head guide at a big Tokio hotel. He and another guide called

Tomora, who also acted as policeman, and incidentally as a spy on foreigners, were constantly quarrelling about the tips and spoil they extracted from globe-trotters. Kosaku finally proposed reporting Tomora to the police authorities and so destroying his hopes of a pension. At the end of the year Tomora one day dressed himself carefully in foreign clothes, loaded a revolver, put it in his pocket and invited the unfortunate Kosaku to a feast at a tea-house. It was indeed a Judas feast. The two men ate together and drank. One after another as little stone bottles of *saké* were emptied, the former enemies swore in bibulous phrases that all was forgiven. Together they started to return to the hotel, both apparently full of happiness and peace of mind, and resolved that in future they would fleece the stranger within their gates hand-in-hand as beloved brethren should. Then just by the bridge near the hotel—the untidy bridge where the trams meet—Tomora turned like a wolf and suddenly shot Kosaku in the neck and body—shot with unerring aim, for Kosaku fell dead without a moan. Tomora then killed himself on the spot. He had not forgiven, but was there not

a supreme and cruel treachery in spending his last earthly hours making merry with his victim? Poor Kosaku! He had just succeeded in laying up for himself treasure upon earth to the amount of twenty thousand yen—and he lost his life because his last and richest globe-trotter bought a seven hundred yen lantern through Tomora, and Kosaku, in his greed, demanded from the younger guide the twenty yen commission which the merchant paid to him.

CHAPTER IV

A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE IS A DANGEROUS THING

IT would be quite wrong to give the impression that Our Little Brown Allies are inconsequent mortals, always in pursuit of pleasure, when one of their greatest qualities—the one, in fact, to which they owe all their success—is a faculty for patient plodding, equally admirable and equally boring, whether it be applied to sweet potatoes or to Schopenhauer. Not that it is usually wasted on either. No, indeed! The great and serious majority of the Japanese nation pays us the delicate compliment of devoting its energies to acquiring our language. According to the latest census eight ninths of the able-bodied population is now doing this. I can quite believe it, for never have I found a corner of the Empire where one might consider oneself safe from the “English student” who accents himself on the last syllable as if he rhymed with “Solent.” He lurks in trains and

trams, he haunts hotels and shops, he hangs about street corners waiting, like a cunning spider, to enmesh some innocent foreign victim in a web of conversation.

“How is your health?” suddenly inquires the knock-kneed youth whose bundle I have just asked the driver to remove from a seat in the *basha* (omnibus). Naturally I am a little stunned by this total stranger’s bold dive into personal waters, and my answer is accordingly monosyllabic and delivered in a tone several degrees below zero. But he is not in the least snubbed; he scarcely hears the chilling reply for, while it is being impressively delivered, his next question is slowly and painfully evolving. As soon as the process is complete I know it, even before he opens his lips to speak, by the ecstatic light on his face—the “I’ve-caught-him-and-he-can’t-escape” expression in his eye.

“What is your age?” he presently inquires, glowing a little with conscious pride, and I stare harder still. This catechism is becoming a nuisance, and I secretly determine to write to the papers and suggest that persons who are wrestling with our complicated tongue should be made to

wear some sort of distinguishing medal or badge, or even uniform—like the police, for instance—as a warning and a protection to unsuspecting strangers. The youth has no thought of impertinence, however, no thought really of anything beyond the launching of his little Ollendorfish sentences which have been weeks a-building. Fate, now personified by my humble self, cannot harm him; he has spoken, he has enjoyed the nameless encouragement of hearing his own voice, and whether I answer reluctantly or not at all is immaterial as he is not seeking information. He merely wishes to watch the effect of his own words upon an impartial listener. Were I to flounce out of the car after some particular remark he would probably never use it again. Temporarily he constitutes me a High Court of Justice where English is on trial; the fate of noun and verb hangs on my actions, and I am vested with the absolute right of taboo. Of course the responsibility of the position is very heavy, but at the same time there is a subtle flattery about it which the poor student has to thank for his second answer. Alas! pride proverbially goeth before a fall. Encouraged by my reply a third question

comes out painfully: "Have you a man?"—a delicate and very Japanese way of inquiring if I am married. This really is too much, so I retaliate by carrying the war into his own country and swooping down upon him with a question of my own, quite a simple question. Immediately his face becomes a blank; the ecstatic light flickers and dies out, and I can see that consternation reigns inside his brain as this cipher message, for which there is no key, reaches headquarters. At last, cocking his head on one side like a sparrow, as a Japanese so often does when puzzled or harassed, the student answers wistfully: "It is very difficult." My family, my occupation, my symptoms are safe after that. Evidently, from his preoccupied silence, he is thinking the puzzle out, and I am left in peace to consider the strange mental equipment which enables Our Little Brown Allies to speak a foreign language before they can understand it. "You address them," as a Babu traveller once said, "but they cannot address back."

During the long summer holidays, what every "student of English" covets is a position as supernumerary at some country hotel, and boys of

respectable families actually scramble for the privilege of rendering unto some resort any services, however menial, in return for scanty board, bare lodging, and the precious proximity to globe-trotters who speak the coveted language. Have not Japanese colonels turned barbers for less?

Sometimes the students are rewarded by a visitor who, kinder and more pitiful than the rest, stops and talks casually to them in the desired tongue—thinking to pass on lightly afterwards. He knows not what he does. Unconsciously, with that little thin string of words, he has bound unto himself a guide, a companion, a willing slave, and for the remainder of his stay in the place he is followed about so artfully, and yet withal so cautiously, that he cannot get free.

For the sake of comfort, then, one must harden one's hard heart to the voice of pity. I discovered it too late—after one bitter summer in Nikko, when a youth, who was ugly with the ugliness that comes from too much absorption in dull things, took it into his head to become my self-appointed guide, and stuck to me with a pertinacity worthy of his sacred cause. I tried to shake him off, to freeze him off, to tire him out, yet he

valiantly remained at my side, and all because in an indiscreet moment I once weakly said "Thank you" to him because he opened my wet umbrella when I wished it left shut. Thereafter he persistently spoiled the woods for me. Whenever my soul was getting ready to soar he appeared at my elbow, helpful as ever, anxious perhaps to take off my boots and shoo me into some temple, or else eager to explain why the tiger-lilies bloomed on cottage roofs when I was content to know they bloomed at all, or to tell just how high the hills were when I was content to know them high enough to prick the sky with their sharp green points. Yet never could I be angry with him for long, since, as soon as my wrath began to boil and bubble over, he would cool it by some new, touching effort to please. Or else he would make me laugh at the critical moment as he did one day when I inquired with nervous dread, "Have you any rats in this hotel?" and he replied gleefully, his whole face lighting up with eagerness to serve, "Oh, yes, shall I get you some?"

Another student I knew—though fortunately, as he was busy pursuing a most satisfactory, loud-voiced American globe-trotter, I never fell

deeply into his clutches—used to stumble now and then upon the most quaint, the most delicious phrases. He would often improve the shining morning hour before his prey appeared by bringing me the news of the village. Somebody's house "for lent," or somebody's servant had been dismissed because she was a "chattering-box," or an "Import," a person from some other village, had arrived. "Is he a pilgrim?" I remember once asking. "I do not know," was the cautious reply, "but that is my suppose." Admirable youth, his was a character with such singular steadfastness of purpose that in leisure moments he would take three grammars and two dictionaries, and, seated upon some mossy stump conveniently near the pantry door, disentangle the intricacies of the verb "to be." The prettiest girl, flitting past like some gay butterfly in her bright kimono, was powerless to distract his attention, and finally his companions began to get worried over his unnatural absorption and remonstrated with him. They used to point out some particularly dainty maiden, and one would force him to look up, and another would ask, "Is she not a picture?—just like Utamaru's

butterfly women." But always the student would shake his head sadly, saying, with a philosophy beyond his tender years, "Women are a great temptation to us," and turn more intently than ever to his books.

Just for the sake of the moral it would be pleasant to record that *Otake San*—such was his name—received the distinguished success his prodigious labour deserved. But, alas! three years afterwards he was only selling "*Kanzashi*"—women's hairpins—outside the Exhibition gates in Tokio, having done, on the whole, neither worse nor better than the majority of his fellow-students. Apparently our language must be harder than we think, or else the Japanese are not born to be linguists, though they fondly imagine that they are, and happily—or unhappily—for themselves never realise their own limitations, but plod on lumberingly for years with a high hopefulness sadly out of proportion to results. Take, for example, a young Japanese acquaintance of mine who can hardly speak six sentences of laborious English, and yet tells me, with solemn pride, "German is my secondary language." I often hear policemen, too, address inquiring strangers as

"Sir or Madam as the case may be," looking serenely pleased with themselves while they do it, and many a man, before he can pronounce three consecutive phrases of our spoken word, sets to work to acquire what he calls the "written language."

"Teach us to write English, and teach us cheaply," is the cry of young Japanese who hope some day to unlock the doors of Tokio officialdom with this magic key of language. Now one may safely economise, if economise one must, on shoes, or *saké*, or cigarettes, but never on foreign tongues—or one defeats one's own ends, which is exactly what Our Little Brown Allies have done. According to an inflexible law, supply is regulated by demand, and when demand is for schools where students can learn for fifty sen a month each, the supply is exactly fifty sen worth of phrases. Personal attention could not possibly be included for the price, as even the poorest of teachers must take large classes in order to keep themselves alive, and they have no time to push or pull a backward pupil over the rough places. If he stumbles he must pick himself up as quickly as may be and run after the others, extracting his fifty sen worth

as best he can. The lucky youths with nimble brains succeed fairly well; the unlucky ones, with dull brains, struggle after them nobly but ineffectually, filling as many years as they can afford with blackboards and grammars and copybooks. Then, having completed the course, usually synonymous with running out of funds, they return for a space to their native towns, and are welcomed as prodigies by the still-less-lettered provincials. Feasts are given them, speeches are made to them; I should not be surprised if in the more enterprising districts a triumphal arch or two lent smartness to the proceedings. And then everybody who has a sign to be painted or a letter to be written comes to consult the newly-returned student, who, though he may be half taught, is always obliging and willing, free of charge, just for the glory of seeing himself in print, as it were, to fit out all his relations, friends, and acquaintances with attractive notices. A certain barber's sign is as good as some of our epitaphs in country churchyards. "Hairs shaved here. Porpoises [paupers, presumably] need not apply." The typical general storekeeper proudly puts up "Dealer in Sack Doods" over his door, the egg-seller "Extract of

Fowl," a butcher, "Beef and Hen Met," and a milkman paints upon his little hand-cart the puzzling inscription, "Whole Milk," which leaves the prospective customer to guess whether the milk is all milk and not half water, or whether it is wholesome.

When the returned student has connections already in official circles he is responsible for some such ambiguous public notices as the following: "Take care, When Red Flag out, Brasting," or, "Right here. It is the way to pass." Or, when he happens to be friendly with the director of the local tram line, he draws up a neat little direction like this: "Passengers are requested not to put heads or arms out of windows for fear of injuring passers-by." Or, if he is lower down the social scale and his cousin is the "gentleman who does washing" for a country hotel, he obligingly writes out a list somewhat after this style:

"The Washermen of Kamakura hotel. Wash List. *Ladies.* Dresses, Dramres, Corsets, Under Baes [whatever strange garments those may be], Pett Coats, Blawce [Blouse], Caps, Collars, Sleeves, Aprons, Stockinges, Handkerchiefs."

"*Male.* Dresses, Chemises, Night Gowns,

Dramers, Corsets, Under Baes, Pett Coats, Pett Coat Bodices, Plawce, Sleeves, Aprons, Stockings, Handkechiefs.”

In order to keep up the precious knowledge gained with so much difficulty and sacrifice through strenuous years when this amazingly beautiful world is empty of everything to them but irregular verbs and idiomatic expressions, the students delight in writing letters to any one who has been incautious enough to politely answer some of their dull and halting conversation. I feel sure that American globe-trotter was the recipient of a vigorous correspondence from his student follower, for no hopeful acquaintance is suffered to die down because of a little matter of distance. At first, perhaps, the student will begin warily with picture post-cards, then proceed to plain post-cards, which during the first five years of his course usually hold all the English he knows, and finally, upon the slightest sign of encouragement, practise at greater length upon his new-found friend.

Every young Japanese I ever met wrote me religiously during the war when he was called to serve with the colours, and either the army was very idle or some of those young men must have

shockingly neglected to keep their natural relations informed of their movements. Day after day the postman would stagger up my hill (there was some talk at one time of a special delivery), and I think the neighbourhood respected me prodigiously for my large and attentive circle of friends. If they had only known! Three of my correspondents were students met casually on my travels; one was the studious jinricksha coolie of a friend to whose babies I once gave cakes, one was my own former cook, one the son of my landlady; two, gentlemen with whom I had business dealings—meat and grocery dealings. The only writer of sufficient position to reflect any dignity or glory upon me was a former head of the neighbouring police station.

But never mind, all the epistles were gems in their different ways, and some well worth quoting. The cook wrote actually from the front:

“SOMEWHERE, MANCHURIA.

“RESPECTABLE LADY,—It is now more than a month since I bade you good-bye yet how far am I from you? To tell you how I have travelled to this part of China could be of the highest inter-

est to you but I am obliged to refrain to do so at this moment. And why? By reason of that I may trespass the military rules. So you will have to wait for some times.

“I will impose a duty on me that I would write you more and more. At present I can only say that we are in a place of as many trees as soldiers.

“As I said I can write you many pages but this not[e] will tell you all my heart feels. I am well and I delight in esperience. Good-by.—Yours
Very truly,

“T. SEKIDO.”

The jinricksha coolie, garrisoned for the time in Hiroshima, generally limited himself to post-cards, with which he regularly announced to me the first news of every victory, beginning with Liaoyang and ending with Tsushima.

“MY DEAR,” he began, unconsciously dispensing with formality,—“At last We are Victory. Throught the Empire great rejoicing over our Victory at Liaoyang is being Exhibited. On Sunday night Hiroshima presented a scene never before, the whole town ablazing with innumerable

lightest lanterns and electric illuminations. Banzai!"

This was the first outburst, and the last was written just before he left for the front, where he died of *kaké* poor fellow, much to his horror and shame, for he longed to be killed in battle.

“HIROSHIMA, August, 1904.

“DEAR MISS,—Please I beg your pardon I did n't write you a long time letly. How are your health? Here it is much hotter than it was yearly therefore we have some epidemic disease in Hiroshima and I am very glad to afford you that a few days ago our Navy conquered the russian fleet.”

The landlady's son surpassed himself in condoling and commiserating with me over the loss of the *Knight Commander*.

“TOKYO BARRAKS.

“DEAR LADY,” he said,—“How do you do these days? Pardon me that I may not visit you letly because my father went to China and my

duty is very busy and some day I will call you. What was my surprise when I had the knowledge of wrecked by Russian fleet (which belong Vladivostock) on the coast of Izu. Indeed I am sorry for you. But what is better there was no live who lost.

“To according the news. They was sent to Vladivostock I hope they are safe and sound.”

The former police inspector, my star correspondent, was attached to the headquarters of some division as a teacher or interpreter, and he had more time—and also, being a Christian and educated in Mission schools, more skill for longer communications. He delighted in ethical questions, and the following letter, with its frank scepticism about rewards and punishments, gives a curious insight into the working of the Japanese mind.

“TO DEAR MISS,—I am very sorry to say I did not write to you for all this long time, because my wife and God have been punishing me, and I must be very bad indeed, it has taken them so long to get me all punished up. My wife told me not to

drink ice very much in these hot days, because if I did, I would be sick. So I drank it to see if my wife told me the truth. At last my stomach ached harder and harder, till I could not bear it any longer. I must go to bed for being so disobedient and take my punishment without complaining. They say: 'never say beautiful till you have seen Nikko temple.' A sight worth travelling across the world. I longed for to see the scenery of that place but since I have no time to get there. Now as you are taking much pleasure in that district. I think you have better pleasant time to see the magnificent temples, the beautiful scenery of mountains, rivers, lakes, falls and many hot springs. All the nature welcome your visit. We have no interesting news or pleasure. I am only engaging to attend the English School to teach for the school is now going on in spite of the hot days. When the school lesson is over I return to my home and I confined myself indulging to spent my time to the care of my child. He is only one year old whom you have seen in the Shiba Park few months ago. Lately he crawls on his knee and speak pa-a-pa. I wish to you see again.—
I remain, yours truly, SUMIDA."

But the most curious example of English as she is written in Japan, where she is invariably written wrong, is a little manuscript absolutely untouched by the ruthless corrector's hand—a manuscript of some original "Plice [Police] Conversation," which was prepared for an English lady, a teacher, by one of her students who, thinking himself ripe for authorship, had written this as a pleasant surprise for her during the long holidays.

"DEAR MISS TEACHER," the accompanying letter explained,—“You must be quite pleasant to be inspired by natural quiteness, beauty, avoiding from care of Tokyo where so dusty.

“I right down a few original plice conversation which I compose for you. If it is good one arter your severe glance, please send it to magazine.—Your most faithfully pupil, D. KOBAYASHI.”

Here followed the dialogue.

Railway Station.

Policeman, May I ask you can I send my becicle with me in this car without any fee?

Yes, you can send it but it is limited only one, you must deliver it to train guards.

Can I take my dog with me not paying extra fee?

No, you cannot, you must pay special fee for him, and he will be send by a small box provided for it.

Is there some porter to carry my baggages?

Oh, I see, I shall call the *Akabo* (Red-cap), so to say baggage carrier.

How much I have to pay him?

By one luggage, bag or anyother thing is 2 sen, but for small goods by one time carrying them the same amount of money.

I think my silk fan has been remained in the car, what shall I do?

Wait for while, I made the station master examine for your good.

Can it be found?

Yes, the master says it was in your car. (After clos of examination he says it can not be found.)

How many amount I can send my goods without paying of fee?

The weight which you need not pay fee in addition of your personal fare is limited by the

class of the ticket. [Here follows a table of weights too correct to be amusing.]

But there is surpass from above you ought to pay ordinary fee according to that weight.

Why the Tokaido train does not start this morning?

They say the rail line between —— and —— have been damaged by undation last night (heavy rain better?).

When will it be repaired?

The station master say if the passenger take *kuruma* (jinricksha) in that interval he can travel through the whole line.

Why the down train does not arrived by the fixed period?

I hear that near Omari station a confliction have took place with each locomotive and so it will be full behind an hour.

What o'clock does the terminational train for Yokohama start this night?

Half pass eleven o'clock sir!

May I enter to see my friend off to the platform?

No, you must get an entrance ticket by two sen.

Can you tell me is there hotel not far from here?

Do not care for it is Japanese hotel or foreign hotel?

I don't care for it.

I think Hiroshimaya is better in this neighbourhood and they are rather accustomed to treat strange foreigner.

Can I reach in time for Karuizawa's train taking *kuruma* from here?

I might say probably you can get there if you let *kurumaya* run in a hurry.

Gentleman, Have not your watch lost now?

Let me see, Oh, dear I could not know when I have lost my watch.

Then I tell you a police detective caught a pickpocket by the booking room and the man has a gold watch confessing that he robbed it off from a foreigner.

end.

CHAPTER V

THE PROFESSIONAL MATCHMAKER AND THE FAMILY CIRCLE

AS soon as the young Japanese student has learned enough to command a position and become a householder, his father or mother, or both, hasten to consult the *Nakadachi* on his behalf. This is the Professional Matchmaker, a person of paramount influence in every community, and one who can determine temperaments astrologically. The *Nakadachi* may be a man, but is more often a woman, and usually a female hairdresser, who, by reason of her trade, has the freedom of every house. While she twists her customer's hair into the shining spirals which a Japanese woman cannot arrange for herself, she observes everything. No domestic secret is safe from her prying eyes. Bad tempers, delicate digestions, flighty spirits, sick bodies or sick souls, even innocent little peculiarities, she discovers.

But what is more disagreeable still, she comments upon them to the neighbours. The daughter of the Buddhist priest over the way, she probably confides to the rich farmer's wife, is lacking in filial piety: the young lady answers her old mother with incredible sharpness. "How dreadful!" replies the farmer's wife, shaking her head with the cheerful disapproval that most of us assume when we hear of our neighbour's shortcomings. And as she does so she thinks complacently of her own daughter, whom she considers a model of the proprieties, far above criticism. If she only knew! The *Nakadachi* remarks to her next customer that the paragon is plain and *passée*—information received by this neighbour with ill-disguised pleasure.

Thus, by playing upon the weaknesses of her *clientèle*, as well as by her own careful observation, the old Matchmaker builds up her reputation. "She knows all the houses where the families are at fours and fives"—the Japanese equivalent of sixes and sevens—people soon say of her, half in admiration, half in trepidation. Mothers then begin to try and keep on the right side of her; fathers begin to drop into her little house and

make tentative remarks about wives. "Do you know a girl suitable for my boy?" one will openly ask, adding, "somebody with so much dowry, hardworking, clean, honest, of such and such a class family, and with the best of moral references"—exactly as we do when we go to a registry office to hire a servant. Even if the about-to-be-wedded son is present at the interview no false modesty complicates the arrangements. Every detail, including the shape of the lady's nose, is frankly discussed, and papa decides whether the family would like it aquiline or snub, while the son respectfully listens. "Does he never suggest his own fancy?" I have asked, and always been told "No." The whole affair is a simple matter of business—the business of carrying on the family line and providing sons to worship at the ancestral graves. Its one redeeming feature is a total lack of hypocrisy; I never heard in Japan of the man who carefully chooses an heiress and then fills the Sunday papers with stories of how he discovers his twin soul hidden in her bags of gold.

The *Nakadachi*, having gathered exactly the kind of person required to fill the position, says solemnly, "I will think, I will think," and forth-

with patters off to the house of her most likely client. There she settles down, sips tea, and talks for an hour about everything except what she has really come to say—about food, weather, and the neighbours. When she takes her leave she probably ventures some such remark as, "You have a daughter, have you not? And just about the marriageable age, if I remember rightly?" Finally, as she is slipping into her clogs at the front door, she adds a few, a very few, words about the son of So-and-So. Of course the hostess knows exactly what is meant but, because it is etiquette, she pretends utter surprise. "The son of So-and-So? *Narahodo*, oh, dear me! You say he has grown into a youth?" adding, perhaps, a few more conventional expressions of astonishment at such an unusual occurrence. "Yes, and a fine youth too," replies the old *Nakadachi*, after which tactful parting shot she shuffles away—to praise the young lady to the other side.

If both parties agree to accept her estimates of their future connections, the maiden most concerned is informed of the wedding. "You are to be married, my dear," says her mamma casually one morning, "and we have chosen Saturday next

for the ceremony because Saturday is the birthday of the god who presides over the horoscope of the revered grandfather of your future husband, and therefore a specially lucky day for the family." On the best authority I am informed that the young lady always answers, "Yes, mamma." There is nothing else a well-brought-up young lady can do—in Japan.

Two or three days before the formal ceremony she sees her future husband, probably for the first time, at the *Miai* arranged by the *Nakadachi*. *Miai* means literally "mutual seeing," and a thorough "mutual seeing" it is. All in their best clothes and their best manners, the two families drink tea together, and while the young couple look at one another out of the corners of their eyes with justifiable curiosity, the old ones peer around with suspicion, ready to pick faults. But unless something very dreadful comes to light on this occasion—unless the bride is seen to have an ear too few or a finger too many or the groom an eye in the middle of his forehead—the solemn betrothal promise is given, and the Matchmaker pockets her fee with a sigh of relief. At last her trouble is over—and successfully.

From our point of view the whole arrangement seems hatefully matter-of-fact. We miss an important wedding guest—little Love, with his beautiful rosy wings which cover, for such occasions, ugly human imperfections. He has been left out on purpose, however. At least, the bride has never heard of him, the groom has forgotten all about him, and the fathers-in-law have agreed to ignore a person whose behaviour is so uncertain. No true Japanese parent will risk having his plans interfered with by a meddling trickster without a head for arithmetic or an eye for suitability.

On the whole their behaviour is unwise, for Love knows very well how to revenge himself. Slam the front door in his face, he still creeps in the back way. Moreover, the mud of the dirty, narrow side-lanes inevitably spatters his wings and his shining feet are often smirched by the foulness of the temples where Society forces him to hide. Draggled, fighting hard for his life, he soon loses most of his soft and tender qualities and grows more and more to resemble his rough, rude elder brother, Passion—which means that he gives the community he chooses to enter many uncomfortable moments. Perhaps he ties the

heart of a staid, good man to a light-o'-love, inspiring him with what the Japanese themselves call the *mayoi*, the dreadful, reckless infatuation which leads to a double tragedy. One reads in the papers almost every day how some respectable merchant has drunk poison with a famous geisha, or a well-known banker, old enough to know better, has tied a piece of dynamite to his waist, clasped some unofficial inamorata in his arms and had the supreme satisfaction of blowing up with her.

Even in my own narrow circle a case of the kind happened. The man, son of my tailor, fell from grace into the clutches of a pretty servant at an inn, a clever, kitten-like creature, incapable, to judge from appearances, of any deep feeling. And yet, when his family bitterly opposed their informal relationship, the pair fled one night at the hour of the heaviest darkness, when, as the Japanese poets say, "the river roars loudest." They fled, as lovers will, all a-thrill with their own feeling, careless of the feelings of others, and the result was that the man's father, through grief at their recklessness, grew sick and died—of a broken heart the neighbours said, though it seems strange that hearts should be still brittle enough

to break at seventy! When the lovers heard of what had happened the deep remorse which follows on irretrievable mistakes touched their hearts. "Ay, ay, we have killed him," they said to one another, "we have killed a good old man"—whereupon, as an atonement, they went to the graveyard in which he was buried and committed suicide on his tomb. The idea was doubtless praiseworthy, but all the pair really succeeded in proving was an extra expense to the family.

This man left three small children and a genuine wife to suffer, I remember, when he temporarily mislaid his sense of duty. She never said she thought it disgraceful the way some people acted; she never uttered a single complaint of any kind. Japanese wives seldom do—in fact, from the man's point of view, they make the most perfect wives on earth. They have no illusions; a man need never be afraid of knocking over some fragile bit of sentiment in his own house and being made the victim of a scene afterwards for his clumsiness. They are beautifully subservient always, under all circumstances. They expect little—and they get less.

A typical household living at the corner of my

street in Tokio will serve as an example of normal family life as it is lived every day in Japan. I know them well, having had exceptional opportunities to observe their intimate relationships from the inside outwards. The man is just an average man, neither better nor worse than his neighbours, fairly well-to-do, moderately intelligent. The wife is gentle, modest, retiring, skilled in household management. And there are several babies—two of them sons—so that all is as it should be. Every morning the husband goes off to an office where he remains all day, while his little wife sits at home waiting upon his aged and exacting parents, one or both of whom always want something done for them or brought to them. At the hour when her lord is graciously pleased to return she goes to the outer gate and welcomes him with great ceremony and many bows. Do you suppose he troubles to return these pretty salutations? Not at all. He simply gives an inattentive grunt—though he is really quite a considerate man and not at all an ogre as Japanese husbands go—and hurries into the house to change the uncomfortable foreign clothes he is obliged to wear during office hours for his loose kimono. His lady wife hovers

around him meanwhile, folds his frock coat and lays it away, brings his *obi* (girdle), puts his pipe and the *hibachi* (firebox) at his elbow, brews fresh tea for him and tells him exactly those things he would like to hear—and those only. Not a word about the petty tyrannies of the mother-in-law or the impertinences of the cook. A highly-strung brain like his—a brain valued by his employers at exactly thirty yen per month—must be kept free from the strain of domestic surroundings, must be made to forget that there are such things in life as cooks or other similar irritations. She brings in the children to amuse him if he is in a good humour, and for an hour he will spoil and pet them and stuff indigestible cakes into their hands. But of her he will take no notice, however well she may have ministered to his comfort. Men who are manly should not show affection to possessions like wives, is his theory. It is a sign of weakness; besides, it is a great deal of trouble, and if you train them properly from the very first they do not expect it. A wife, after all, from his point of view, is his property—*sa chose*, as the French say—something a little better than an upper servant, a little dearer than a second cousin twice removed—

a person who walks behind him along the street or into a public dining-room, who carries his parcels, and when he has a friend in to play "go" (chess) slips in and out of the room unnoticed by either host or guest. As a gentleman he treats her kindly, but as a man he avoids confessing his moral weakness by making love to her. Families in Japan are not the place for affectionate frivolities.

If he feels like unbending he either says to the "Honourable Interior," "Continue, madam, to amuse yourself by making my winter kimonos, arranging the flowers in the alcoves, and feeding the tame gold-fish in the garden pond. I am going out." Or else he goes without saying anything—and dines with some men friends at a fashionable restaurant where, free from all restraint, the party enjoy themselves very merrily. They eat far more than they should, and of course so long as geishas hover about like tropical moths, filling their wine cups, these gentlemen empty them. The result is always the same; cheeks grow scarlet, eyes sparkle, hands are clapped in rhythmic accompaniment to some singer, and finally at daybreak each man staggers home to

sleep off the effects of his debauch, rolled up in his *futons* (quilts) like a pig in the straw.

For two days thereafter his family is punished for his over-indulgence. He is ruder than usual to his wife; he is withering to his children, he is slightly less deferential to his parents; everybody in the house trembles, moves about on tiptoe, and speaks in whispers. It is a state of things altogether lamentable, for which we have no word sufficiently expressive, but which the Germans would simply call "*Pfui.*" If it happened in our own enlightened land a dozen societies would hold meetings to correct it, a hundred incensed persons would write letters to the papers on the subject and sign themselves "One Who is Interested in the Preservation of Morals." The Japanese, however, are a good-natured, easy-going people who take no pleasure in criticising the sins of their neighbours. They do not think any the worse of a man for getting drunk—provided he gets drunk decently indoors and does not lower his country's reputation for sobriety by reeling around the streets and meeting globe-trotters. The authorities would, I am sure, stand little nonsense of this sort.

Neither does public opinion frown upon him

who takes unto himself secondary or even temporary wives. He may have just as many as he likes and can afford without fear of being cut by his acquaintances or hampered in his official career. The great Prince Ito had a little harem of eighty pretty maidens, so the papers said, and look how high he rose! Of course the comic weeklies had their little joke at his expense now and then, but on the whole people said "Lucky dog" and envied him. There was one man in particular, also a Government official, who was downright jealous. His own wives were about as numerous as the descendants of Abraham, but still somehow he never managed to outnumber those of his colleague, and when you come to think of it that is enough to sour a man! Once he nearly succeeded, but just at his proudest moment he got into serious trouble over the jovial rivalry. It was at the time of the Peace Riots, while the people were still pinching and screwing and saving on account of the war, that this gentleman happened to buy a very successful and very expensive geisha to add to his collection. And the people heard of the sum he had spent on her—the patient people who had been doing without necessities, let alone

luxuries, for months. So they rose in their wrath and went to his house and broke the windows and set fire to the place, nearly grilling the inmates alive.

“The nation was not protesting against the rich man’s natural wish to purchase another beautiful geisha to add to his collection,” the Japanese who told me the story hastened to explain, for fear of being thought a prude, “but they were angry that he should have made his purchase just at a time of national anxiety when every one was economising.”

How are *bona fide* Japanese wives, in the face of this accommodating public opinion, to check their husbands’ merry temperaments? In the past they have made no effort to apply corrective measures. Their early education has taught them never to show anger, jealousy, or grief, but when their lords come home with spinning heads and treat them with silent rudeness (I must say that never have I heard of a Japanese husband of the better class who was unkind to his wife in words) to ask no questions, and, above, all to make no remarks of a sarcastic, spiteful, or unpleasant nature. Otherwise they court divorce, which on

the man's side is fatally easy among Our Little Brown Allies. Almost any excuse is good enough. My milkman one day summarily bundled his spouse out of house and home, returned her with thanks, simply because he disliked his mother-in-law. She was "*yakamashi*," that is, troublesome, on her visits to her daughter, also given to talking too much. When he told me the reason why he had broken up his home I was aghast—and said so. "Oh, it is of no consequence," he replied airily as I was peering into his milk-cans one morning. "A new wife is as easy to get as an old one to get rid of." So the poor lady was sent back in disgrace to live with the *yakamashi* mother and be labelled all her life, "Not wanted in cabin. Stow away in hold,"—all for no fault of her own.

In the near future, however, I am sure such things will never happen. Already the Japanese woman is as the worm that shows signs of turning. Slowly she is beginning to change—advance as we call it. The freedom enjoyed by school-girls to-day is five times greater than it was two years ago—it has become so great all of a sudden that seven prominent female educationalists have got frightened and issued some "Don'ts for

Behaviour," which show very accurately how far the pendulum has swung.

Article I. Don't have a talk with young men in a closed room; the presence of a third party is required.

Article II. Don't visit young men.

Article III. Don't see a bachelor at his lodgings except under the guardianship of elder women.

Article IV. Don't communicate with young men; when necessary send letters through proper people. Don't open yourselves the letters you have received from a stranger.

Article V. Don't exchange photos and other articles with young men.

Article VI. Don't receive men in your bedroom or sick-room.

Article VII. Don't go out if possible after sundown; when necessary, be accompanied by a chaperon.

Article VIII. Don't travel or put up in a hotel without a chaperon.

Article IX. Don't live alone in any house except relatives' or friends' without a chaperon.

Article X. Don't behave vulgarly towards men taking every care in speaking and deporting.

Article XI. Don't speak with men and receive favours therefrom without being introduced in a proper manner.

Article XII. Don't go near such a person or place as may create a misunderstanding.

Article XIII. Don't take a walk or play games with young men without a chaperon.

Article XIV. Don't see young men off or meet them on a trip.

Article XV. Don't dress or undress in the presence of others.

Young matrons, too, though they do not need to be reminded like the foolish school-girls that one may be up-to-date without dressing or undressing in public, are no longer content to live in quite the "noble seclusion" their mothers did. It is all very well to be taken out three times a year by one's husband to some temple festival, but it is more amusing to drive one's self in a pretty carriage and pair—and one bold young peeress does it. The older generation may shake their heads at what some of them consider immodest if not actually indecent. She has the moral support of a dozen princesses who order complete

outfits from Peter Robinson's every year—the very princesses whose mothers, when they sent for trousseaux from Europe, gave directions that the top and bottom of the box should be marked, and, when by mistake the signs were reversed, put on the garments in reverse order.

Poor, foolish ladies, they had no idea of being emancipated—no conception of any attitude of mind except one of clinging limpness to some male relative who did not appreciate them. Fancy, they scarcely even knew how to behave at an official dinner-party, foreign style. But all the same, if I were a Japanese husband I would encourage my wife to be as they were—yes, even to bring home charlotte russe in her parasol and shrimp salad in her reticule. If the men want to continue being comfortable in the old-fashioned way they must see to it that their women do not learn too much.

CHAPTER VI

A NATION OF MIMICS

ANY one might think that these Japanese ladies, who now suddenly demand rights and privileges, after having lived contentedly for centuries without either, are really being educated above the old soul-killing drudgery. But that is not the case. They have simply had an opportunity to observe the lives of their European sisters and begun to imitate them because, like dogs that bark and bite, "it is their nature to." Our Little Brown Allies, men, women, and children, are a nation of such incorrigible mimics that whatever they see the rest of the world doing they must do also. If somebody has a Constitution, they want a Constitution; if somebody else builds steamers, they must build steamers; and when it rains in London they turn up their trousers in Tokio.

The best Japanese society seriously struggles to copy our ways and habits. I am sure the Tokio

ultra-fashionables all read our edifying periodicals, which tell their subscribers not to eat soup with a sponge or place feet upon furniture. I believe, too, that they keep a staff of special experts scanning the society papers from London, Paris, New York, and Vienna, just to answer those who eagerly inquire, "What must we copy next?"

Every season these experts advise some new fashion—they would soon lose their positions if they suggested no novelties, as the Japanese, like children, quickly tire of the same game and require another—and this fashion is enthusiastically followed—for a time. One year I remember giant picnics, copied from America, became the rage. Rich people gave serial outdoor entertainments lasting for three days, at which they extravagantly provided five kinds of food on the same plate. Newspapers fed school children in picturesque spots; employers arranged monster outings for their workmen—outings so huge that a member of the General Staff must have been borrowed to plan the commissariat arrangements. But this fashion lasted an unusually short time—even for Japan. The railway officials found themselves utterly unable to cope with the crowds who wanted

to get to the same place at the same moment, and, furthermore, many towns seriously objected to being flooded with the unruly population that rightly belonged to another part of the Empire.

Enthusiasm being thus turned aside from the fad of the year in the middle of the season, the "experts" could think of nothing better to suggest than some useful imitative work on public funerals. Compared with Ireland, as they pointed out, Japan was rather behindhand. She had not yet achieved anything in this line big enough to get into the European papers, and thinking patriots agreed that what she needed when burying her public men was more show and less simplicity. A special study was accordingly made of the Celtic model with remarkably good results. Many a man who, while he lived, had spent his unimportant days behind a little cage in some Government office became a personage—and an opportunity—once he was dead. His family's private grief was suitably consoled by the large palm wreaths and floral cushions that the neighbours sent to show their sympathy instead of the old-fashioned single branch of *Sakaki* (an evergreen, meaning literally, "God's Tree"), and the public was suitably im-

pressed by the lengthy train of mourners which even the dead man's doctors and nurses were expected to swell.

With a proper sense of the value of contrasts, next year the "experts" recommended something frivolous rather than solemn—something, in fact, to please their feminine following. A summer number of the *Sphere* or the *Queen*, devoted to Ostend or Margate, gave them an idea, and they suggested sea-bathing for the ladies. But this once the little Japanese matrons were slow about acquiring a habit; the pleasant combination of coldness and wetness and periodic suffocation, which is the portion of sea-bathers, did not appeal to them, and so, after shivering half-heartedly for a season in weird bathing-dresses of white handkerchief linen, they gave it up and took to being photographed instead.

The craze for photography was really one of the most popular fads that ever swept over Japan. All classes and both sexes had their pictures taken, not as we do, urged on by our loving family and modestly pretending to protest, but with frank enjoyment. The young recruit marched proudly off in his first uniform to stand before some camera,

leaning upon the gun he had not yet learned to load. The sailor did likewise—only he clutched a life-buoy as the trade-mark of his calling. Civilians of the “smart” variety dressed themselves in their best and stiffest foreign clothes and repaired to some studio, where they sat themselves down in a sanctified pose of sanctified rigidity on a plush chair edged with bullion fringe, behind which atrocious piece of furniture was placed—with mathematical precision—a curtain painted to represent a Roman ruin; the photographic subject, if a man, who had at some time or other enjoyed the advantages of military training, sat at attention with eyes right; if a woman, was stiffened artificially by means of several iron clamps placed along her spinal column, and told to place her toes together, her heels apart, and one hand, grasping a large white handkerchief, in the centre of her lap. When every trace of individuality was successfully suppressed, when the person’s position and face was absolutely wooden, every muscle stiffened as if with starch, the result was judged excellent and in perfect “foreign style.”

As well as I remember, the photographic fad was followed by the waltzing fad, which undoubt-

edly had deep political significance. It was confined to certain picked gentlemen of Court and official circles; they took a course of correspondence lessons in the art of dancing, and then, instructed by official circular, led out diplomatic ladies at balls to experiment upon them. A friend of mine was the first victim of a certain high personage whom it would be too cruel to name. Though in agonies at the ridiculous spectacle she knew she was going to make of herself, she accepted his invitation to waltz for the sake of politeness. The couple made several false starts before the little man confessed that he had only had six lessons in waltzing, but still he thought he could manage if she would count one, two, three, loudly in his ear. It was a pity, he added, that music meant absolutely nothing to him and he could never distinguish the first beat of a bar from the third. "You have a great deal of my sympathy, I assure you—far more than you think," replied the lady, sarcastically, as she began to count. One, two—bang he had collided with a marble pillar; one, two, three, he had almost overturned a gold-laced member of the Imperial Household, himself a little off his proper orbit. Their pro-

gress was fraught with real danger, and upon what might have been the fate of the poor lady, had she not tactfully persuaded her violent partner to sit down and talk about his accomplishments, I do not care to dwell. Next morning some Japanese humourist wrote an amusing skit on the entertainment, in which he said that waltzing reminded him of "hopping fleas." A little vulgar, perhaps, but very true where his countrymen were concerned!

One of the most recent fashions among well-to-do people in Japan is to have their children brought up on the European plan. Rich men now confide their offspring to British widows or maiden ladies in order that the little ones, while still at an impressionable age, may be brought into daily contact with chairs and beds and leather shoes. On Sunday nights they return to Nature and the comfort of collarless kimonos, but the rest of the week they are rigorously subjected to all the disagreeable advantages of our dress, discipline, and sanitation. It certainly does them good. The Japanese child, at home, is too much pampered. As a great many travellers have pointed out, Japanese mothers never use the paternal slipper

as a corrective. With mistaken kindness they placidly quote the old proverb instead—"Children are far better when they are loved"—and by loved they mean "never punished." The dear little things must be allowed to do whatever comes into their mischievous little shaven heads, eat everything which they can crowd into their quaint little round mouths, ask for anything they happen to think of at any hour. Imagine then what an awakening the *régime* of the British matron is to the wayward little dears—and what a wholesome awakening! They may cry at first for a favourite doll in the middle of the night but finding no doting parent brings it to them they soon cease to show their tempers.

Physically, too, as well as morally, they benefit from this excellent fashion. Airy rooms, open windows, light blankets instead of wadded *futons*, which weigh upon the chest as mince pie does on that region lower down which we consider it impolite to mention—all these are improvements on the Japanese house, where proper sanitation is sadly lacking. Half the year—the winter half—there is insufficient oxygen, and people sleep, eat, and have their being in an atmosphere largely made

up of charcoal fumes. The other half—the hot half—the sun and the dampness bring out smells that show something rotten, not “in the state of Denmark,” but in the state of drainage. Then, above all, these little victims of a fashionable fad have the great advantage of constantly hanging their legs down from chairs instead of crumpling them up on the floor. Legs constantly crumpled will grow neither long nor straight—at least so several clever Japanese doctors are preaching. These scientific men even go so far as to state that Our Little Brown Allies have centuries of squatting to thank for the odious prefix “little” which they hate so much,—the soldiers especially. I remember how one poor battered fellow, whom I used to see in the hospital after the war, would forget his woes and beam ecstatically as he told me, with pride, “Well, nobody can say I am a little man—I have walked shoulder to shoulder with the Russian prisoners, and you call them big enough, don’t you?”

Before the whole nation can grow, of course, the pretty soft *tatami* (mats) must disappear from the houses—and even the decree of fashion will not easily accomplish that among all classes. The

wealthy minority, however, as a part of their fad of imitating our habit of life, are gradually changing the style of their dwellings. The fine old *yashikis*, set in quaint gardens, are beginning to be considered behind the times. Whoever can afford it to-day orders a two-story red brick or white stucco mansion with a Renaissance portico and a Queen Anne cupola. This atrocity is laboriously built by a native architect. He makes his reputation over the design—and like as not forgets some important internal part of the structure. Maybe it is the front staircase. A certain promising young architect of Osaka was known to be absent-minded about his main staircase. But as he cheerfully got over the difficulty every time by putting in a flight which began in the upper broom closet and ended in the pantry his customers never complained. They thought it was the usual thing—in Europe.

Still more absurd was the mistake of mimicry which occurred in a Tokio public building a few years ago. The question of copying somebody's police force was then being discussed. "Let's have the French model," said the governing majority. A certain little official was accordingly

sent over to France to study police-stations and all that in them is. But, unluckily, the biggest Paris *gendarmierie* was undergoing extensive repairs at the time of his visit; the Chief Inspector and all the lesser inspectors were temporarily housed in a hospital—with the sign over the front door changed. They omitted to explain this to their guest, and of course the poor little man, who had never committed a crime or submitted to an operation in his life, did not suspect. He observed in good faith, just as when he reached home again he described in good faith, and with much minuteness all he had seen—how the rooms were placed, how large they were, how many of them went to a floor. And the Japanese, painstaking as usual, builded exactly as he described—with the result that they presently found on their mistaken hands a white elephant of a building suffering from the defects of its qualities, those very characteristics which made it ideal for a hospital making it useless for a police-station. Fourteen-foot cells, a cheerful outlook, and morning sun, only encourage crime.

If Our Little Brown Allies would rest content with copying our habits and our municipal in-

stitutions, little harm would result either to their models or to themselves. But they also persist in copying our manufactures—and in an unscrupulous manner, which undoubtedly decreases their chances of a heavenly reward. Take their silverware for example. They have adopted all our shapes, and it is safe—though shameful—to state that whatever should be solid the Japanese silversmiths imitate with a hollowness the more deceptive because it does not boldly resound. Even those impressive dragons on their massive tea-services—those fine, fat creatures which might serve to advertise a patent food for infants—are frauds. Not a hygienic diet but leaden hip pads and bustles and stomachers produce their plump figures. The modern Japanese artisan is growing greedy, and his greed is undermining not only his moral sense but his strength of mind, so he is unable to stand up against the fatal argument of globe-trotters' dollars and answer boldly, "I will not make ugly slipshod things for you; rather will I earn less and remain true to my traditions." What must the men who made these "traditions" so long ago say to one another if they look down and see the way things are going? "Not like our

times, are they now?" I can imagine one saying to another sadly. "Always hurry, hurry, hurry, anything to get a piece of work finished, well or badly." "Yes, very different from our day," answers another. "We worked all our lives and perhaps only turned out three or four good pieces. But then our ambition was to produce beautiful things—to snatch from the Gods a pinch of their immortality—none of us cared for money. All we needed was a perfect Lotus bud in a bronze vase for inspiration, or a single white Morning-Glory in an ivory cup beside us. Why, these young fellows, if they trouble to keep a flower near them at all, stick a ragged blossom in an old cigarette tin. Bah, and they call themselves artists!"

The modern school of Japanese painters is just as slavishly imitative, with less excuse, as the makers of umbrella handles and hair-brushes. Hardly a man among them cares nowadays to do those exquisite water-colour sketches of Crows and Flies and Grasshoppers and Peonies in which he could excel. No, his ambition is a six-foot canvas, a life-size figure, and oils—like our Old Masters. I remember seeing at the Osaka Exhi-

bition a few years ago the first collection of home-made oil paintings. Disillusionising is too weak a word to describe it. One look through the door was enough to make *Hokusai* turn in his grave. Instead of those beautiful, poetic renderings of ghostly legends with their marvellous soft "atmosphere"—the specialty of the old Japanese school—I saw several rows of naked women, by gentlemen who no doubt had studied in Europe. Perhaps it is wrong to judge them harshly; perhaps it was not their fault; the Government probably ordered them to go to Paris or Rome or Florence and apprentice themselves as palette scrapers to some celebrity in their trade—on the same principle that it ordered its naval officers to go and be scullions on foreign warships and pick up the secrets of the battleship trade. As good citizens we must commend them for their prompt obedience. But a good citizen is not necessarily a good artist. Men may spend years measuring the noses of Botticelli's women, the hands of Da Vinci's, the hips of Rubens's, and when they have pieced the results together and painted them pale brown, proudly hang them in an exhibition—without creating masterpieces.

Heaven only knows why these beginners should further decrease their hopes of success by choosing to paint the female nude! It is contrary to every canon of Japanese art; the old school dressed all their Goddesses and Wood Nymphs and Tree Spirits, though they did not object now and then to painting spirited groups of fishermen or farmers in the scanty costume befitting their occupations. It was also—only ten years ago—contrary to the canons of Japanese good taste. I remember when the authorities in Kioto refused a design for a diploma because it contained two allegorical figures allegorically clad, and when the authorities of Kobe actually arrested a foreign lady driving through the streets for endangering the public morals by allowing her eight-year-old daughter to wear a muslin frock with low neck and short sleeves. Yet now we see a small band of determined men, officially winked at, mercilessly dragging the graceful kimonos off modest paint maidens, and forcing us to look at thick ankles and heavy bodies instead. My sympathy went out immediately to one poor sylph awkwardly playing with a serpent, and to another mournfully scratching upon a violin under a blossoming

cherry tree. A third, more brazen in expression, was less appealing, as she regarded herself in a Louis XV. mirror with unpardonable satisfaction; but her next neighbour made me feel almost wretched. Sitting upon a damp grassy bank beside a tiny stream, with one arm poised airily behind her head, she gazed out of the picture at the staring public with eyes half bewildered, half imploring, as though she would apologise. "Honourably forgive me for idling in this unseemly and foolish manner. If you will only help me to find my clothes I will at once proceed to do something useful."

Oh, better far, if imitate they must, that Our Little Brown Allies should imitate biscuits decently clothed in tins; yes, better even that they should put foreign labels upon them! The moral side of this question we will not touch—nor the biscuits either, for all their alluring pink sugar tops. It is, in fact, a good rule for those who value their "honourable interior" as a Japanese lady of my acquaintance called her digestion, also to beware of concoctions put up in bottles in Japan. Especially beware of clarets with red, white, and blue striped labels and inscriptions in seventeenth-

century French, of sherries guaranteed from Spain, and whiskies Scotch enough to wear kilts. Nine times out of ten none of those liquors have even taken a trip abroad for the sake of the label—like rich Americans do. Trade-marks, signatures, contents—all are copied in Tokio, and generally copied with impunity, for our manufacturers seldom incur the expense or the trouble of prosecuting the offenders, though now and again some determined exception fights for his principles and his products. There was, for example, the celebrated case of the whiskey maker who formally complained that a certain Japanese manufacturer was using his label, slightly altered, upon an inferior brand of spirit. He took the case into court and the judge patiently pointed out his uncharitable attitude of mind. “What,” said the Man of Law, “does it matter if a Japanese uses your label? Is n’t it really a delicate compliment to you? Is not imitation the sincerest form of flattery—according to your own proverb? Besides, when a purchaser opens a bottle of the imitated whiskey and tastes it, he will either know the difference or he won’t. You follow me? Well, if he does he will be careful to buy, microscope in

hand, next time; if he does n't, that simply proves there is not enough difference between the two articles to make so much fuss about." Unfortunately the British firm were unable to appreciate the paternal advice and are still looking for a judge who will agree with them.

After they find him, only a very stern ruling, or perhaps several very stern rulings, will cure a habit as deep-seated in Japan as this habit of borrowing other people's property without permission. It has corrupted all classes. Even the humble "*yaoya*" (literally, the "seller of a hundred things"), who lives in my quiet street and supplies me with vegetables and provisions, has adopted it. Seeking one morning early to buy a fresh melon for the breakfast-table I caught him in the very act of fraud. His shop, thus surprised, was all in disorder; the little counter was covered with jars of strawberry jam, and astride of it, among the bottles, sat a very dirty little boy with a pot of rice paste and a pile of Morton's labels before him. There, unashamed and in full view of the public, he was quietly pasting them upon the home-made preserves that still smoked invitingly, while the old "*yaoya*" himself, the real

instigator of the deception, enjoyed his pipe unconcerned inside the shop. "How," I expostulated, alarmed at seeing this child of tender years pushed along the downward path, "how can you permit him to do such a dishonest thing?" "Because I am an old man and he is my apprentice; therefore I allow him to learn and to practise all the profitable features of the trade," he retorted complacently, rather proud of having conferred on the lad the favour of an initiation in rascally practices. Strange to say, he and his kind never seem to realise for a moment that by all their needless and foolish trickery they are bound ultimately to defeat their own ends.

CHAPTER VII

OF SHOPS AND PUBLIC OFFICES

ALREADY the majority of foreign residents in Japan avoid Japanese shops whenever possible, though the Japanese shopkeeper can undersell, because he can underlive, his white competitors. Sometimes, however, it is actually cheaper to pay a higher price for one's necessities and luxuries—cheaper because of the reduced strain upon the nervous system of the buyer.

The typical Japanese shopkeeper often sets the calmest nerves on edge and tries the most saintly patience. In the first place, he does not want to keep his shop. All matters of trade and barter being considered demeaning by his countrymen, his attitude towards business is languidly indifferent, towards customers slightly hostile. He makes it a rule never to urge, induce, or otherwise encourage any one to buy anything, and to gently discourage if he can. The experience of a lady

in Yokohama, who went into a shop to look for some expensive brocade, will serve as a typical example of his methods. "Have you any good brocade?" said she to a little man who came slowly forward with an air of abstraction—as if inwardly contemplating *Nirvana* and praying that he might not be long disturbed from higher things. "Yes, we have," he wearily replied. "Well, will you get them out and let me see them?" "Yes, if you are sure you want to buy!" said he with a resigned sigh.

Personally, I have had much experience with the Japanese "merchant"—as the tiniest shopowner calls himself—both in Tokio and Kioto, where foreign rivals dare not penetrate, and I have found him a fascinating study—of inattention. If by chance he has the particular article I am seeking, it is too much to expect him to know its price off-hand. The stock of his establishment may be small and my request for a thing so common that people must be asking for it every day, but the proprietor is obliged to hunt up its value laboriously in a ledger, with a puzzled air as though he had never seen it in his life before and could not possibly guess whether it was worth ten

sen or ten yen. I generally occupy myself during this operation by looking around the shop, and when he finally reappears I ask, "Have you anything new since I was in here last?" Poor man, he shakes his head more in sorrow than in anger at my persistence. "No," he says, "I am very sorry." But I am not to be put off so easily. Well knowing that Our Little Brown Allies are exceedingly clever at devising or copying novelties, I press my inquiries in detail. Together the proprietor and myself open drawers and search odd corners, he reluctantly, I determinedly, till at last we discover, carefully hidden away, something both new and original—something which a shopkeeper in any other part of the world would put in his window marked "latest fashion." But then shopkeepers in other parts of the world pride themselves on their pushfulness, while shopkeepers in Japan pride themselves on their bashfulness; the former glory in a crowd of customers; the latter try to avoid a number of purchasers who will all insist upon buying something. Did not a certain silk "merchant," of whom I inquired whether he had any more of such and such a thing, tell me dolefully, "No, and I never shall

have any more, for no sooner do I get in a new stock than it sells out directly."

A favourite trick of little Japanese shopkeepers to avoid the shock of a sudden sale is the remark, "We do not keep it ready made," in answer to the demand for some specific article. Usually they will suggest, "You give order, we make specially," adding many tempting promises about how beautifully they will do it. Anything to gain time, anything to save immediate effort, are the ideas at the bottom of their minds, I imagine; anything to save the trouble of looking through their stock, anything to get rid of the customer temporarily, and to sink back into a comfortable apathy.

Alas! these philosopher-merchants find themselves in an uncomfortable predicament when the inevitable day of reckoning comes round and the order so blithely undertaken has to be produced. Left to the tender mercies of the youngest assistant it is not ready at the appointed time, and some one is put to the trouble of inventing plausible excuses to calm the exasperated customer. Then, when at last it is finished, it is sure to be wrong in a dozen ingenious ways. If a garment, it is too

short or too narrow, or the wrong colours have been used; if a piece of silver, it is the wrong shape or the wrong pattern; if a trunk, it is the wrong size and costs more than the price originally quoted.

I remember once negotiating with a carpenter for some simple frames. He sent me word when they were ready and I trudged hopefully half across Tokio to see how my pictures looked in their new dresses. I had chosen a soft brown wood to tone with the etchings, and explained exactly what was wanted with what I thought extreme lucidity and admirable patience the week before. What did I find? Hard, heavy frames of an ugly, dingy black. It was most irritating; but concealing my vexation as best I could, I began expostulating mildly on the fellow's carelessness, when suddenly the cheeky young carpenter burst into a rage and fairly shrieked at me in broken English, "I 'vise [advise] you go back own country. Go out my shop. I 'vise you go back own country." As far as his premises were concerned I took his advice and beat an immediate retreat with as much dignity as possible under the circumstances, while that impudent little toad of a

boy continued to gibber and gesticulate until I was out of sight. He was an exceptionally ill-bred youth for Japan, where whatever people think inside they keep a polite outside, but he was not an exceptionally careless worker. In fact he was considered so "skilful" at his trade that he was left in sole charge of a "branch store."

The "branch store" is another of the characteristic and inexplicable peculiarities of the Japanese shopkeeper. His highest ambition is realised when he succeeds in establishing a "branch" in the next town, the next street, or even round the corner from his "main store." One of the biggest Yokohama silk merchants has gone so far as to open a secondary shop just across the road, to the delight of the proprietor and the inconvenience of the purchaser who buys half a dozen handkerchiefs on one side of the street, carries them across in his hand, and completes his dozen on the other. I knew, too, a case still less excusable—the case of a curio dealer in a little country town of forty houses, who has opened a branch hardly a dozen yards from his main establishment. Why he indulged in such luxury, when he hardly ever sells anything in his main store, he can not or

will not explain; my own theory is that he counterfeits in the "branch basement" to pay expenses; otherwise, how does he escape bankruptcy? especially as I have noticed that he is suffering from the most acute form of the disease called "Deterioration."

It is a common ailment among Japanese shopkeepers, and no doubt some day an eminent scientist will discover that, like laziness, it is caused by a microbe, and then invent a serum to cure it. So far, however, neither cause nor cure has been discovered. We only know that it may attack any healthy shop from three to five years after reaching maturity, and that the symptoms may be more or less virulent, the progress of the disease more or less rapid. The worst case I ever knew was that of a certain shoe shop. For two seasons before it was stricken it was exceptionally healthy. Its salesmen and artisans were neat, prompt, careful; they had good memories, all of them; they even made to order satisfactorily, and one had the most comfortable sense of security in giving them special directions and in listening to their promises. Then suddenly, without warning, the deadly microbe attacked this model

establishment; shortly after, it began to droop visibly; within a few months it was quite useless. These same shoemakers, who once fitted so excellently and finished so exquisitely, were hardly able to put a heel in the right place, and though after a time they recovered somewhat, the shop never regained its original vigour. Victims of deterioration seldom do, poor things. They are gradually doomed to subside into a gentle insignificance as their mysterious disease develops. I know of tailors who have gradually forgotten how to cut, of embroiderers whose hands have slowly lost their cunning, of photographers whose interest and ambition have gradually ebbed away—pathetic examples which would seem to indicate an alarming state of affairs. But in reality that objectionable little microbe knows very well what it is about. At the expense of the individual it really performs a service to Society by attacking “merchants” who have already achieved success and clearing the way for newcomers. Even the microbes are patriotic and work for the greatest good of the greatest number—in the land of Our Little Brown Allies.

I know of but one thing more aggravating than

a Japanese shop with its irritating yet laughable peculiarities, and that is a Japanese Government Office neatly tied up in its own particular ball of red tape. Take the Custom House for example. As Customs go it is comparatively harmless—I mean with regard to duties—for except alcohol, tobacco, gunpowder, wild animals, and a few similar trifles, one may bring in what one likes unmolested. There is no unholy joy awaiting the lady who outwits the authorities by concealing reels of silk in her husband's trouser legs—no, the pleasures of smuggling are denied—in Japan—to all but anarchists, tobacconists, inebriates, and proprietors of menageries. They must, I should imagine, form a very small percentage of the travelling public, yet the little Japanese inspectors live in great dread of them and dive their yellow fingers into many a harmless box, bundle, and package in search of whiskey, cigars, bombs, and boa-constrictors. Not only the "Main Office," at one end of the wharf, hunts diligently, but a "Branch Office" at the other rechecks the work of the officials fifty yards nearer the steamer. Trunks are not usually opened again, but what vexes the Anglo-Saxon soul is the clerk's barbaric habit of

turning dressing-bags, full of bottles, upside down while he slowly searches for his superior officer's chalk-mark—without which that bag is considered an illegal bag and its owner gravely suspected of having swum ashore with it in his mouth. "Have n't I showed it to three people already?" says the exasperated Briton. "Do you want to photograph it next, or perhaps X-Ray it to see if there are cigarettes concealed in my tooth-powder?" "I think that will not be necessary," is the bespectacled youth's grave answer. It is all very well for the white man to attempt frivolity; the Japanese knows that his own system is right for him; that only by this careful habit of checking and rechecking, one set of checkers playing detective, as it were, upon another, has his nation risen superior to the slipshod, inaccurate methods which make other Asiatic Powers so hopeless in *Welt Politik*.

Still, for the most perfect example of red tape in the world, I would not recommend the Customs but the Post-Office in Japan. It will satisfy the most exacting. Let any person yearning for some occupation with a spice of excitement about it go to Japan and get a friend in another hemi-

sphere to send him a parcel while he is there; then let him attempt to wrest from the proper authorities the box, bundle, or basket which by the indications of the address should be his, the applicant's, property. As soon as the parcel receipt reaches him he should make up his mind to a whole day's excursion and set out early with birth certificate, bank book, washing list, and any other papers which may be handy. Arrived at the Main Post-Office he must first look for the little window marked "Parcels" and then present himself at it cheerfully.

"You want parcel?" says a meek, surprised voice through the wicket.

He hands in the receipt and the little clerk disappears to the back of his little pen, where he collects his associates, and they all bend over the harmless paper, pulling and pinching it and examining it through a special Postal Microscope for detecting forgeries. Meanwhile the applicant is waiting and a crowd is gathering on his side of the wicket too—a crowd of other unfortunates to whom thoughtless friends and well-meaning relations have sent parcels. At last the little clerk reappears, looking very grave.

“You are the addressee who expects parcel here? Where are you living?” This is the moment for addressee to produce birth certificate, washing list, etc., and the Postal Officer receives them solemnly as if they were criminal evidence, and retreats again. Another consultation takes place behind the bars. The addressee’s patience probably begins to wear a little thin about this time, and he cuts short the discussion by sticking his head as far as possible through the wicket and calling out, “Well, where is my parcel?” Brutal question, delivered with brutal suddenness! This is just what the little clerk cannot answer, and so he comes forward, looking pained and grieved, as he scratches his head and says, “It is very difficult.” He is right—the addressee finds it *is* very difficult to wait calmly ten minutes longer and then be told his parcel is not there.

“You expect a foreign parcel,” says the clerk with the air of having made a sudden and brilliant discovery, “therefore you make application at next window.” At “next window” the whole episode is gone through again, and the addressee is passed on to the Foreign Department of the Custom House (situated a few doors off), with a

copy of his receipt now—for the original is too precious to be allowed out of the building.

Here again a rigid examination takes place. Questions are put, extending back into addressee's past, forward into his future. Does his present position justify his receiving a parcel at all—let alone a foreign parcel? Well, that depends somewhat on the contents, and so in a side-room both parties go through the sacred rite of opening, and the clerk finds something very suspicious—perhaps the latest in hair wash containing a certain percentage of alcohol, which is dutiable, and the rest of the afternoon is spent discussing the value of the hair wash plus the alcohol and minus the alcohol—in either case not more than £1. Finally, about sunset, the addressee receives his parcel, which in spite of its intrinsic beauty and the kind spirit of the giver has become odious to him, and crawls home either depressed or amused by the experience according to his temperament.

Another excellent way to get a little excitement in Japan is to attempt to cash a foreign money order. Take to the proper department of the proper post-office the little blue paper that stands for riches—and await developments. Note

the pitying smile of the little clerk at any sign of impatience on your part; listen to his halting explanation about how in three weeks or so the Tokio Head Office will receive a duplicate of your paper, in two weeks more the Yokohama Branch Post-Office will receive a copy of this copy, and then if you will come again he will look into the matter. But do not on any account call the man a "silly idiot" or you will be pushing the fun too far. In Japan there is a heavy fine for calling Government officials "silly idiots"—a fine which must have been specially included in the Criminal Code for the benefit of the lawless European, as no Japanese would dream of doing such a thing. His ancestors, in feudal times, learned the lesson of respect for authority too thoroughly for that. They "wore obedience like an ornament," and when their rulers ordered them to work from sunrise to sunset cultivating the rice-fields of their betters there was no back talk about the eight-hour day.

Naturally, after half a dozen centuries of being told what to wear, how large to build their houses, and how much to spend on toys for their grandchildren, any serious tendency towards individual

initiative was pretty thoroughly squelched; in time the nation actually came to love being disciplined, and down to these modern days the love has lasted. The big officials still run the little officials, the little officials order about those who are still less important, while the people are obligingly warned and prohibited by all the officials together, including the postal clerks who earn ten yen a month and know nothing except the letter rate to Tokio. Why, even in Germany, where pianos may not be played after "ten o'clock evenings," and handkerchiefs may not be dried on window-sills, life is in a state of reckless libertinism compared to Japan, as the stranger finds the moment his vessel drops her anchor in a Japanese harbour. Half a dozen little men immediately come on board clamouring to see his tongue and feel his pulse, sometimes introducing themselves quaintly as "I am the Sanitation," "I am the Expert Cholera," "I am the Plague." Woe to him if any of his fellow-passengers, shaken up rudely twelve hours before, still retain a greenish complexion! The ship will be held for a single sea-sick Chinese emigrant. "He is a suspect," declares the Chief Physician. He must therefore

be isolated in the bow and sprinkled with Keating's, for he is considered guilty until he proves himself innocent by recovering. He is excluded from the comforts of Society, and his very footprint is looked on with suspicion as a possible source of infection. The rest of the ship's company may fume and fret; in desperation they may whisper insults about the Chief Physician—I myself have heard exasperated ladies call him a "little yellow monkey" before now—but he simply takes no notice. Why should he? Do what they will, all are at his mercy, condemned by his lightest word to lie five hundred yards out from their destination for two days or ten—and he knows it. The Czar of all the Russias is only the pale shadow of an autocrat compared to this little Japanese "Expert Cholera."

When, later on, the stranger becomes a householder in the land of Our Little Brown Allies he realises the full extent of the Government's grandmotherly interest in his private affairs, and how kindly it lifts every possible responsibility off his shoulders. For instance, the Government fixes the exact day for his "spring cleaning," and on that day and no other he has to pick up

his *tatami* (floor mats) and sweep them; on another fixed date he is required to remove the loose boards which form the flooring of Japanese kitchens and show to properly-qualified inspectors the condition of the foundations. Should Japan's soldiers win a victory, the Government tells him to hang out flags and lanterns and exactly how many of each to hang. Then the Government declares the anniversary of the battle a holiday, and on that day, whether he wants to or not, he may not work. He must go to some park and sit on the grass with his family under the eye of a policeman who will send him home in time to march in a torchlight procession.

In return for this care the Government expects him to report himself and all that happens to his household in the proper quarter. If he is very poor he is required to state once a week how he makes a living. If he has children, he is to say so officially, and if his family otherwise increases, say by the arrival of his mother-in-law, he must tell that also. If he has a garden, and a blight comes upon his plants, he must notify the Controller of Gardens, who will thereupon come and kill the rest of his plants by sprinkling them with

chloride of lime so many times a month. If he himself has a sore throat he must hurry to the Isolation Hospital for examination, and if he has rats in his house he must immediately inform the police, giving his reasons for having them, and an accurate estimate of the number he believes he has. In the last-named case—a serious one if it occurs in the hot season—he will be peremptorily ordered to purchase a trap or a cat so as to decrease the chance of plague in the community, and as a guarantee that he has actually done so he is required to bring his dead rats himself, or send them with some thoroughly reliable person, to the District Sanitary Inspector, who will pay him two sen for each defunct rodent.

Lest he should be remiss in his duty of acting as an information bureau about himself, the police come round periodically and jog his memory in the name of the authority **THAT MUST BE OBEYED**. This habit Europeans, who are much less law-abiding than the natives, find so irritating that Our Little Brown Allies have been clever enough to modify it in their cases. A few years ago the spying was done quite openly. A little man came

to back doors then and questioned servants about the occupants of houses. But nowadays the inquirer's methods are much more delicate. True, he comes just the same, but he comes to the front door with a polite excuse about the weather on his lips, and he talks of the rice crop, and only now and then slips in tactful and unobtrusive inquiries about the visitor's business, and the probable length of his stay in Japan—unless, of course, the person inquired about happens to be a Russian, when he receives special attention, and attention thinly disguised. Have not the Russians these last few years been the most natural people for Japanese suspicion to fasten upon?

A friend of mine who was an *attaché* of the Russian Legation before the war used to give a spirited description of the spying to which he was subjected. Every morning as he lay in bed in his little Japanese bird-cage house there came a loud knock at the front door. It was an "open in the name of the law" knock that sent his servant shuffling quicky to the garden gate to bow in a dapper little policeman.

"Master, this official has come to inquire for you," she then called up the tiny flight of ladder

stairs that divides the *nikai* (the upstairs) from the rest in Japanese houses.

“Very well, let him inquire,” replied the *attaché*, politely rolling over in his *futons* (wadded quilts) and looking down the ladder straight into the drawing-room. There was the policeman bowing low.

“How is your honourable health?”

“Oh, quite well. Many thanks for your considerate inquiries.”

“And what is your august name?”

“My name is Radomski—the same as when you called yesterday.”

“And to what honourable nation do you belong?”

The *attaché* at this dramatic point used to rise on one elbow with a grand gesture and roar down in the high falsetto shriek of a Japanese actor, rolling both his eyes and his syllables fiercely, “I am a Russian!”

At this great and damaging piece of news so impressively delivered, the little policeman always hurried away, but only to return next day and ask the selfsame questions.

One afternoon this Russian gentleman, desiring

to buy a wardrobe, went to an obscure little shop to do so. As soon as he had entered the shop the little Japanese who was shadowing him slipped in also. The Russian had been long annoyed by a constant official supervision of his most harmless occupations, so he determined to get rid of his pursuer this time.

“Show me a *tansu* [wardrobe]” he said to the shopwoman. “No, not that one, the one over yonder, and turn it around so that I may examine the workmanship of the back.” There was a gentle wriggle, for behind this particular chest the spy had taken refuge. He deftly slipped to another. The second was ordered turned about; again the same thing happened, when he crouched behind a third. The poor spy was growing out of breath dodging his persistent persecutor; flustered, too, as none of the books he had read on “Spying” gave directions as to how to act under such unusual circumstances. For an official “follower” to be himself followed was entirely out of order. Bewildered, breathless, he took refuge behind the last trench, or his last *tansu*, and when that, too, was turned he had to flee ignominiously, leaving the *attaché* alone

to complete his dangerous and treasonable purchase.

The *attaché* was by no means the only one of his nation to suffer from too much supervision, however. Three harmless Russian professors in a university were so pestered just before the war that they had to appeal to their Minister for protection. "We are being driven to desperation by a too-flattering attention," said they. "Our goings-out and our comings-in are watched; our downsittings and our uprisings are reported on; our purchases are noted; our newspapers are opened; our letters are lost. Kindly assist us to a little privacy." The Minister hastened to explain in the proper quarter that the professors were absolutely harmless—only what they professed to be—and please might they be allowed to live the peaceful life of the innocuous. "We were only protecting them," came the answer from the Proper Quarter, which was pained and grieved that its action should have been misinterpreted.

A little later the Russians saw how unjust they were. The Japanese really deserved credit for the way they protected the Russian residents, the Russian Mission, and the Cathedral during all

the months of the war. Not even a window was broken; not even a convert was insulted. After peace was made the Russian Minister and dear old Bishop Nicolai, one of the best known and best loved men in Japan, drove in state to the Police Headquarters and gave formal thanks for the way they and their belongings had been kept in safety even when popular feeling against the Russians was at its bitterest. "Had it not been for your protection," said the Minister, in stiff phrases, "our property, even the lives of our people, might have been endangered by the natural excitement of yours." Then with touching humility—which experience leads me to think was intended for publication—the Police Inspector made an excellent retort. "Even if we had done nothing, the God of Your Honourable Country would have watched over and protected his servants."

What he probably thought to himself was that the Russians, throughout the campaign, had thrown rather too much responsibility on their God. Heaven, as the proverb says, helps those who help themselves, and though faith is a beautiful thing, the sceptical Japanese think they have

found a pretty good substitute for it in an infinite capacity for taking pains, and a careful attention to a thousand irritating little red-tape rules and regulations. If you don't keep your powder dry, they argue, there is little use believing in a God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAWBREAKER AND THE LAW

THE only people in Japan who are not properly overawed by the police are the very people that should be most fearful of them—the *Dorobo*, those bold, bad robbers of whom every householder stands in dread unspeakable. In the popular imagination the Japanese *Dorobo* is a mixture of Captain Kettle, d'Artagnan, and Hercules. He is strong with the strength of ten; he is cunning as a lynx. Like Love, he laughs at locksmiths and "breaks through and steals" in spite of barred *amadós* (storm shutters). No one hears him; no one sees him, but on the morning after his visit the family wake from their heavy, unventilated slumbers to find one of their best *cloisonné* vases dropped on the verandah and the rest of their treasures clean gone.

A generation ago every man was his own detective. When a robbery occurred, the head of

the household carefully looked for the awful *Dorobo's* footsteps on the garden path, and when he had found them—or thought he had—ceremonially burned a cone of *Moxa* on each. The feet of the flesh-and-blood *Dorobo* thereupon grew sore and swollen. No longer able to run nimbly from justice, he limped conscience-stricken to the house he had denuded and gave himself up. But those were the good old days when being a burglar did not prevent a man being a chivalrous gentleman at the same time.

Now the profession, like so many others, has fallen into disrepute. It is filled with a low class of men—the sons of persons in trade—persons without traditions. The modern *Dorobo* inherits from these shop-keeping fathers an ungentlemanly habit of desperate methods; he is above, or below, being touched by an appeal to the finer instincts. He goes about his business armed with a sword which he uses with skill and application, and the householder who gets in his way is lucky if he gets out of it again with body and soul still in partnership.

Only very rarely one learns of an exceptional case, in which a stray touch of the old chivalry

relieves the blackness of the modern *Dorobo's* character. The police records give occasional instances of tender compassion shown to children by the worst criminals. There was, for instance, the famous, ghastly murder in which seven persons of a lonely household were hewn to pieces in their sleep, and a little child left unharmed in such a position that the evidence showed how careful the men who slew must have been not to hurt the boy.

Women generally get no mercy, though here again there is an exception to prove the rule. Two Tokio missionary ladies play the part of heroines this time; two terrifying masked men, armed with long, wicked swords, the part of the villains. The elder lady was suddenly awakened one winter night by a robber, with the lower part of his face muffled in black cloth, standing by her bedside and demanding money.

"I am not accustomed to sleeping with my savings under my pillow," replied the lady as calmly as though she were in the habit of being aroused every night by a terrifying apparition. "If, however, you insist on having what is not rightly yours, I will go with you and show you

where I *do* keep them. Only you must kindly hand me my clothes first."

It was bitterly cold and the burglar, the gentle and compassionate exception, began to fumble among the garments hung against the opposite wall with masculine helplessness. He wanted to find something neat and not gaudy; a nice suit of grey lamb's-wool combinations struck his eye. "The very thing," quoth he to himself as he handed them to the lady. Was she grateful, was she even content? Not a bit of it. All the thanks he got for his trouble was a burst of furious indignation. Robber or no robber, she had not the slightest intention of getting up and walking with a man unless she was suitably dressed. "Not those," she said sternly, a world of reproof in her icy tones. "That," pointing to a becoming red dressing-gown. The *Dorobo* meekly obeyed and, serene in the conviction that she was looking her best, the lady left the room with him.

Outside the door, at the foot of the stairs, the second *Dorobo* was waiting. "Show us quickly where your money is, and if you are quiet about it we will not hurt you," said he with intent to reassure. As well tell a brook to stop babbling

as a maiden missionary lady of spirit to remain silent under the circumstances! This one grandly dismissed the idea of personal safety from her mind, and called to her friend sleeping on the floor above, "There are robbers in the house. Get out on the roof and shout." The friend promptly did; the robbers fled at the alarm—luckily, for no help was forthcoming. Next day, when the neighbours were reproached for their lack of public spirit, they excused themselves by saying, "Yes, oh, yes, we heard a noise but we said to one another, 'the honourable missionaries are singing hymns again,' and so we turned round and went to sleep." A very ingenious and plausible excuse it was, but not convincing. Do you suppose they really thought the "God Ladies" were holding a service on the roof in their night-clothes? Not a bit of it; they heard, they realised, and they remained away because nothing on earth would have induced them to willingly enter a house with *Dorobo* in it. As a very old resident said to me when I first came to Japan, "Never shout 'Robbers' under any circumstances, for you will be shunned like the plague if you do. Shout 'Fire' instead; that will bring all the neighbours in a

twinkling to assess the damage and save their own property."

One of that same pair of genteel desperadoes who were driven off by the presence of mind of the missionary heroine terrorised the rest of Tokio for weeks. A few nights afterwards he broke into another building. Two young girls slept alone in the house. They were timid, gentle creatures—the type that puts its head under the bedclothes in a thunder-storm and makes such an excellent, submissive wife—and though they heard the man enter their room they were powerless to do anything more practical than lie shaking in an extremity of terror while he quietly lighted a candle, went through their belongings, and gathered up their little trinkets.

After he had gone they recovered sufficiently to shriek for the *Junsa* (policeman), whose first care when he arrived was to whisk his note-book from his pocket and begin cross-questioning the young girls as severely as if they had just stolen their own things. "What is your age? What are your names?" he inquired. "But, please, what has that to do with it?" the elder found courage to ask. The policeman waived this question aside

loftily and began again where he had been interrupted. He was a very thorough and punctilious specimen of his class and he intended to follow what he called his "legulations" at any cost. Nothing would induce him to leave the house until he had collected sufficient information for a biography of the two girls. "This is an affair which requires particularly investigation," said he as he finally went, "because the *Dorobo* of the lighted candle is the most dangerous variety. Later I will inform you of results." But this was the last they ever heard of the zealous officer for there were no results to report. The *Dorobo* had got safely away while the little policeman was entering in his note-book the nationality, age, and occupation of his victims.

If the thief had only been a harmless, erring crook or *kurumaya*, instead of a *Dorobo* of "the most dangerous variety," I am certain his start would have availed him nothing. In this land of Our Little Brown Allies, where not a sparrow falleth without the fact being reported to the proper authorities, his hiding-place—even if it was in the most obscure village—would have been discovered. Within twenty-four hours a speci-

ally-detached policeman would have been politely slipping twine hand-cuffs round his wrist, and remarking courteously as he did so, "I beg your pardon for inconveniencing you," and he himself would have been replying, "Pray do not mention it." Thus a necessary business arrangement, entered into with due regard for the proprieties, would be decently brought to its inevitable conclusion.

But the little Japanese policeman finds no pleasure in setting out to capture a *Dorobo* "of the dangerous variety." Even after you have actually got him, this rascally fellow does not recognise the first rule of criminal good-breeding, which is that a captive must never try to escape once he has been officially informed that he is under arrest. And then the actual capture—that is attended with risks the little *Junsa* frankly does not like at all. Some of the superstitious popular terror of the typical desperado is in his blood, perhaps. The villain with masked face and kimono sleeves caught back with *tasuki* cords, so as to leave his arms free to wield the long sword (with which the killing of six or eight persons may only occupy a minute), imbues the Officer of the

Law with a moral terror. "Look how that fellow carries his head in his hand," the detectives whisper to one another, using the old idiom to describe a daring *Dorobo*. Not his bravery but his lawlessness throws them into a panic. There was the case of the notorious highwayman not long ago who took refuge in a doorway and kept half the police of the town sitting round his retreat in fascinated inaction—like little birds round a snake—for a whole day. They found it too embarrassing to get into close quarters with him, so they deliberately besieged the criminal and calmly watched him commit *hari-kari* from a safe distance when he began to feel the pangs of hunger. Yet it would be most unfair to accuse those policemen of cowardice. All of them would have died willingly and gallantly on a battle-field for a noble cause but they had serious objections to ending their days like rats in a hole for the sake of recovering some paltry property.

Supposing then I lose my electro-plated asparagus tongs in Japan, I know what to expect—unless they happen to be stolen by some meek household thief. The policeman at my corner will balance the value of my belongings against the

chance of possible mutilation to himself, and will probably decide that my asparagus tongs are an unconsidered trifle—for which I cannot really blame him. A philosophical temperament is a great asset in “foreign parts,” as I once had occasion to explain to a Scotch gentleman with red hair and a vile temper. He lived next door to me in Kioto, and he lost his bicycle—a beautiful machine made specially for long-legged sons of the Highlands, and fitted with special attachments for hill-climbing and other emergencies. When I say “lost” I do not mean that he forgot it in a train or mislaid it in the street by his own carelessness; no, it disappeared suddenly one night out of his front hall. He got quite excited, I remember, and informed the police three times a day for ten days. But he might as well have informed the wind for all the good it did. Two weeks, three weeks passed; his best epithets, including a choice selection from his own dialect, were giving out; hope had almost deserted his heart and he had just made up his mind to walk for the rest of his days, when a cross-eyed Japanese youth came to his house and asked if he had lost a bicycle. The Scotchman replied with an eager affirmative.

Well, said the cross-eyed boy, he had recently bought a very beautiful machine for seventy-five yen, but he found after purchasing it that the frame was too large and he could not ride it. Then some one had told him that a foreign gentleman had lost a bicycle, a very tall foreign gentleman; therefore he had come to the very tallest foreign gentleman he knew of, and he now offered to return the machine for what he had paid for it. Would the foreign gentleman come and look at the machine? The "Foreign Gentleman" did, and recognised it immediately as his own. There it was without a scratch, the long-lost treasure! He notified the police at once that it was found and they said he was very lucky; the best thing he could do under the circumstances would be to buy his own bicycle back again and ask no questions. Perhaps seventy-five yen was a little dear, but fifty would be fair; probably the cross-eyed boy would sell for fifty. He did—with the manner of one performing a kind and thoughtful action. Strange to say, none of the little *Junsa* seemed to think it odd that a Japanese youth should walk into a bicycle shop, grandly pull seventy-five yen out of his pocket (where it would be unusual to

find seventy-five sen) and buy a very fine machine without so much as putting his foot on the pedal to see if, when he did, the proper and corresponding part of his anatomy reached the seat. And stranger still, none of them appeared surprised that the youth showed such supreme unselfishness that he returned that machine at a personal loss of twenty-five yen, just for the pure pleasure of doing a kindness to a stranger.

Though residents hardly ever get their stolen possessions back in Japan, tourists sometimes do. If a *Dorobo* snatches a visitor's watch by mistake, he will often return it by dropping it into a letter-box or even, on a dark night, by throwing it in through the open window of a police-station on to the lap of the policeman sitting quietly inside. With my own ears have I listened to a grateful tourist in the hall of a Tokio hotel loudly exclaiming, "I love the police, I love the police." His gold repeater, lost in a railway station two hours before, had just been returned to him, so no wonder he sang the *Junsa's* praises. The point of interest is that he will continue to sing them in other lands he visits; will act really as a kind of living advertisement, and, did he but know it, the

hope of these favours to come is the reason of the prompt return of his property. I am informed, on the best authority, that though the police are not on visiting terms with the Robbers' Guild they have been known to hold communication by letter with its head men, somewhat in this style: "Please return to us the jewels you removed yesterday. They belonged to a man influential in his own land, and he will talk for ever about the affair if they are not recovered. He will smirch the fair name of our country. He will say we are no respecter of persons; he will say, oh! things too humiliating to be borne. Even his newspapers will criticise us. Please, therefore, for the honour of Japan return the jewels quickly, and some time, when some one who lives here for ever and cannot go away and talk has some valuable to your taste, we will be deaf when you pry open his *amado*." There is no resisting such an appeal—not, at least by a Japanese *Dorobo*, who, like all his countrymen, is patriot first and professional afterwards. The stolen goods are back before morning, and the police get *kudos* and loving gratitude for ever.

Nowadays all over the world "the man who advertises is the man who gets the trade"—and

the praise. Make a good show in public—that 's half the battle—the half which Our Little Brown Allies understand so well. Individual and private lapses are insignificant, though they may be amusing. I know a good story, for instance, about a certain little *Junsa* who fell from his high standard. A lady belonging to the British Embassy in Tokio was awakened one night by a noise. Her husband happened to be away at the time, and, terrified, she immediately screamed, "*Junsa, Junsa,*" without waiting to make any further inquiries. The little policeman, well knowing that he could not afford to be deaf to a call from an Embassy, came at once and searched the house diligently, but nothing could be discovered except the cat scratching on the *amados*. The lady consequently felt ashamed, just as a fond mother does when she calls a doctor to attend her crying offspring at midnight and finds that the baby has only been bitten by a mosquito. She dissolved in apologies while the rest of the family appeared one by one in various stages of *déshabillé* and dissolved too. In order to recompense the little policeman for coming on a false alarm she decided to make him a present of fifty sen. But with an

effective gesture he pushed it from him. "The Japanese police never accept money for doing their duty," said he, grandly. The audience was duly impressed. The lady was more ashamed than ever; dissolved in apologies again for her tactless behaviour, and to be extra polite, herself accompanied the little man to the front door. As they stood together in the dimly-lighted hall she heard a whisper almost in her ear, "Please you gev me that feefty sen now." The grandiloquence had melted away with the onlookers; greed got the better of him.

Every flock has its black sheep of course; that is only human. But, on the whole, the Law, as represented by the little *Junsa* in Japan, is wonderfully white—if somewhat dilatory. The reason is that the police are generally recruited from the ranks of the Samurai or fighting-men's caste, which found itself out of work after the break-up of the old Feudal System. They are, therefore, better educated than the ordinary mortal, and the proud possessors of military traditions commanding infinite respect from the crowd; a respect nothing can diminish—not even a pair of spectacles or a sword several sizes too long for the wearer.

So deep is this reverence, in fact, that no gentleman dreams of asking the way of a little *Junsa* without first taking off his hat and bowing almost to the ground. It is his desire—and the desire of every other well-regulated citizen—to please the police even, if need be, at the expense of his personal inclinations. For this reason one seldom sees a street brawl in Japan. A man, conscious of the approach of a fit of rage, uses his remaining self-control to induce his enemy to follow him indoors somewhere so that they will not trouble the authorities with their quarrel. For this reason, too, a Japanese crowd is the model for concerted behaviour. I have seen five thousand people line Tokio streets to watch the Emperor pass by, and five little *Junsa* control them quite easily. Again I have seen five hundred peasants in a country town neatly line themselves up behind a slight straw rope—according to instructions—in order to leave the middle of the road free for the passage of the Crown Prince's cow, which was being led to a distant pasture by a policeman in full uniform and white cotton gloves. On the other hand, I have never heard of a Japanese attempting to smuggle in a kodak where he is expressly told

not to, or to sketch a fortification, or to injure a tree he was officially requested not to injure, or to "snare small animals on Imperial preserves," though these preserves may be distant, unfenced, and unguarded by anything more formal than a police notification, or to do any of the other things he ought not to do officially. Undoubtedly they are by nature a law-abiding people, the Japanese, and were it not for the *Dorobo* the land of Our Little Brown Allies would be the policeman's paradise.

CHAPTER IX

BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION, OR GIVING AND RECEIVING

WITH the single exception of an officer of the law engaged in the performance of his duty, it is not only permissible but suitable and customary to give anybody in Japan a present. Moreover, there is no fixed season (as with us) for giving—no single festive occasion, like our Christmas, dreaded by fathers, jeered at by humourists—when aunts and cousins have to be “remembered” with something which looks as if it cost more than it actually did, and when petticoats and portraits of the Royal Family are distributed among the deserving poor.

The New Year festival provides the first legitimate present-pretext in the Japanese calendar. But others follow each other in such rapid succession that there is hardly a day without its own particular excuse for sending something to somebody. The lavish man wakes six mornings out

of seven with the comfortable feeling that he is quite justified in working off his fit of generosity by sending a salt *Hokkaido* salmon to the Prime Minister, or a square yard of half-baked *Mochi* (a delicacy said to be made of beans, but really made of gum arabic) to his brother-in-law's uncle. Or, failing originality of choice, he can always fall back—only metaphorically, of course—upon a dozen eggs, which will be chosen comparatively fresh if destined for people who hold favours in their hands and may be bribed to let one fall, and frankly stale if destined for poor relations.

On the Feast of *O'Bon*, to vary the monotony, Our Little Brown Allies give presents to the spirits of their ancestors, who at this season slip out of heaven for three days in order to see how their earthly descendants are getting on. They are the "cloud of witnesses" exercising their prerogatives of supervision promptly and personally, and they are welcomed by the simple country folk as specially honoured guests. A few days before the festival I see through open *shoji* the mother of each household busily arranging the *Kamidama* or Shelf of the Gods, where rest the tablets of the spirits—the *Ihai*. She moves to and fro with a

curious reverent familiarity, lighting the "grave lanterns," setting out little cups of fresh water, little bowls of rice, hanging up queer bunches of sea-weed, and finally solemnly fashioning a cucumber horse and an egg-plant cow with tooth-pick legs. Each offering, the peasants say, has its own special significance, its own particular use. The candle lights the August Ancestors home, the rice and sea-weed feed them, the water quenches their thirst, the cow waits upon the bank of the River of Heaven to refresh them with milk, the cucumber horse transports them if they grow weary.

But that is not all. On the third and last day of the festival, when the spirits are about to return to the Celestial regions, there is a very pretty ceremony of farewell, and more presents. At twilight—the hour of grey shadows and mysterious secrets—troops of country folk throng into their quaint cemeteries, where all the little graves are so tightly packed together that I wonder the spirits have room to slip in and out. The mourners carry incense-sticks and flowers, bright sprays of goldenrod, flaming tiger-lilies, soft trailing clematis, and whatever else their fancy dictates.

The essential point is not to come empty-handed, but there is no restriction on individual choice. I have seen a tiny grave decorated with an infant's patent feeding-bottle, and another with a new pair of clogs such as some dead mother used in her lifetime, and still another with a young girl's gay little sunshade of printed cotton edged with cheap red fringe.

A nasty specimen of the half-educated, sceptical youth of modern Japan once tried to explain to me that the peasants, with what he called a "supercilious" (superstitious) faith in Shintoism, believe that the souls of their loved ones have become gods with full powers to bless or injure their mortal descendants; hence the milk-bottles and shoes and parasols by way of propitiation. He wanted to persuade me that these tender attentions had their origin in a selfish cupboard love; to show that the shadow of self-interest dims one of the brightest facets of the strange, many-sided Japanese character. But I don't believe a word of his cynical arguments. Surely, surely, no baby soul would use its influence in Paradise to injure that mother-heart which shielded it so tenderly, surely no mother would have to be bought off

from evil designs on her little children by a pair of new shoes, and no young girl would intrigue for the unhappiness of the domestic circle she had lately left. No, however "supercilious" they may be, these poor peasants give to their dear dead with no thought of gain.

It is only in the better-educated, wealthier class of society—to which my young acquaintance was so proud to belong—that people are uneasy when they have made a gift until they get a return. "The gift perfunctory" in Japan—as in Mayfair—is strictly confined to the well-to-do. Only in Mayfair it is seldom used except when fashionable persons furnish their houses by holding up their acquaintances with a wedding invitation—whereas among Our Little Brown Allies there is a masked highwayman at every corner shouting, "Your present or your reputation." To disgorge, therefore, becomes a plain social duty which may be performed with little enthusiasm but which must be performed both promptly and correctly.

"Correctly!" there's the rub! After one has taken infinite pains to choose the wrong thing for the right person, the manner of its presentation

has to be carefully considered. I learned this lesson from some ragged little village children one day. The urchins were picnicking near by and I, being in a charitable mood, determined to contribute to their innocent pleasure by organising races and offering prizes of cakes and sweetmeats to the winners. The boys ran willingly enough. But when I tried to present the awards not a child would come forward to receive them, in spite of my most ingratiating smile. They all stood in a group, very shy and uncomfortable, looking at me out of the corners of their long eyes with a curious expression I could n't understand at the time. Later I learned it was pity—pure pity for a person whose good gifts were made inaccessible to the deserving because he had no knowledge of how to give them. Even these little plebeians, hungry perhaps, greedy certainly, as children always are for “goodies,” could not afford to overlook the combination of unwrapped cakes and my bare hand.

A little higher up the social scale a brown paper covering to a pickled radish or a gold lacquer box would be considered an equally impossible breach of the rigid etiquette of giving. The recipient

would be shocked beyond measure—certainly shocked beyond gratitude. In fact, though a gift cost a fortune it will avail the giver nothing in Japan unless its outer wrapping is of a particular kind of silky white paper, unless the confining string is of the red and white variety specially made for such occasions, unless accompanying the parcel is one of those ceremonious little cardboard ornaments shaped like a folded umbrella, and, last of all, unless the wrapper is inscribed with the mystic and humble words, "*Sokoshi bakari*"—"Only a trifle."

This, at least, is the simplest paraphernalia of presentation. Another and still better way is to send the gift on a beautiful old tray, and cover it with an embroidered *feroshiki* or handkerchief. You can safely borrow both these accessories if you like from some person who has a good collection of family heirlooms, for the recipient is expected to keep your present—often worth very little—and promptly return the wrappings—often worth very much. He may not, however, return them empty; that would expose him to a suspicion of meanness; so he lays upon the tray some trifle—a sheet of white paper or a box of

new matches will do—just to show that although there is nothing in the house sufficiently excellent to return at the moment, something suitable will follow a little later. Paper and matches are re-regarded by both parties simply as an I.O.U.—a promise to pay, and at the same time a receipt for value received.

Politeness requires that there should be no undue dallying over the return present. My own experience is that while delay means enemies, haste means deliberately subjecting oneself to an income tax, for no sooner is somebody paid off than he insists upon running you into debt again with another present. The grocer round the corner, for instance, regularly sends me a little gift of moist cooking sugar every month when I pay my bill. If I happen to have been invited out to meals often during those four weeks and my account is small, he sends a fat parcel containing five saccharine pounds; if nobody has troubled about me, and I have consumed at home a larger quantity of his tomatoes and flour and salad oil, he only sends a two-pound package, looking to it nearly that he does not lose by my invitations, and calculating with great exactness

the value of his sprat in proportion to the size of the mackerel he means to catch.

Still, he is easy to deal with compared to those on a plane of social equality with constantly marrying daughters and constantly dying grandparents, whose value, unlike that of the sugar, I can only guess. I wonder if they ever think, those careless young people who allow themselves to be led into matrimony, those inconsiderate infants who get themselves born, what a burden they are putting upon their friends and acquaintances? Apparently not; they seem utterly selfish about it; they never even trouble to choose a season when eggs and salmon are cheap. Every householder is therefore at their mercy. And, worse still, he is at the mercy of any stranger who thinks the acquaintance of his family desirable or useful. The stranger's wife arrives one day to pay her first formal call, bringing the gift, which she considers essential to the establishment of relations, in the *kuruma* with her. She carries it as naturally as we would a card-case, and hands it to the servant at the gate with instructions as to when it is to appear. Usually, just in the middle of the visit, the *nesan* brings it in to the hostess,

who looks beautifully astonished. "Am I indebted to you for this exquisite thing?" she says to her visitor before she has looked at it. "Oh, I am so sorry, I am so sorry!" Whether the sorrow is for the indebtedness, or for the present, or for some secret grief unconnected with either, the construction of the language leaves deliciously vague. Neither caller nor callee refers to the offering again, however, at the time. The visitor finds her tray and *feroshiki* with the matches or paper on her table when she gets home, and the hostess makes haste to redeem the promise as soon as possible, for delay would be taken to mean that she did not wish the caller's further acquaintance.

When next the two meet, unless the lady called upon has been obliged to administer the social snub, a little extra fervour is put into their bows, and one says to the other, before inquiring about the latest gossip, "Thank you for yesterday's, or for last week's, overwhelming kindness," and she who has been thanked answers, "Please, do not mention such a miserable episode, so unworthy to be connected with your august self."

At fashionable dinner-parties, also, the present

habit prevails. Some kind of souvenir is given to each guest, and the quality of the gift in these cases is really a mark of the host's social status. The poor man sends one home with a paper fan or a bamboo box full of sweets; the rich calls in a famous artist to paint one a scroll during dessert. Or, if the party consist of but few and distinguished guests, a host may present a genuine "Old Master" to each with great ceremony. At the precise psychological moment a servant carries the treasures in one by one with the care and respect that only a package of dynamite would command in any other country; then the host himself loosens the brocade wrappings and unrolls the *kakemono tempo adagio*. Slowly, very slowly, as the scroll unfolds, an anæmic goblin is dimly seen riding a faded horse which appears to be trying to scratch its neck with its hind leg. "Ah!" says the guest, drawing in his breath with a sharp hiss of joy and admiration—"Ah!" and nothing more. His appreciation is too deep for words. What if time has obliterated the arms of the man and the tail of his mount? Are not the few remaining smudges enough? Certainly they are—to the real connoisseur. Only persons without imagination

require a complete picture—just as only persons without artistic reverence want to make effusive exclamations when they get it. Our own galleries and museums are filled with the type which, carrying Cook's coupons in its hand and wearing strange garments upon its person, stands in front of Botticellis exclaiming, "Is n't that line magnificent?" or "Don't these saucy cherubim in the left-hand corner give one a remarkable sense of repose?" Counterfeit connoisseurs, that is what they are, and the Japanese, genuine to a fault, despises them from the bottom of his heart. He despises them almost as much as he does that other type of European who never even raises his eyes to the beautiful. I remember a young Japanese gentleman, still at the football age, seriously giving as his reason for disliking a certain young Englishman, "He is a person with no appreciation of the fine arts; therefore I can no longer respect or associate with him." The two had once been friendly enough till one night the Japanese—who was neither fop nor prig, by the way—invited the Britisher to dinner, and sent the day before to inquire of his guest's servant concerning his master's favourite flower. This in-

quiry was meant as a delicate attention, of course, but it greatly perplexed the servant, whose master never looked at flowers. At last he remembered that once the young Englishman had ordered a large bunch of irises and sent them to some "Miss." Irises then, he decided, must be the gentleman's favourites. Irises, therefore, filled the *Tokonoma* in the house of the Japanese gentleman, and at a certain stage of the dinner the host complimented his guest on admiring the flower which is the emblem of patriotism and the "young man's flower" in Japan. "We say in our country that the leaves, shaped like swords and growing straight as a fine blade, typify the martial spirit," said the Japanese gentleman, meaning to be very affable and complimentary. "Oh, really!" replied the guest, with the air of a fish out of water. "We are happy that our taste in flowers should be similar," continued the host with a more uncertain touch. "Yes, by Jove! beastly lucky, is n't it?" said the guest in a bored tone as he looked out of the window—and after that the host dropped the subject and the association.

Visiting the sick in Japan—as indeed elsewhere—means a present too. But Japanese in-

valids, in whom illness seems to bring out the gentle, childish characteristics inherent in the race, crave no orchids or expensive dainties out of season. Grown men get as much pleasure from a dwarf pine in a soap-dish as they would from anything else one could bring, though it cost five times as much. In fact, this was the favourite choice of the poor wounded soldiers who lay so patiently in the hospitals after the war—this little gnarled tree, pathetically like the poor misshapen cripples themselves. They preferred it to cakes, or sweetmeats—to everything but their beloved cherry-blossom, which they loved so much that it was with the greatest difficulty one could get the fragrant pink branches into the wards. A score of convalescents were always waiting outside to beg for them, and the biggest armful was soon distributed. "I have good fortune to-day," the successful soldiers would say gleefully, hobbling off on their crutches to stick their sprays in medicine bottles full of water, and those who were disappointed, when they were asked what they would like next time, "a packet of cigarettes or a flower?" always answered, "Honourably be kind enough to bring me a flower."

But, failing flowers, they were prettily grateful for every little thing they received, these iron warriors, in whose hearts a little child still sleeps so lightly that he wakes unexpectedly to every one's surprise. Relatives brought them goldfish and games like "Pigs in Clover," or tobacco, and sometimes gifts of a rough teapot and a few little cups, which would draw a dozen poor maimed fellows creeping along the floor to the bed of the lucky recipient to share in a tea-party. Afterwards, in spite of all difficulties, the strong idea of a necessary return for hospitality received kept these poor guests busy and happy for days making paper flowers in their beds for their hosts.

The rule of give back if you have taken is as inflexible as the laws of the Medes and Persians. When you have had anything in Japan a gift of thanks must be sent; when you want anything, a gift must precede the request for a favour. The student who wishes to join a class takes something to his teacher. The acquaintance, to whom one has given an address, repays the trouble with a box of macaroni. One of my friends, to whom I presented some quinine tabloids, brought me a box

of Huntley & Palmer's wafers next day with "The Honourable Biscuits" written in a very painstaking hand on the wrapping. Another, a little Japanese lady whom I often asked to dinner, felt obliged to repay me every time with a gift which she carefully hid under her chair until the meal was over. Both of us were uncomfortably aware of its presence the whole time, but still we maintained the fiction of its not being there at all; and I managed to receive it with creditable surprise for months—until at last I screwed up my courage to explain that my gratitude was considerably tempered with embarrassment. Her company, I explained, was my reward for the trouble and expense of the meal, and further, material payment made me feel unpleasantly like a restaurant-keeper doing a strictly cash business.

When she understood the point of view I believe she too was secretly relieved to be free of the terrible bi-weekly strain of providing novelties. She could not have held out much longer without repeating herself, since, before I plucked up courage to stop her, she had already brought a dozen different kinds of cakes, parti-coloured bows for the hair, a painted *Gifu* lantern for my

verandah, two varieties of soap with beautiful pink veins in it, a five-pound tin of Australian butter, and a bottle of preserved cherries.

The strain of giving would really become unendurable to half the people in Japan were it not for what is known as the "*meibutsu*" or specialty of each town. This fills in gaps nicely; this provides the answer to vexed questions. "What shall I give to the kind person from whom I have received my twenty-fifth English lesson?" "A *meibutsu*." "And what shall I send my ailing father-in-law?" "A *meibutsu*" also, both to be brought back from the next place I happen to visit. The shops there are sure to make a reduction on quantity, well knowing that every person who goes off on a holiday is expected to return with "*meibutsu*" for everybody he knows, the idea being that a person who has enjoyed himself and had nothing particular to do should try to make up to those left behind in the place where they belong, engaged in the usual dull routine. Help to lift somebody out of the rut by bringing home to him or her some little novelty—that is the kindly spirit—and never mind what the trifle may be. Whether a metal pipe or a bamboo toy, it

can be presented with perfect propriety to grandmother or infant grandson.

“*Meibutsus*” vary greatly of course. Some are sticky like the chestnut paste of *Nikko*, some are bulky and a source of perpetual anxiety like the fragile baskets of *Arima*, some are pretty like the *Ikao* cotton cloth dyed in the iron spring water, and some are useless and ugly and impossible to carry, like the fierce fishes of *Kamakura*—the fishes which blow themselves up into a globe when angry or excited and then remain blown up—as an eternal punishment I suppose—and get turned into lanterns. There are dozens of all varieties, useful and useless, dear and queer, sensible and silly, so that people with much-travelled acquaintances are soon in a fair way to start a museum. Or, to be accurate, they would be if they kept the things. But nobody does keep them all. The provident housekeeper constantly receiving “*meibutsus*,” and constantly requiring things to send back in return, has invented a system to circumvent the expense. It is somewhat like double entry book-keeping. When the need for the return gift arises, she goes, like old Mother Hubbard, to her cupboard and looks over the parcels that have

arrived lately. Distinctive things like blown-up fish may be out of the question, but there are sure to be some local or non-committal contributions. Doubtless there will be eggs hardly a month old yet, and cakes that only came week before last. Either of these will do nicely; therefore the lady wraps them up properly and passes them on. Nine times out of ten, she who receives them does the same; also her friend and her friend's friend, till those eggs or cakes are nearly as travelled as a war correspondent.

It is not considered good form to put a taximeter or a pedometer in the box, but a small mark has been placed on an unobtrusive part of a speckled egg before now. I once did it myself out of curiosity. Would those eggs come back to me? And how soon? Here, thought I, was my chance to prove my standing in the community. If they returned staler than when I sent them out, I was a stranger on whose right side nobody particularly cared about being; I was a person without influence. If, on the other hand, they were deflected to another beat, I might feel a certain justifiable pride; I was a person of importance. It was a dangerous game, and all I

can say is pride had the fall that the prophets predict. There was an interval—a decent interval, during which my eggs made the *grand tour* among mutual acquaintances, and then—and then—they returned with the card of the doctor's wife (I was exceedingly healthy) bearing the inscription "*Sokoshi bakari*"—"Only a trifle"—staler than before.

"Ah," thought I to myself, "how much more blessed is it to give than to receive!"

CHAPTER X

THE IIWAKE—A “SPEAK-BECAUSE”

GENERALLY speaking, Our Little Brown Allies look upon everyday life as part of a very old work of social art, inlaid and polished beautifully long ago, which they think it their duty to keep from becoming scratched on its smooth and shining surface. The giving of gifts naturally helps to do this, but the real *vernismartin* which preserves intact the lacquer of polite society is the *Iiwake* or “Speak-Because,” literally, “excuse.”

The *Iiwake* must have originated some time in the Middle Ages when the Samurai rule, “Never tell a lie to your friends,” was in full force. As nothing was said about enemies, employers, or the general public, the inference was that they might be duped *ad infinitum*—still, even the limited command was found embarrassing beyond measure. Some compromise with conscience, some decent

drapery to disguise the nakedness of Truth, was urgently needed, and thus the *Iiwake* came into being.

From that time to this it has survived, through wars, floods, and social upheavals. Politicians still adopt it; friends still employ it, children still cry for it. Whenever an unexpected difficulty arises, there it is—useful to-day as yesterday—an ever-ready polisher to wipe away discomforts, and one which practice has taught Our Little Brown Allies to use with consummate perfection. Indeed, I find that the plausible excuses, which are little less than lies and little more than truths, now mount to Japanese brains spontaneously, as if by instinct. They can gauge with the accuracy of a hawk descending on its prey the amount of force required to impress each *Iiwake* on each victim; then having gauged, they can boldly present their “speak-because” with as innocent an expression as if it were an unanswerable argument, and without any of the stammering or stuttering which marks the amateur in prevarication.

The most common and the most commendable form of “speak-because” is that dropped by a practised tongue simply to please a questioner. For

instance, suppose I stop a passing lad on a country road and ask the distance to the next village, what does he answer? Nothing at first; it takes him five minutes to realise that I, a stranger, who have no reason to be doing so, am addressing him in his own language; once he grasps that fact, shyness still makes him slow of understanding, and I therefore try to put him at ease by helping him with the answer. "This village I just asked you about, is it very far away? Do you think it is seven miles?" I repeat slowly to encourage the bashful youth and put our acquaintance on a more friendly footing.

"Yes, oh, yes, it is seven miles," he always answers. The dull, peasant face is alight with the desire to give satisfaction. To me somehow this eagerness seems a little overdone; my caution is aroused and I generally try another question, mentioning a different distance this time in a search for corroborative evidence. "About nine miles you say?" and then he replies just as cheerfully as before, "Yes, about nine miles." Had I said ten, twelve, or even fourteen miles, the result would have been exactly the same since the very fact of my suggesting any number was sufficient

clue for the "pleasing lie apparent." Therefore, nowadays, whenever I ask a question in Japan, no matter how satisfactory the answer may be, I always think of what the Queen of Sheba said to Solomon—and I think she must have said it with a sigh—"The half of it hath not been told unto me."

Another popular variety of *Iiwake* is that employed as a means of self-preservation after wrong-doing. Like the "gift perfunctory" this did not originate in Japan, credit for the idea being due to Adam, who invented the first excuse when he was suddenly called upon to explain about the forbidden fruit. The Japanese have simply adopted his patent and improved upon it, till now even the stupidest among them can plan an *Iiwake*, and tell it in a less bungling manner than the father of men.

My old housekeeper in Tokio, for example—the stupidest of women—a poor, wrinkled old crone with the dulness of age and the morals of a child of ten—surprised me one morning by showing unexpected resource and originality in a "speak-because" which was to save her from a scolding. It so happened that the sliding paper

screens of my little house had been newly papered and for seven days I looked on their stainless purity with pride and satisfaction. On the eighth morning I was vexed—excusably vexed—to find that across each little square snowy pane some one had drawn a neat St. Andrew's cross with great deliberation and a sharp instrument, nearly cutting it into four. Wrath gleaming in my eye, I taxed the old housekeeper with the desecration, but instead of being insulted or nonplussed she only smiled and said simply, "The weather is so damp, *Okksan* (lady), that when I slid open the *shoji* this morning they did not run freely, and to my great surprise IT happened." What could I do in the face of her pained astonishment but stand still, in much the same state myself, while she elaborated the imaginary incident, and carefully explained how dampness often drew mathematical St. Andrew's crosses on paper panes? Not for a moment did she seem to imagine that I might guess, once my admiration for her talent for fiction had worn off, that the "damp weather" had been assisted by her little grandchild, a bright-eyed mischief who ran errands for me.

Gifted and resourceful as this *Iiwake* undoubt-

edly was, however, it cannot compare with one which came my way a little later. On a certain hot, drowsy summer afternoon, when the *semi* (cicada) were singing their loud, wheezy notes, a little boy rushed through my garden gate and burst in on me like a whirlwind. He was sobbing and gasping and seemed greatly excited. "Ai, ai," he said in answer to my astonished questions. "My mother is coughing and bleeding at the mouth, and I have come in great haste searching for coxcombs to cure her. Will you give me some coxcombs from your garden?" "But why do you seek for coxcombs? Why not for a doctor?" He began to weep afresh at this suggestion, and I was so grieved at his very genuine-looking sorrow that I, instead of asking more irrelevant questions, told him forthwith that I had no coxcombs, though, if his heart and faith were set on coxcombs, one of the neighbours had a few. "Yes, I know," he sobbed, "the little house down the street has them, but the people who live there won't let me in, won't listen to me, and my mother is coughing." I cut him short. That poor woman, that poor suffering creature whose offspring was so distraught—we must do something for her

and not waste precious time in idle talk. So hand-in-hand the wailing, dirty little boy and I went to the house down the street. Went, I said, but to be exactly truthful we ran breathlessly till we reached the place. There, growing in a straggling row in the little garden, stood the coxcombs that were to save the child from despair—the mother from death perhaps—and there was the gate securely locked, the family evidently having gone off for the day. “You foolish little boy,” I burst out as I realised how the child had not only maligned the people who lived in the house, but wasted precious time by doing so, “it is n’t that they won’t let you in. They can’t. They are n’t in themselves.” He answered by setting up another doleful wail and beginning again the story of his misfortunes: “My mother is coughing, and blood is pouring from her mouth,” till I felt very like wailing myself. With an effort I checked the tendency and said firmly, “Listen, little boy. There seem to be no available coxcombs in this quarter, but if you are sure they are what you need in this terrible calamity, here is a card to a friend of mine who has a whole garden full of coxcombs.” I scribbled an urgent appeal on the

card hurriedly for every moment was precious and gave it to him. "Now, go as fast as you can to fetch the remedy, and as my friend lives on the other side of the city, take this twenty sen and hire a *kurumaya* [jinricksha coolie], whose legs, being longer, will carry you there faster than your own," was my parting admonition.

He disappeared, still wailing and groaning, and I spent a miserable afternoon thinking of the poor woman racked with pain and waiting for the one thing that could give her relief. A few days afterwards I met my friend from across the city and gravely began about the coxcomb incident. "Oh, you mean the little boy who brought a card from you," she said with a chuckle which I thought most unfeeling under the circumstances. "Well, I happened to be out at the time but my manservant, who evidently understands his own people better than you do, opened the door and took a good look at the little boy. 'I believe I have seen you before,' he said to the urchin. 'Yes, now I am sure I have seen you before. You are the same little boy that came here a year ago and got fifty sen from my mistress because your grandfather was very ill. We've had enough of

your ailing relatives so be off, or I will call the *Junsa* to arrest you for begging.' ” And that was the end of the pitiful incident. The fact that it was so well worked out, that the combination of coughing mother and coxcombs was so picturesque, that the grief and agony were so splendidly acted, and the joy over the twenty sen so well disguised, was all the balm I could find for my stupidity at being duped by a small boy of twelve.

Mothers are the best possible foundation for an *Iiwake* since, shown in misfortune, they arouse pity as no other relative can—especially when “presented” by a people like Our Little Brown Allies, who have a natural dramatic talent for effects and how just to produce them. My baker’s boy, having neglected to bring my bread for a week, and well knowing that he had laid up for himself a good scolding, was not above excusing his absence, when he finally did appear, by saying, in a very doleful tone, which I felt sure was put on, “Oh, my poor mother has been ill!” He had an aggrieved manner, too, as he said it, and I felt that this was his way of reproving me for my heartlessness at wanting my breakfast under such tragic circumstances.

"What a pity," I replied a little sarcastically. "Now, what has been the matter with her? The rainy weather perhaps?" "No." "A little spring feeling of laziness then?" "No," again, and this time still more dolefully, his woe-begone face plainly reading me a lecture for my levity. "Well, what has been the matter?" "A plate fell on her head!" he finally announced with an air that peremptorily waived all further banter aside. I was aghast. "Now, will you please explain to me how in a Japanese house, where nothing is ever hung on walls or put on high shelves, a plate fell on your mother's head?" But he was gone without stopping to explain. Only the pitying hunch of his retreating shoulders conveyed to me as plainly as words what he thought of a person so lacking in respect for parents as I evidently was.

The *Iiwake* is further used for wriggling out of things unpleasant to do and at the same time impolite to refuse to do. A gentleman of my acquaintance employed a really inspired *Iiwake* of this type in order to avoid a wife. The lady in question, though possessed of all the virtues, was a little beyond her first youth and had the reputation of being perhaps a trifle strong-minded. Some

kind missionaries, who knew her and thought it a pity that so much virtue—even if a little undiluted—should be wasted in single blessedness, tried to arrange a match for her with this very good and suitable man who lived in a small town in the interior. They wrote him long letters cataloguing her good qualities and dwelling on her suitability to be his helpmeet. But the prospective bridegroom, in the true Japanese fashion, made a few inquiries of his own, and learned from his impartial witnesses that the lady was older and more intelligent than he cared for. As he could not, in common politeness, refuse the offer point-blank, he cast about for an excuse. At last he found one worthy of the occasion, and wrote the following letter:

“DEAR MADAMS,—Your kindness in so tenderly considering my humble welfare I shall never, never forget. But my insignificant village is far away in the mountains, and in winter it is very cold. Therefore it would be exceedingly selfish of me to bring a lady of all the good qualities you describe to live in such discomfort in a dreary place where every year there falls deep snow. I

could not do so; to profit by your kindness in this way would be too selfish, and my conscience would continually reproach me for want of thoughtfulness of others."

Of course the good missionaries could not allow him to be daily pricked by his very sensitive conscience, therefore their lady candidate remained in single blessedness.

A friend of mine, an Englishwoman, was the victim of the most comical *Iiwake* I ever heard—told by no less a person than the principal of a celebrated Tokio language school. The lady in question had agreed at some personal inconvenience to help this teacher of languages with his higher classes. She had accepted his worrisome boys for a given number of hours each week, and considering their exceeding eagerness to learn, and their exceeding stupidity about doing it, she felt herself entitled to a heavenly crown—let alone politeness upon this earth. But alas! one day she was obliged to tell her pupils in the classroom that she noticed with regret a very rude habit growing up among the children of Tokio, some of them perhaps brothers and sisters of these very

pupils. "They pursue me in the street calling me '*Ijin Bakka*'" ("Foreign Fool"), she exclaimed with warmth. "Do you not think an Englishwoman, of all women, should be most free from insult in your country seeing what England has done for Japan?"

No answer but a shuffling of nervous feet. Luckily just at that moment the principal of the school had entered the room and was standing by the lady's side listening. "It is indeed a thing to be ashamed of, if true," he murmured. He was cold, suspicious, inquisitive. The "if true" plainly conveyed a world of uncomplimentary meaning. Freely translated it might have been rendered, "I don't believe a word you said," and the lady was bridling anew at the implied insult when a small boy, no doubt intended for a future pupil, appeared in the doorway, and, from the shelter of his mother's kimono, pointed at the English teacher and screamed in a shrill voice, "*Ijin, Ijin Bakka.*" There was a moment of strained silence, then the lady, outraged but triumphant, exclaimed, "There! What did I tell you? Now you hear it for yourself. Within the very walls of your schoolroom, I, straight from

the country you pretend to honour, am treated as a barbarian." The little school principal was actually nonplussed for a moment and at a loss for excuses. He was only just saved from complete collapse by a little colleague who rushed up and whispered in his ear.

"Well, what does he say?" demanded the indignant Englishwoman waiting for her apology.

"He says," gently replied the principal in his most soothing tone, "that you must be kind enough graciously to excuse the little boy's mistake. He only called you a foreign fool because he had not the honour of knowing your other name." When in doubt use a synonym was the gentle inference, and not a safe one; its effect being to increase the strain on the bulwark of the lady's self-control. "Do you call that a sufficient reason for his insulting epithets?" she retorted, flaming with indignation. She might have added that in the land to which she was proud to belong a blue eye might be blackened for less. "What would you say if you took a walk down Piccadilly and the boys called you 'yellow monkey'? How would you feel if, when you made a complaint to the police—as you are so fond of doing—they

answered that this was the usual remark when English people did not know a visitor's name? Answer me that."

But neither the principal nor the sub-teacher did or could, and for the only time on record their ally, the *Iiwake*, deserted them, leaving them helpless in the throes of this awful encounter.

One last example of the "speak-because" must be given for the sake of those who enjoy solving puzzles. Perhaps some person adept at acrostics or skilled at telepathy, or some follower of Sherlock Holmes, may be able to explain it. The *dramatis personæ* concerned were three in number—a Scotchman and his wife, and a Japanese landlord. The stage properties were a house and garden at Nikko which the hero and heroine desired to rent for the summer, and the villain, with smiling countenance hiding deep deceit, agreed to allow them to occupy. Negotiations proceeded swimmingly for some weeks, as of course in the East bargains cannot be concluded in a hurry. The landlord agreed to make certain alterations. The prospective tenants bought a phrase book and made affable remarks like "This house suits us sufficiently well but can you assure us that the

roof will not be leaking in the tempestuous heats of summer?" the author having forgotten to mention the word for "rains," and they being reduced to mentioning the only other thing to do with that season which he had included.

Then suddenly the landlord changed like the climate near a mountain lake, as the Japanese say. From an attitude of obliging politeness he turned to one of obstinate obstruction. The very improvements to which a week before he had listened with such flattering respect were now dismissed summarily as out of the question. This was impossible, that was inconvenient. "What can the man mean?" said the Scotchman to his Scotch wife.

What the man meant, had they only known it, was to gently irritate them till they went off in search of another domicile. He must have said something like this to himself: "Europeans are persons full of excitement, empty of self-control, and always in immoderate haste. Therefore, if I politely thwart their selfish desires and delay in executing their commands, the tempers of this persistent pair will fly out like the cork in a soda-water bottle; they will fizz rude remarks for a few

moments and then take themselves off and cease to trouble me." He miscalculated; however, the fine old strain of Highland determination which asserted itself the more strongly the more he dissuaded. "This particular house and no other," said the Scotchman and his Scotch wife in the tone that they would have used in reciting "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." It was becoming a desperate situation for the landlord. Hard pressed, his imagination squeezed almost dry of *Iiwake* he made one final effort, but luckily it was a good one.

"I have an old aunt," said he, beginning his last "speak-because" with the immobility of a bronze Buddha, "who is not only old but crippled also. She cannot be moved, and she must have the largest front room in order that her old eyes may look upon the beauty of the garden." At this news even the Scotch family were so impressed that they gave up and bowed themselves out. "We have old aunts of our own in two hemispheres," they said, "and if we have to live with anybody's old aunts we will live with those."

But why should the man have suddenly trumped up this ailing relative in order to keep a good fat

rent from finding its way to his pocket? Why indeed? There is the mystery presented in all humility to those who have the detective instinct. The one possible clue to the landlord's *volte face* is the fact that his villa adjoined the Crown Prince's palace and the Government may have given him a peremptory hint not to let it to strangers. I give this clue for what it may be worth, though personally I see no reason why a decently-behaved Scotch family—no children and all the washing done out of the house—should not live next to the Crown Prince if they were willing to pay to do it. They would seem to me the last people on earth likely to throw a bomb over the wall. As Bernard Shaw says, though, "You never can tell," and royalty is not a thing to take risks with in these days when it is touch-and-go with the "upper classes," and even the House of Lords may be asked to send in its resignation in the middle of the season.

CHAPTER XI

CERTAIN CURIOUS CHARACTERISTICS

AS a French humourist says, "Ze different nations 'ave ze different customs," not only in *Iiwakes* but in other things besides—and fortunately they do. The world would be a dull place if everybody lived, learned, and lied like everybody else. Thank Heaven, I say, that by the mere crossing of an ocean one can look at life through the wrong end of a telescope, and get not only a new viewpoint but a new focus as well.

Certainly half the charm of the land of Our Little Brown Allies would be gone were we no longer to find a hundred surprises there—the gardens with stones instead of flowers, the windows of paper instead of glass, the trees in pots instead of in forests, and the thousand and one curious habits which have all the charm of variety. Half our interest in the Japanese themselves, too, would be gone were it not for what

we are pleased to call their topsy-turvy way of doing things.

Watch Japanese carpenters building a house, for instance. They put the roof on before they build the walls, instead of afterwards, and strange to say, their method answers as well as our own. Fragile though the buildings look as they run up in a night, yet they stand the shakings and quakings of a restless earth better than the Western sky-scraper with its steel corset. The suppleness of the bending reed outlasts the stiff, uncompromising strength of the oak.

Watch how the Japanese fishermen launch their boats, push them into the water stern first, and how the Japanese groom puts his horse into the stable, ties the animal up head outwards, choosing with some taste to present the creature's most attractive end to the public and risk a bite for the passer-by rather than a kick.

Watch the Japanese housekeeper doing housework. Instead of using an ugly dustpan she takes a fan, which, be it remarked, is the most useful thing in the country, and stands to Our Little Brown Allies much as the bamboo to the Chinese and the cocoanut to the South Sea

Islander. One kind made of coarse paper serves the hired handmaiden to blow up the charcoal fire with; another, larger and stouter, winnows the farmer's grain; a third, shaped like a lozenge, is the *baton* of umpires at wrestling matches, its various motions constituting a deaf-and-dumb language which the combatants understand and promptly heed; a fourth, as big as a small screen, is the imperial emblem of Court ceremonies; a fifth, like a wooden soup-ladle, is carried by high priests in processions; while a hundred other varieties are used by actors, singers, dancers, and by the general public, male and female, neither sex thinking it unseemly to go out on a hot day with one tucked into the neck of the kimono.

But to return to the peculiarities of the Japanese housekeeper—"the foolish person who sits in the inner room," as her modest husband calls her to his acquaintances. She uses an umbrella made of paper, which is the very last material we should choose to take out in the wet, even if oiled. She wraps her parcels in a silk or cotton wrapping, really a large handkerchief—as we understand the term—and when she wants a real handkerchief for nose-blowing purposes she takes a square of soft

white paper which she uses once and then throws away. Her children, if the household be poor, are not allowed this luxury, and as a result many a quaint little face is transformed into something very nearly repulsive for want of the sheet of notepaper. "I wish," a missionary lady once said to me as we were walking together through a poor village where there were dozens of ill-kept children, "I wish I had brought a trunk full of handkerchiefs instead of Bibles."

When the Japanese "house-mother" writes a note, or, as is more likely, gets one written for her by the professional letter-writer, she turns her address inside out like this: "Brown John Mr., Street Wood Pine, Tokio." When she enters a bath, public or private, she takes care to remove the superfluous dirt outside the tub, and to wash off all traces of soap before she gets in, so that the long series of bathers who will all enjoy the same hot water in turn may not be inconvenienced. When she puts on her kimono she crosses it from right to left, superstition forbidding it to be done the other way for fear of evil consequences. Instinctively it seems as if our processes of mind, even in trifles, are the exact reverse of hers, for

we Europeans, in putting on a Japanese dress, invariably cross it from left to right, causing the Japanese to shudder. "Foreigners cross a kimono," they say, "as we cross the kimono of a corpse."

With the same contradiction of instinct, we wear black at funerals and white at weddings, while in Japan it is just the other way. Japanese brides wear black—indeed, black is ever the colour for ceremonies, and it is in this sombre shade that the "foolish person who sits in the inner room" pays her formal calls. On such occasions, to mention a few more of the little differences between the people of one island empire and the people of the other, it is the guest in Japan, not the hostess, who pours out tea, and it is the hostess, not the guest, who fixes the time of the latter's departure. "You must be very tired talking to me so long," she says when she feels her own conversation giving out. "How kind of you to have bored yourself in my society for such a length of time." Without this signal the guest dare not move for politeness' sake—a custom globe-trotters should bear in mind when Japanese visitors come to see them and stay from

breakfast till dinner; in justice to the poor things remember they may be dying to go home to sick babies or pressing business, only without the proper hint how can they?

Students who care to dive into the deeps of Japanese folk-lore will find there some of our myths turned upside down, though otherwise recognisable. Hero and Leander become a fisherman's daughter and her fisherman lover—only in Japan Hero does the swimming while Leander sits snugly at home in his thatched cottage. Night after night she crosses the strait that separates them guided by a light shining in his window till, one night of storm, the taper is blown out or neglected, and poor Hero, struggling in an angry sea, loses her way and is drowned. It is a well-known story, all the fisher-folk of *Izu* tell it, yet not one of them that I have ever spoken to on the subject seems to feel it reflects the least discredit on Leander; any blame, if blame there be, attaches to poor Hero, who only got her just deserts for her forwardness they think.

For people who prefer humanities to histories, there is a far prettier modern story, concerned with no careless lovers but with a gentle old man

and a rose garden and the curious Japanese habit of becoming "*go-inkyō*," or the "honourable retired one," at an age when our heads of families most appreciate the privileges of headship. My old man was a gardener well known in Tokio for his wonderful roses, which everybody bought because he alone seemed to know the secret of bringing them to perfection in a strange country. A kindly, gentle old soul, customers who came to buy usually remained to chat with him, and he grew to be so well known, so well liked, that everybody looked on "Rose-Garden Man" as a friendly and familiar landmark. Imagine then the surprise, the consternation, when one day, quite unexpectedly and without warning, the old fellow announced that his patrons might have any of his pots they liked because he was about to become *go-inkyō*. At first they scarcely believed him. "It is true," he repeated obstinately, and divided all his keepsakes among his friends as if he were going to another world. Finally, having given away all he could, he called in an old-clothes dealer and sold the rest, including his worn sandals and his patched gardening clothes, throwing in a familiar spotted leather waistcoat—the gift of

some European customer—for good measure after he and the second-hand man had wasted a beautiful spring morning haggling over the things. “I’m not going to work any more,” he told me gleefully the next time I happened along. “You know why? No? Because my *sawn*”—he always pronounced it thus—“my *sawn* come back from America. He is dentist. He makes much money. He is head of family. I am *go-inkyō* now.” And sure enough he was *go-inkyō* before the law and before his own clan, a willing second where he should by right have been the first. Sometimes I hardly believed he could be happy, wandering about, overdressed and idle, after thirty years of honest toil. But it seems he really was. He who so often transplanted his roses now transplanted his hopes; which were henceforth to grow and flourish in the sun of the boy’s success. Meanwhile, whatever the youth, who was a very modern young man, asked for he got, including a “dental parlour” in a more fashionable quarter, where he thought he would prefer to practise. The sale of the old rose garden paid for that, leaving enough over to fit up the place well. A few further trifles which he wanted the old man dived

into his savings and bought. What did it matter?—the household might safely even run into debt a little way, for soon the boy would redeem everything and raise his old parents to a proud height on which they had never stood before, thought the old man. Alas! just when all was ready and success had only to walk in through open doors, the young man died suddenly. A few days afterwards I met the father on the street and found it hard to recognise my cheerful old friend in the forlorn, stooped figure, the face grey and heavy with grief. "Have you been ill, Rose-Garden Man?" I asked him. "No," he replied simply and half-foolishly. "I no sick. My sawn . . . he dead." His own interest in life was gone—a lamp flame blown out in a wind, and though a few of his old friends bought him a little plot of land and started him in a rose garden again, he never succeeded. This second time not his body but his spirit was *go-inkyō*, the "honourable retired one" retired into the land of grief.

In most countries, it is generally admitted, customs reflect the national character; the ring through the Zulu's nose is also through his civilisation, so to speak; and hot curries mean hot tempers

in those who eat them. But to this rule Our Little Brown Allies are an exception, and the difficulty of judging their real character as reflected by their habits, and of determining which of their qualities are actually inborn, and which are taken off and hung up before going to bed, is largely increased by the frock-coated outside covering the Oriental inside. The greatest authorities, like Lafcadio Hearn and Chamberlain often confess themselves baffled and puzzled at finding ideals and motives among the Japanese totally different from those of the West, yet hidden away under laws copied from France or Germany.

A complete analysis of Japanese character may be impossible—and Hearn says it is—but certain pronounced characteristics become presently apparent to those who look carefully behind the Shoji—and the greatest of these is curiosity. Sometimes it appears only as a mere purposeless sense of inquisitiveness such as leads persons living in the same street to find out all about one another. Almost any Japanese woman can tell quickly and accurately the income of her neighbours, how many servants they keep, how often the master of the house takes too much *saké*

(wine), and what the children have for dinner. Is it any wonder when the custom of the country sanctions point-blank inquiries on personal matters from perfect strangers; when the peasant who meets me on the road wishes to know where I am going; when a fellow-passenger in a train questions me as to where I live and why I live there; when the *nesans* in a hotel look at my rings and boldly ask what they cost; and when even the pack-horse girl, whose beast of burden carries my trunk to some mountain village, inquires what is in it and where I bought it?

Again there is another kind of curiosity—which is extremely purposeful—the kind used by the Government. It cannot be avoided or escaped; it cannot be outwitted. Like Providence, it “seeth all things.” It notes the comings and goings of every traveller; it follows every foreign army and naval officer during his stay in the country; it insists that every hotel guest on arrival shall fill out a page in a register as big as a family Bible with his name, age, occupation, colour, nationality, place of residence, and probable hour of departure; it makes shops send daily lists of their sales with names and

addresses of buyers to the nearest recording office.

Not content with this what one might call "internal" inquisitiveness, it spreads itself to every sphere in the whole Far East, where Japan has, or might have, or hopes to have interests—Korea, for example, and even China proper. While waiting for a train in Peking itself one day I was amazed to find a little Japanese edging up to me note-book in hand and inquiring, "Where are you going?" My natural impulse was to answer, "Is that any business of yours?" And indeed what possible excuse had this little spy (he was nothing but a mild variety of spy) for exercising his impertinent curiosity in the capital of a foreign country? He himself would have argued that in political matters the end justifies the means, and that the end and aim of the Japanese Government is to be the one Government in the world "from whom no secrets are hid." He might—though naturally he would n't—have told me that he was a link in the most excellently-organised information chain in the world—that all over China, and all through Peking itself, there were hundreds of others of his fellow-countrymen

“snooping” just as he was “snooping.” He might also have given me some interesting information about the newspaper control offices which form an important part of the whole secret scheme and from one of which he was very likely detached.

Abroad, these bureaus control whatever native newspapers they can induce or frighten or bribe with promises of subscriptions into adopting the Japanese point of view or puffing the Japanese policy. Did not the truth of this fact come to light unexpectedly just the other day when an attempt was made to assassinate the Prince Regent of China and an independent local editor let the cat out of the bag by saying, “The Chinese Government has ordered Chinese newspapers not to discuss the matter. And further, the Japanese Legation in Peking has followed suit by giving the same order to those journals under its control”?

In Japan a large part of the work of the newspaper bureau is the reading of every newspaper in every foreign language to see what it has to say about Japan. Up and down the long columns a picked staff of lynx-eyed translators search from morning till night and nothing escapes them, not

the humblest editorial, nor even an advertisement of Samurai Brand Milk. Is there a bit of ridicule wrapped up in a leading article? They find it, they report it, but they never forgive it nor forget it. Is there a correspondent whom they have tried to impress with banquets and compliments, but who has ignored these benefits and spoken unflattering truths? Now and then. Once quite a well-known man whom they had feasted left their country, travelled to Singapore and gave an adverse opinion of his former hosts to a brother editor there. His remarks appeared in the newspapers as an "Interview," and in due course they lay on the table of the chief translator of the chief information bureau, and he read them and pondered sadly on the ingratitude of the white man. But at the same time he caused a little black mark to be placed against the correspondent's name in the ledger reserved for cataloguing such persons; and it is safe to predict that that man will be hated by Our Little Brown Allies so long as his life shall last with a hatred which will not spend itself in loud complaints or bad language, a hatred not "loud but deep." He would be wiser never to return to Japan, for neither wel-

come nor information will ever be given him there again. Great sensitiveness to ridicule often goes hand-in-hand with proportionate vindictiveness.

Next to their curiosity, the most striking characteristic of Our Little Brown Allies is a strange sense of irresponsibility which shows itself in small things as well as large. Some one calls it "the cloven hoof of Orientalism," and attempts to explain its origin in the fatalistic teaching of the oldest forms of Shintoism. That may or may not be the truth, but whatever its origin, the characteristic is now wide-spread. I find it, to quote a humble instance, in the little butcher's shop in Tokio where I have so often ordered my provisions and so often failed to get them. Either the butcher boy forgets to cut the steak or the errand-boy forgets to deliver it. Worse still, when I gently but firmly recite the tale of all the inconvenience I suffer through their carelessness, I find no becoming attitude of regret, no mental hanging of guilty heads. Yes, they forget, they acknowledge that, but they never seem to appreciate the disgrace of breaking a contract however trifling. My little confectioner is no more dependable. I may have guests to tea, I may invite the Chief

Justice and warn the baker of it, yet he makes no special effort to remember my cakes, shows no regret when he disappoints me, and, instead of humbly promising to do better next time, simply appears bored at my fretting.

Of course, when this same strain of Oriental apathy—so paralysing to every kind of effort it touches—attacks important matters, the results are serious. Take the matter of railway accidents, of such common occurrence in Japan that *Tokio Puck*, the clever Japanese *Fliegende Blätter*, lately printed a famous cartoon on the subject entitled, "A Funny Fenomenon." Two pictures showed two trains of cars, the first entirely empty of passengers except for the very end car, to which those travellers who could not find places in the overcrowded inside were hanging on outside by grasping the window-sills; the second having the travellers more evenly distributed—one old beggar in the car nearest the engine, two soldiers in the next, three peasants in the next, and the biggest crowd also in the last car of all. Underneath, by way of explanation, some quaint letterpress was printed: "As always, trains having collision, passengers seem to be anxious for its dangers: and

they are all getting on the last car. Therefore being empty of the rest of cars, officials shall fix the fare as the following:—No fare for the closest one of the locomotive, to reduce by half and insure about their life for the next. Half-price only for that next. And it will be commonly for the rest as usual.”

The reason why, with one accord, passengers avoid proximity to the locomotive is because in case of trouble the engineer—whom no sense of responsibility keeps at a post become difficult or dangerous—jumps off and leaves the boiler to blow up if it wants to. With luck, it may only blow up those in the car nearest to it, and with great luck it may not blow up at all.

Much the same reliance on happy chance seems to be the chief article of faith of the Japanese afloat when he stands in authority. Certainly those Japanese-captained launches which tear across the swirling straits of Shemenoseki, which pass so close to other wild craft that there is scarcely room for anything but a word of command between them, must rely on luck alone for a safe passage, I suppose. Otherwise, how account for the captain's serene eye, the crew's indifferent behaviour, as,

steering wildly, cramming on full speed from pier to pier, they dash across the intervening strip of water as if it were an obstacle race?

A naval *attaché* who followed the manœuvres of the Japanese fleet critically during the late war with Russia told me that he continually marvelled how the Japanese battle-ships escaped sinking one another. Many of their evolutions he described as absolutely foolhardy—in curious contrast to the pernicky care of the land troops, who sometimes erred on the side of too little, rather than too much, dash and initiative. “But how did the fleet get through so brilliantly?” I suggested. “Luck—of which the Japanese seem to have an abnormal share—seldom deserted them,” was his reply, “and when it did, and they made mistakes, nothing was said about the blunders.” I could not help thinking how typically Japanese this method is. Spare no expense in advertising successes and bury the failures quietly in the garden. Above all, no coroner and no autopsy.

It is but fair to add that the splendid European and Australian mail steamers of the Japanese lines have an excellent reputation, though how far this is due to the fact that they carry non-

Japanese captains it would not be safe to judge. The white commander is a necessary—if galling—concession which Our Little Brown Allies are obliged to make to the white passenger trade. On coasting lines throughout the Far East they are, however, at liberty to please themselves and patronise home industries, as passengers who travel up and down Chinese or Korean or Japanese coasts for their sins must take what they can get or stay at home, the choice of companies being generally limited to one, and that one Japanese. All such travellers can possibly expect is a British Chief Officer and Chief Engineer as a guarantee that the fatalistic policy may not be carried too far.

A certain British officer on the run between Japan and North China gave me some curious information about what he described as the “goin’s-on” in the ships of his own company and the irresponsibility of his subordinate Japanese officers.

“Our captain,” said he, “now he ’s a nice man, kind, courteous, and as polite as the Prince of Wales, but he has funny ideas sometimes, like when I first came on board and found that though we run into a fog thick as sealskin the siren was

only going once in ten minutes. The idea fairly gave me the shivers—on our course, too, which is full of ships. So I said to him, just by way of a suggestion, ‘Don’t you think, captain, we might blow a little oftener considering we can’t see ten feet ahead?’ But he just smiled kindly and said, ‘Oh, no, it is not necessary; this is a lucky ship. She has been through the war.’ ”

The younger officers my informant described as frankly indifferent to their calling and determined never to allow their sense of duty to interfere seriously with their personal comfort. On the slightest pretext most of them would report as unfit for work, neither thinking nor caring who was to do their share of it for them. Our idea of triumphing over slight inconveniences for the sake of duty never seems to cross their minds. In winter they have always “breathed the wind,” that is, caught cold; in summer they suffer from “summer weakness,” and in the off-seasons they have either “kake” or “no-byo.”

Some of the more willing are pitiful specimens of incapacity. One boy who came on board to be assistant engineer threw himself entirely on the mercy of the bluff old Welsh chief engineer, say-

ing, "I am quite ignorant; please love me." He certainly proved ignorant, but he never was loved—at least not on that ship. Brought up from childhood among engines and taught to respect and care for them, the old Welshman had little patience with the manner in which Japanese regard machinery. His personal experience did not lead him to be merciful to the greenhorn, and besides, he had been for a long time on the run to Korea and heard too often of the way the Japanese recklessly drive their locomotives to pieces from the Baldwin expert kept constantly at work doctoring almost incurable cases. "No, I will not love you," said he to the poor youth, "and what is more, I will not have you. Go and help the cook and mind you peel the potatoes nicely."

With officers, other than engineers, there is, it appears, no question of refusing unpromising specimens. Take what the company sends and make the best of it. "Not long ago," said the chief officer, "the head office sent a young third officer on board—a youth just out of school—no knowledge, no certificates, nothing, in fact, but a brand-new uniform, very bright buttons, a pleas-

ant smile, and a frank letter from the Directors. 'We send you a new officer. *Please take care of him.*' " As the ship was short-handed at the time, the young man was set about simple duties immediately, but even these he was not allowed to do without serious misgivings on the part of his superior. Presently he complained to his friends the Directors that he was not being given any responsible work, so after a few weeks' training he was allowed to take a watch. "I gave him a week to make a mess of things," said the chief officer, "and sure enough before the week was over a wrong entry appeared in the log. It was pointed out to the young man. 'If your entry is right,' said his superior officer, 'you should be in quite a different latitude. But as it is wrong you happen to be three points off your course and close to a dangerous reef.' The price of his inattention and folly might have been heavy yet all he did when he heard of it was to reply in a meaningless tone, 'I am very sorry,' and then laugh. I could have forgiven the poor young idiot his mistake," said the Britisher, "but that laugh rankled for years, until I found out what it really meant."

No wonder. That misplaced laugh has made

more enemies for Our Little Brown Allies than all their other characteristics put together, for strangers are slow to realise that in Japan laughter does not always indicate pleasure, that on the contrary it may mean many other things, such as nervousness or an attempt at self-control. How many missionaries have been horrified to find that on reading the story of the Crucifixion to a class the pupils laugh! How many school-teachers have been equally horrified to find that on being asked to describe some event of the hour scholars will dramatically tell the story of a poor creature who has been run into by a tram and cut in two, and then laugh as though the tragedy was a huge joke. At first they do not know that this is not the laugh humorous but the laugh nervous, the very same laugh with which a Japanese will announce the death of a near and dear relative. But even when they do find out the truth, some Europeans never survive the shock which the apparent heartlessness gives them. "I will never like the Japanese," said an American globe-trotter to me one day, "they are a terrible people. Just imagine, a Japanese lady friend of mine, when I inquired after her eldest son, replied, 'Oh, thank

you very much, he died yesterday,' and as she said it she laughed pleasantly."

Of no avail were excuses or explanations to change the heart of this stranger. I tried to tell her that the poor Japanese lady was no more callous than any other mother. Her laugh, considered aright, was really an admirable thing, rooted in unselfishness. "Do not sadden others by intruding your personal grief upon them," says the old Bushido code, and she, as a well-bred person, was only trying to carry out the noble precept when she was so bitterly misjudged.

"Well, what you say may be true," retorted the American lady, "but I guess we diverge too much upon the sense of humour for white and yellow to have any real sympathy with one another."

CHAPTER XII

THE AWKWARD AGE

WHAT makes Our Little Brown Allies still more difficult to judge than they would otherwise be—what gives rise to half their contradictory characteristics—is the transition period through which they are now passing. A dainty and beautiful race-childhood lies behind them, an ugly adolescence before, and, as they stand between the two at present, they display all the peculiarities belonging to the age known as “awkward.”

Of course many of these peculiarities will of themselves drop off again when Young Japan outgrows the “flapper stage.” But a few others may need to be knocked off by some of those little punishments which are indispensable to the proper upbringing of a young person.

The fact is, Young Japan is a typical specimen of the spoiled child, clever, given to mimicking the

household guests before they are outside the drawing-room door, and quite beyond the control of the older generation, who never see her come into the room without trembling for their heirlooms, the most precious of which, the fragile vase of Courtesy, her blundering fingers have already chipped and cracked almost beyond recognition. What a pity! It was so dear to the old people—how dear we can perhaps judge by what a simple schoolboy wrote forty years ago when the subject of "Etiquette" was given out to his class for a theme. "Courtesy," said this lad in all seriousness, "is the greatest thing in the world. The possession of it separates us from the animals. Monkeys do not understand the rules of courtesy, therefore they are animals."

"Do you think that the new generation would express such sentiments?" says a charming old professor who taught the grandfathers of to-day, and who comes periodically to sit upon my mats and bitterly deplore in sympathetic ears the way Young Japan is allowing that separating gulf of which the lad wrote to become narrower and narrower. He, and such as he, would wish to stop the growing rudeness either by patching up the

older forms of politeness and making them fit for use, or, if they look out of keeping with the new fashions and factories, by urging the importation of manners from the West to match the new style of civilisation. But what can a small minority do except offer an occasional protest? A gentleman of the old school may get up in a tram now and then and give his seat to a poor woman holding a heavy baby, saying, "Honourably excuse the unpoliteness of youth," as he looks at the rows of hulking schoolboys and apprentices seated on the benches. But his action does not make them ashamed. Not a bit of it. If they emerge sufficiently from the absorbing contemplation of their own affairs to notice the example at all, it is only with a feeling of pity for one who might have enjoyed his own comfort yet deliberately gave it up for a woman. The man who lets politeness carry him that length must be a fool, they would certainly think if they troubled to think at all; he is not fit to follow; and not even fit to argue with, especially when the subject admits of no argument. "Ladies last," not "Ladies first," is the sensible rule for keeping in its place an inferior sex. Now, if the old gentleman

had suggested to the buxom wench in the corner that she should yield her place to him, they might have felt some respect for his common-sense. As it was, he is nearly as bad, from their point of view, as the young Englishman who, when he saw a Japanese lady and her husband enter a tram, naturally rose and offered his place, and then looked astonished and irritated when the husband sat down in the vacant seat after many grateful bows and appreciative phrases about the stranger's courtesy. "This young man," said the Japanese to his wife, "must have heard that I am the manager of a Government bank, and is no doubt showing me this consideration partly on account of my position and partly for political reasons."

All parents know that the more precocious a child is the less it should be complimented to its face. Tell little Willie that he is a promising child and he will promise to your heart's content, and only perform when absolutely necessary. That is, he will let his reputation carry him just as far as it will and only get off and walk when the old horse cannot go another step. Equally, tell Mariana that she is a pretty girl and she will be spending half her time looking in the glass and the

other half sitting around in the hope that somebody will repeat that compliment.

This is exactly what has happened to Young Japan. The neighbours have spoiled her. "What a pretty child! What a bright pupil!" has been sounded in her ears for so long that the perpetual praise, like some poisonous drug, has created a strong desire for a continually-increased dose and made her willing to stoop to any methods for the sake of obtaining it. Quality even has become immaterial; any praise will do—the world's if possible, if not the individual's—only some approbation must be forthcoming.

Without doubt the late war with Russia assisted Our Little Brown Allies to obtain the soothing drug which does them such harm in the opinion of their genuine well-wishers. During that campaign they behaved so well that nobody could deny them praise. They fought manfully; they were generous; they encouraged the Y.M.C.A. They displayed at all times a commendable modesty and much self-sacrifice; they abstained from vain-glorious boasting. The harder the strain, the greater dignity they used to hide their anxiety. The Government kept a cool head throughout, fed

the people on promises when they showed signs of becoming restive, and though it trembled often enough with anxiety (statesmen were almost in despair over the obstinate resistance of Port Arthur, and as nervous as cats before Tsushima) it kept a brave face and brought the war to a successful conclusion, much to the surprise of everybody in Asia.

Then when the hour of trial was over the people kissed their hand to the whole human race and climbed down off their pedestal to gather the wreaths laid at their feet by admiring friends. The attitude, I must say, was unbecoming and ungraceful, and by the rapidity with which they assumed it the Japanese made themselves ridiculous, for nothing, more 's the pity, as they were frankly disappointed in the tributes paid them on this occasion. Far too many were inscribed "To the most martial people in the world," or "To the people who are born soldiers," and many of Our Little Brown Allies read a hint of mediæval taste for barbarity between the lines. A Japanese lady of education, who had been studying the papers from abroad which pointed out at that time that the Japanese were excellent soldiers because,

more than any other soldiers, they delighted in war, remarked to me, in quite an aggrieved tone, "The West pretends that Japan loves to fight. But it is not so. She was forced into the war to defend the right." Well, of course she was—the right to gobble Korea quickly and half of Manchuria slowly. A certain celebrated professor, however, got immediate secret orders to explain the situation, leaving out the part about the gobbling process, and he accordingly did prove by algebra that the Japanese are just as humane as other people, and rather more so, and that they only fight when absolutely necessary. The point misunderstood by other nations is not that they do not wish to fight but that, "By jingo! when they do," their patriotism makes them do it splendidly to a man.

[I am sorry to contradict the professor, only I happen to know that every soldier who was drafted off to the war did not run to it as a child runs to his mother, with all the beautiful eagerness the Japanese Government tried to make believe he did. Neither did every family send its sons to death and glory with unctuous satisfaction. The picture of fond parents pressing a cholera belt as a parting

gift into the hand of their first-born and telling him to think of nothing but the commands of his Emperor until Russia was wiped off the map is a little overdrawn. The truth is, no country has the monopoly of any one virtue or is exempt from any particular failing. There were reluctant parents in Japan as elsewhere, and there were occasional outcroppings of cruelty, one especially notable. It was the case of a poor old couple living near Tokio, who, having but a single son to support them in their declining years, pleaded that he might be excused from military duty and remain at home to cheer their old eyes and earn their rice and *daikon* (pickled radish). They probably pestered the War Office. I can imagine them with all the patience of Oriental old age, waiting in corridors, pouring their grievances into the ears of everybody who got within earshot, even the hall porter, urging, begging, entreating. Finally the War Office replied courteously that the son should remain at home, and without doubt they went away congratulating one another on their diplomacy, poor old things! But as the only condition on which the favour would be granted was that he should report himself at headquarters immedi-

ately, they sent the youth off at once with a heart full of joyful expectation. That whole afternoon they waited impatiently for his return. Three o'clock, four o'clock, five o'clock—he did not come. Then just at nightfall a *niguruma* (hand-cart) appeared at the door, and when the old couple hurried out to see what had arrived for them, to their horror the men in charge handed them the dead body of their boy, remarking simply, "He shall remain at home with you." Diabolical? Perhaps, but true, if the young recruits called at the same time are to be believed. The War Office would say they are not. Still, I know of at least half a dozen ready to vouch for the story—as they are equally ready to vouch for the story of two of their comrades buried alive in a Tokio barrack-yard for deserting.

Things like these, however, are only whispered in friendly circles; they have never gotten abroad, and so the world, though it may have suspected that a few savage instincts lurked under Japan's false shirt-front, continued to pander to Japanese vanity, having no proofs to make it do otherwise. Great Britain took the lead by suppressing *The Mikado* lest the operetta wound delicate sensi-

bilities, and was at once repaid for the sacrifice by deepest gratitude voiced by all the Japanese newspapers. "Thank you so much for not allowing us to be made ridiculous—even on the stage," they all said between the lines. The *Yomiuri*, rumoured to be the official organ of Marquis Saionji, then Premier, went still further, and after congratulating Great Britain on having taken a step in the right direction proposed that the ban should also be laid upon *The Geisha*. "Now that people throughout the world are so anxious to learn the true character of the Japanese nation," the editor made bold to say, "and that the existence of such plays—which constitute a real affront to the good name of Japan—are calculated to do great harm to Japan's fame and seriously mislead the English public, we would feel deeply grateful to Great Britain for prohibiting them all."

Articles like this set me thinking of what a lucky thing it is Shakespeare did not mention the cherry blossom instead of the rose in that little passage about smelling as sweet under another name, and did not stain Iago brown instead of black, else we might have lost him too, perhaps—waked up one morning and found him sacrificed on

the altar of Japanese vanity! And think of the risks we have run with our Old Masters! Suppose—only suppose—Reynolds or Burne-Jones had painted the devil in a kimono! Would apologies have availed to save that picture? Could we have hoped to pass it off as “an attempt at the Black Prince in a tennis suit”?

Hardly. In the end, I feel sure, we should have been obliged to smudge the masterpiece out, and Our Little Brown Allies, knowing full well the advertising value of the picturesque sacrifice, would have felt, as we did it, increased pride in themselves for thus giving us an opportunity of earning a measure of *kudos* while obliging them.

It is a favourite method of their own for calling attention to their perfections—this ostentatious putting behind them of Satan and other mischievous persons or habits. Schoolboys like nothing better than to burn *saké* bottles and *geishas* in effigy at the New Year festival, and then listen to the chorus of “How noble!” that greets them afterwards. Samurai maidens like to commit suicide when somebody throws a *geta* (wooden shoe) at the Empress just by way of sensational atonement.

But the nation can no more live up to this standard every day than we could ask for the butter every morning in blank verse, and the mad chase after success, the burning desire for admiration, makes them still less able to do so. Alas! vanity is a form of indulgence which inevitably narrows the minds of those that practise it, and finally induces all sorts of "funny complaints," like tale-bearing, back-biting, and petty jealousy. A few examples will explain better than anything else what I mean.

Last year, at the Exhibition in Tokio, a man who had exhibited some statuary—very beautiful, but yet not beautiful enough to gain the first prize—quietly walked into the hall of fine arts and shattered the marbles into fragments in a petty and totally unworthy spite against the judges. A photographer's assistant, who had exhibited in the same place and was actuated by the same mean motives, broke his frames, splintered his glass, and tore up his prints because they had gained no more than "Honourable mention."

In several instances I have known men who wanted a position and failed to get it deliberately attempt to oust a successful rival by publishing a

scandalous article about him in the newspapers. This form of revenge, indeed, is quite common in Japan, and will, no doubt, continue to be while editors allow their columns to be used as scurrilous public vehicles for private animosity. The worst feature of the case is that they can do so with impunity as the law of libel is such a clumsy thing in Japan that a private individual, even if he has been accused of the most outrageous things, scarcely ever invokes it. No one will believe the scandal, he hopes, and meanwhile he keeps a dignified and disgusted silence. Not so the long-suffering politician, who has not, on the whole, usually suffered longer than he deserves. If called a liar in public he will bring the cumbersome statute into action, but the insult must have been public. Otherwise, even he will hush the matter up, preferring to swallow an unpalatable truth rather than risk a *cause célèbre* which might easily get into the foreign newspapers and harm the reputation of his country. Really, after all, the underlying feeling of the nation is very like that of a society woman who cares little for scars that don't show. What she dreads nowadays is a pimple on her neck that every one

can see when she appears *décolleté* at some fashionable gathering.

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Such then are some of the trivial ways in which Young Japan "does not realise the poster." But the most serious indictment against her is ingratitude. For more than a quarter of a century now Our Little Brown Allies have sat at the feet of Western teachers in order to pick their brains, as an Irishman would say. Have those teachers been treated with the respect, the reverence which people who hold the recipes for guns and battle-ships and billiard-tables have a right to expect? No, indeed. Once the Japanese have learned all they wish to know they have dismissed their masters with scant ceremony, and sometimes with a lack of consideration that almost amounts to cruelty.

The late war with Russia is also largely responsible for the development of this bad quality and in all fairness I can hardly see how such a series of unparalleled successes could have done otherwise. Beginning the campaign as the Japanese did in all nervousness and trepidation, when they found that neither was necessary, that the great-

est power in Europe, the biggest, the richest, the one that could put most men into the field, was only a huge bogey which toppled over when little Japan said "shoo" to it, was it any wonder if the tremendous revulsion of feeling brought on an enlargement of the cranial bones—commonly known as "swelled head"?

The complaint is at present complicated with an abnormal looseness of the tongue among other symptoms. Reserve, in the commonest form of politeness, is being thrown off. It becomes the fashion to speak one's mind among the common people, and the children frankly sing in chorus as a foreign lady passes down a Tokio street, "Foreign fool with the eyes of a cat" (so blue or hazel eyes are always referred to in Japan). Equally, among the more educated a cynical attitude towards the West is being adopted. A young Japanese who had been reading about the German scare in the British papers said in a pitying tone to an English lady lately, "I am very anxious about your British army." "You may well be," was her angry retort, "for the more its efficiency diminishes the more disgrace to you when you are ultimately beaten by it."

She referred to the phrase often heard in a tone of supreme self-satisfaction from Japanese lips to-day—always unofficial lips, of course—“We shall fight England next and then Germany.” How long ago was it that Japan was very humbly asking for an alliance and the moral support of the nation which she now affects to despise? Scarcely eight years, yet some Japanese schools are already using as a text-book a pamphlet on *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire*. The humble student has already become the arrogant critic, determined to avoid the mistakes of a nation which has, so to speak, had its day, and whose face is now turned towards the setting sun.

Well, a great nation can afford to meet this ingratitude with equanimity. But an unfortunate individual, insignificant and poor, is in a very different position. If, like Lafcadio Hearn, his literary talent can command a circle of readers he may bring his wrongs to public notice—and a lot of practical good it does him!—if not, he is denied even this satisfaction, though his case be equally pathetic, and Japanese employers are not above trading on his helplessness, more shame to them!

Among half a dozen peremptory dismissals

which have come within my own knowledge, the case of a certain poor little man who, in vulgar parlance, was "given the sack" two years ago stands out for its unnecessary unkindness. The man was an exemplary character—by profession a teacher. Term after term he lavished time and patience conscientiously upon little boys in Tokio—ugly, stupid little boys—for a salary quite out of proportion to his expenditure of either. There was no reason to suppose that he would not have continued so to do till the end of his days and, accordingly, he took his usual holiday during the particular summer which was to prove so fatal to him with an easy mind, only returning to Tokio a day or two before school should open, according to his usual habit. Imagine then his consternation when, as he was planning to take up work again, a friend upbraided him for slyness in resigning his position and allowing a new teacher to be appointed without telling his intimates. "Why," complained the friend, "did you allow us to read such a thing first in a newspaper?"

The little teacher was thunderstruck. He resign? This was the first he had heard of his retirement or of a successor. Could it be true that

without giving reasons or notice his employers had turned him adrift? Unfortunately he found that it could, and as he depended for his meagre living on his teaching, the little man had to alternately entreat and threaten every official in Tokio till they wearied of his persistence and gave him a miserable appointment in a country school to quiet him. As for the reason of his dismissal, it was never divulged. Most likely the foreign teacher's place was required for a native, employers preferring to "patronise home industry." But does that necessity excuse the Japanese for using such cunning and secrecy towards a helpless dependant whom they might have turned away decently and kindly? Certainly not!

I may add that the policy turned out to be a very mistaken one, and that the very next year Fate avenged the poor little professor in this wise. A Japanese dock company in Nagasaki, taking a leaf out of the Government's book, summarily dismissed a foreign employé and got hoist with their own petard over the action. The man in question was a fearless old Scotch engineer, an expert in his line. He had been in the Japanese service for fifteen years, believed his position was

secure for life, and had therefore bought land, built himself a house, and taken unto himself a wife. Suddenly the company took it into their heads that they knew all he knew and could dispense with his services. "I 'll believe it when I see it," retorted the engineer, as, much to the astonishment of his former employers, he added to the size of his garden and quietly remained in Nagasaki. "They 'll need me yet," he told commiserating friends with a chuckle. And sure enough they did—not six months afterwards, when a foreign Government gave the company an order for seven river gunboats. In due course the ships were completed, and the builders were "puffed up with pride," until their work was inspected, and the purchasers refused to take delivery because, the engines having been placed too far forward, the vessels were too low in the water. The Japanese engineers had made mistakes in their plans—mistakes they could neither find nor rectify. Then with superb *sang-froid* they turned to the outcast Scotchman and asked him to help them. But he would n't. They begged. He refused. They entreated. He stood firm. At last they promised money, anything, and he agreed to submit

his terms, which were a permanent position and ten thousand yen compensation. Over these two stipulations they haggled and bargained for a week, but at last they accepted because there was no other way to save the gunboats, and the despised and rejected foreigner set to work, practically rebuilt five of the boats, and rectified as far as possible the construction of the other two, which could not, however, be handed over to the Government that ordered them. Marked "Slightly soiled," they are still awaiting a purchaser.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME OLD-FASHIONED VIRTUES AND CUSTOMS

DEEP underlying these ugly qualities of Young Japan there still remain a few gentle virtues, handed down from ancient times, and and though, year by year, it takes sharper eyes to spy them out, the result well repays the trouble, for among Our Little Brown Allies the best qualities are certainly the oldest, taking "best" in the sense of "admiration compelling" rather than as merely "capable of winning quick worldly advancement."

Of course the first and most glorious of all these virtues is loyalty and love for the divinely-descended Emperor and his family. It is a cult, almost a religion—a wider form of the bond between servant and master, or retainer and prince—a sentiment higher than the love of parents for children, closer than the tie between friend and friend, stronger than the fear of death itself. None

is so poor, none so humble, that he dare not feel it; none so proud, none so powerful, that he scorns to own it. Our Western sovereigns, with the possible exception of Emperor William, who must gnash his teeth with envy when he sees the Divine Rights willingly given to his colleague in Japan, have almost forgotten what this flattering unction feels like. No more pedestals for them. Shaking hands with the engine-driver, that 's about what their functions have come down to! That's what is demanded by a popular taste which can neither understand nor sympathise with a sense of reverence.

Yet, as seen in Japan, one feels instinctively reverence is a good and noble thing. An old peasant woman tells me solemnly that on the Crown Prince's arrival in her little town she will go out and "worship" him, using the word that she uses for the gods, and I almost envy her the sense of dignity, of retirement, of mystery in which she wraps her future sovereign. He comes, it is true, in a panama hat, a frock coat, brown boots, and other paraphernalia in which ideals are not usually dressed. But what does that matter to the idealist? True faith can overlook an anachronism as easily as move a mountain.

Moreover, true faith, however rude or humble, is never ridiculous. When I see the faces of Imperial pictures in Tokio bazaars covered with little flaps of white paper, I do not even want to smile. I simply ask the reason, and the little stall-keeper solemnly explains that it is because *Kitsune* (fox goblins) have been known to enter and take possession of uncovered portraits, and, naturally, the Imperial Family must not be exposed to such risks. Mercifully, that little shopkeeper is totally devoid of a sense of humour. Otherwise, as she looked day after day at those fearful oleograph caricatures of His Majesty and the Empress and their grandchildren, dressed in ludicrous travesties of foreign clothes, some of her tremendous stock of veneration would surely ooze away. The fact that it does n't—that neither she nor any other soul in Japan sees anything amusing in the travesties of their ruler and his spouse, or in the Crown Prince's first-born with his magenta bib and "candle-shade" hat—only shows how thoroughly the critical attitude has been eradicated from the nation in such matters.

If it needed further proving, a war always proves abundantly what a very real cult this Em-

peror worship is. Twenty years ago schoolboys, on being asked to write down their dearest wish, always answered with one accord, "to die for our Emperor," and, even allowing for a little hypocrisy, many of the answers must have been spontaneous and genuine. The percentage, if the experiment were tried to-day, would be scarcely as large, for the Japanese youth is growing somewhat more selfish, but quite enough of the old spirit still remains to startle the world with an occasional proof showing tragic depths of unselfishness.

There was an instance only lately. A young reserve officer on the outbreak of the last war considered it his duty to volunteer for special service. But he had the misfortune to be poor and a widower, with few friends, and no relations except one little daughter, whom he loved so passionately that he feared and dreaded to leave her among strangers. Whatever he did, wherever he went, he knew that, even if she was well cared for, the thought of her would stand between him and his duty to his Emperor. Therefore, like Virginius in old Rome, he called the child to him, fondled her tenderly for one last time, and then plunged a

knife into her little breast, and set out from his desolate home a free man and single-hearted.

Such sacrifices, rare and curious as they are nowadays, were common enough once upon a time. Half the old plays turn upon similar incidents, the most famous being the true legend of the *Samurai*, who gives his only son to save his sovereign lord's heir, and feels proud to do so. I know the American globe-trotter who complained about the Japanese mother smiling when she told of her son's death would call the action inhuman and unnatural. So it may seem at first sight; yet when one looks deeper into the motives of it how supremely noble! Imagine the father, with smiling face, sitting beside his lord's enemy, into whose friendship and confidence he has wormed himself, the better to complete his sacrifice—sitting at the school-house door, and, as the children troop out with careless, unsuspecting feet, whispering, "That is the one," as his own son passes by! Imagine him afterwards, when the villain—having done his bloody deed—brings him the severed head in a lacquer box, calmly lifting the lid himself, gazing at the glassy eyes of his first-born, and saying cheerfully, "You have killed

wisely. That is the great lord's son," and then bowing the man politely off as he starts back to his master with the gruesome burden! Finally, imagine that father returning slowly to a desolate home, with only the consciousness of flawless loyalty to sustain him and without even the gentle consolation of tears—for a Samurai might not weep. Then judge whether his affection for his master, his self-denial, courage, and sense of duty are not fine and admirable qualities!

To belittle the sacrifice by pretending the Samurai was a heartless parent might be an easy explanation of the incident, but it would be a grossly unfair one. That man must have loved his son with an absorbing love, for all Japanese fathers idolise their children. Doubly so because, as tradition and custom forbid men in Japan to look upon their wives except as chattels, on whom it would be bad taste to lavish affection, all the devotion of which they are capable goes to those bright little creatures who alone are the mirth and adornment of Japanese homes, "serving their parents for playthings and for picture-galleries."

I have seen among Our Little Brown Allies dirty children, spoiled children, rude children, but

never unwelcome or unloved children. The strongest, roughest man among them melts into tenderness towards a child. *Kurumayas* turn from their gambling and desert their *saké* bottles after a long day's run to trundle a little creature about in their *kuruma* for its pleasure; workmen carry a soft, crumpled scrap of babyhood in their arms for an airing no matter how weary they themselves may be. Carters, whatever their hurry, always stop to pick up a grimy urchin playing at sand-castles in the middle of a crowded road and set it safely on one side.

In return, old-fashioned young people, if such a contradictory expression is permissible, treat their elders with consideration and respect. Japanese translations of Molière's works have been suppressed by common consent simply because they ridiculed old age. Public opinion would not tolerate plays like *Fourberies de Scapin*, which depicted fathers made the butt of gross wit by their children, which showed youth always victorious at the expense of age. They positively horrified a people who count filial piety one of the chief virtues. "We will not see parental authority dethroned and undermined," said Our Little Brown

Allies, considering the question from the broad standpoint of social expediency. Nor can they afford to do so while the present clan and family system exists in Japan. Their communal cult, which for centuries has been found so perfectly adapted to the needs of the nation, demands the discouraging of any act of disrespect from the younger towards the older members of a family as the price of teachings which have inspired—and still inspire—many charming acts of devotion.

Daughters, even nowadays, who sell themselves for the maintenance of their parents, are sure of extravagant praise. Sons, who feel no shame over the most humble parentage but gladly share their prosperity with the old people, are always commended. One lad I knew, as soon as he had climbed into a good situation in Tokio, spent all his meagre savings in removing his old father and mother nearer him, and not only their conservative selves but their weather-beaten country cottage as well, because the old people dreaded new surroundings. Another youth, a country *kurumaya*, drew his old mother all the way to Tokio, a distance of more than a hundred miles, so that on her seventieth birthday she might have the

pleasure of seeing the sights of the capital. A third hastily went out and married a wife because his work required his absence from home all day, and he wanted some one in the house to nurse his old father whom he would not trust to a servant liable to depart suddenly.

Apart from these instances of a younger generation acknowledging and paying a debt to the older, very pretty cases of gratitude towards comparative strangers existed among the simpler Japanese society of, say, forty years ago, and they still exist in isolated individuals notwithstanding the growing spirit of ingratitude which we cannot help noticing in Young Japan. An old, old man, from whom I once bought a few trifles in the little village of Ikao, walked for three days across the mountains to bring me a gift of fresh eggs and humble greetings when he heard I was at Nikko the next year. My landlord in Kamakura, an aged Buddhist priest to whom I occasionally gave cake or lump sugar, presented me regularly with the first fruits of his tiny garden—new potatoes hard as little pebbles, and cobs of corn. Also, if ever I failed to return from a walk until after dark, he followed me, in spite of his seventy

years, with a lantern, remarking quaintly, "I have come to protect you."

Dear old man, he was the most perfect incarnation of the old spirit of kindness and grace as he prayed to his gilded god or fed the tame doves which fluttered down from temple roofs, and the best possible advertisement for the gentle influence of Buddhism. Alas! he himself was forced to admit that this influence is decaying!

"The ideas of the West have burst into our Buddhist peace," he would say sadly, "and the new generation of our people like to call themselves free-thinkers or sceptics. But to me it seems that these are merely new-fashioned names for selfishness and the growing desire for luxurious living. I hear that rich men in the big cities now spend five hundred yen a month on their pleasure alone; that is, they spend on unnecessary things enough to support a hundred Japanese lives for that period. I hear, too, that even the old Samurai families, who once scorned to think of money, are now becoming greedy and grasping. Their excuse for being so is the sudden increase of prices and standards. 'Our daughters,' some of my old friends tell me, 'are no longer content with the

koto and the *samisen*; they desire to have a piano.' But do these men ever stop to wonder why? Do they ask themselves if it is for real love of Western music? Do they inquire whether underneath the request there is some noble motive, or just the mean desire to have a new and expensive form of noise like some neighbour? Alas! no, for these men themselves are becoming a prey to the disquieting new conditions, and their conduct makes me wonder what is to become of the old virtues of simplicity and self-denial," said he as he shook his bald old head sadly.

Thereupon, to comfort him, for he was a good old man, I told him a story to prove how gentle and pitiful men will still be sometimes, even men who are "free-thinkers" and live in cities.

Quite near my little house in Tokio there was a tiny bird-cage of boards and shingles. It enclosed only two rooms—a larger and a smaller one, scarcely six feet square. And in this tiny box there lived a poor crippled man whose wife had deserted him, whose child was dead. None remained to care for him, and so the neighbours, touched by his helplessness, allowed him to live in the little tumble-down shanty rent free. He

was unable to work, scarcely able to crawl about, and yet he clung to life with all the pitiful eagerness of the useless and the unhappy. In order to buy rice to keep himself alive he rented the smaller room to a poor student, a kindly country boy, and for months and years he dragged out his meagre existence without comfort, without pleasure, except when some neighbour brought him a flower. At last the student was called home to his military service, and as it was unlikely that another tenant would soon be found for the tumble-down room he inquired about sending the poor cripple to the "*yoikuin*," literally, "the home of rest," plainly, the workhouse. Everything was at last arranged and the day upon which he was to enter his new home decided upon. Then the boy spent an afternoon begging a little money from the neighbours in order to give the poor cripple one perfect day of pleasure before he was shut up for ever. And poor as they were they gave according to what they had, some ten sen, some twenty, some only one. When two or three yen were gathered together the boy returned home and told the cripple what he had done. Then, next morning, he washed the poor helpless creature, dressed him in

a clean kimono, tenderly lifted him into a *kuruma*, and together they started off for the great day.

“Where will you honourably be pleased to go?” asked the boy. “Take me to Hibiya Park, that I may see the bright flowers,” said the poor fellow, and accordingly he was slowly wheeled to each bed and given a sight and a smell of the loveliness laid out there. Then there followed a delicious dinner, and *saké* besides, and finally, at the very last hour before sunset, the boy and his charge drew up at the workhouse gates, the boy pressing into the cripple’s hand the few sen left over in order that he might buy himself cigarettes when he felt inclined.

Could any age or country show a more perfect act of unselfishness than that of the young student whose last day in the gay capital, before he started off for some country garrison, was spent in pouring a little of the holy ointment of happiness over a sad life?

When I had finished the story the priest smiled happily and said, “The old virtues are not yet gone then!”

Not yet. Some remain, as some of the old customs remain, and some of the picturesqueness

of the past. Kioto, the queen city, for example, is still a "many-tinted fairy tale." Seen at night, when darkness blots out the factory chimneys, she might still be a city of the *Samurai* days; she might still be the seat of the *Shogunate*.

If the traveller hurries he may yet find wonderful processions in honour of dusty gods and goddesses winding up the *Maruyama* Pleasure Hill towards one of the glorious temples situated there. He may see, if he does not delay, the most wonderful old costumes of brocades stiff with gold, the most splendid suits of armour, the most cunningly-wrought swords. He may see, too, all along the route of the procession, the houses thrown open so that it is easy for the passer-by to look in and enjoy a glimpse of priceless old family heirlooms, such as golden screens or fans with, perhaps, a single bursting blue wave upon them which will give him a delicious sensation of coolness. Very likely some of these householders will invite him, with wonderful courtesy, to sit with their friends on the white mats and observe the passing crowd, which is sure to be interesting—the geishas, in double jinrickshas, twittering like sparrows in the curious falsetto trebles which

make them easily distinguishable anywhere; the old men with their hair tied up on top of their heads in the fashion of last century, and their old wives with blackened teeth, who stop to stare with the good-natured curiosity of countryfolk; or the children toddling by, resplendent in bright-coloured festival robes, with little "*O Mamori*" (gay, embroidered bags containing paper charms, invoking the blessing of the sacred dog, *Mitsumune*, who keeps off robbers) tied to their sashes, and underneath their *geta* (wooden clogs) tiny, tinkling bells, so that in case the fidgety little creatures stray, they may be easily traced.

The beauty of the festival decorations alone is a continual delight to the stranger. There will be national flags and sprigs of pine before each entrance, and every street is prepared for illumination. Fortunately, the electric light has not yet penetrated to many of the smaller streets, which are often narrow as gangways. Before each house there stands a lantern post of unpainted wood, and the lanterns hanging from them are the greatest charm of the whole display. Their infinite variety is apparently unending. Some are large as a balloon, some are small as a melon, some

are four-sided, some are round, some are shaped like butterflies, some like fruits, some are decorated with bright flowers, some with simple ideographs in black and white. Our Little Brown Allies must have an inexhaustible imagination, since designs of this kind are scarcely ever repeated. I myself saw three million patterns on cheap printed cotton cloth at the Osaka Exposition, and I have been told by merchants that even in wall-papers no two pieces (Japanese wall-paper is usually made in pieces about fourteen inches long and seven inches wide) are ever exactly alike, proving that the artistic sense must have a remarkable vitality to survive, in cheap things for the use of the common people, the general spirit of deterioration which is affecting all the more expensive manufactures.

Street displays, processions, fairs—day fairs and night fairs (the latter in the glow of artificial lights simply bewitching)—make up the round of simple pleasures which still delight the conservative section of Kioto society. Like the Parisians, Our Little Brown Allies' greatest pleasure is open-air idling. I have seen Japanese gentlemen exiled to Korea or China take their families to picnic on a vacant town lot, or go themselves,

in a frock-coat and slouch hat, with a gun on their shoulder, on shooting expeditions after magpies in a suburb. But by preference they like mingling with a crowd.

Now Japanese crowds are like most other Japanese things—they vary greatly with localities. There are some in which it is unpleasant and even dangerous to loiter, and these are invariably the crowds who have adopted the “new civilisation” with its attendant roughness and rudeness. But in Kioto even a great gathering of people is always good-natured and good-humoured, and I know of no way of filling a fine day more charmingly than to join a merry throng of Japanese countryfolk making its way to some temple festival with a happy mingling of merriment and devotion.

What is their excuse for the outing? Probably the slightest. Some old belief or fancy still holds sway. Perhaps a certain temple has a *matsuri* in honour of those who are no longer “mankind people”—in other words, “The August Spirits.” Or some clever priest may be offering charms to propitiate *Baku*, the Eater of Dreams, the marvellous creature with the “body of a horse, the face of a lion, the tusks of an elephant, the tail of

a cow, and the feet of a tiger," who gobbles up nightmares, and whose ungainly figure is sometimes to be seen embroidered on pillows.

Is the New Year festival approaching? Then people are out to buy pictures of the Treasure Ship. Once every year—on New Year's eve—it sails into port, and at this season "wise virgins" obtain little pictures of it and put them into the drawers of their wooden pillows to ensure a cargo of good fortune.

Is it the *Tanabata*, the prettiest, the most romantic of all the feasts? If so, a slender branch of freshly-cut bamboo, still bearing its leaves but gaily hung with slips of coloured paper, will be waving above each house. All those papers are inscribed with short poems, or if the householder cannot turn a dainty rhyme, then with the somewhat meaningless phrase, "*Ama no kawa*"—River of Heaven. The gods are not particular; they know the poor *père de famille* has done his best. Indeed, in this case, I hardly think the celestial beings concerned trouble themselves much about their worshippers for they are lovers and naturally engrossed in their own affairs. This is the popular Japanese version of

the story as Lafcadio Hearn so exquisitely wrote it down:

“The great god of the firmament had a lovely daughter, *Tanabata-tsumé*, who passed her days in weaving garments for her august parent. She rejoiced in her work and thought there was no greater pleasure than the pleasure of weaving. But one day, as she sat before her loom at the door of her heavenly dwelling, she saw a handsome peasant lad pass by leading an ox, and she fell in love with him. Her august father, divining her secret wish, gave her the youth for a husband. But the wedded lovers became too fond of one another and neglected their duty to the god of the firmament; the sound of the shuttle was no longer heard and the ox wandered unheeded over the plains of heaven. Therefore the great god was displeased and separated the pair. They were sentenced to live thereafter apart with the Celestial River (the Milky Way) between them; but it was permitted them to see each other once a year on the seventh night of the seventh moon (the date, according to our calendar, falls in the latter part of August or the first part of September). On that night, providing the skies be

clear, the birds make with their bodies and wings a bridge over the stream, and by means of that bridge the lovers can meet. But if there be rain, the River of Heaven rises, and becomes so wide that the bridge cannot be formed. So the husband and wife cannot always meet even on the seventh night of the seventh moon; it may happen that they cannot meet for three or four years at a time. But their love remains immortally young and eternally patient." And at this pretty festival the children of earth pray for fine weather, and by means of the gay little prayer papers tied to the bamboo branch, symbolical of the River of Heaven (which is also called, in the old Chinese books, the "Bamboo Grove"), show their sympathy and interest in the Herdsman and the Weaving Lady.

Or perhaps what draws the city to make holiday is the Boy's festival in May. Ten years ago, like the *Tanabata*, it was still universal; yet ten years more and it will have vanished—though formerly it was considered of such immense importance that at this season, above every house where there was a son, a big brightly-coloured paper fish floated, tied to a very tall bamboo pole. More

than one son meant more than one fish, and sometimes I have seen four or five, varying from twelve to two feet in length, attached to the same string, the small ones hooked to the tails of the larger ones. So cunningly were they fastened that the mouths were held open, and the wind entering the quivering gills inflated the bodies and kept them rising and falling exactly as real fish would do. Some were made of silk costing fabulous sums like ten or twenty yen, while others were only brightly-coloured paper and could be bought for as little as five sen each. But all were considered equally symbolical. Even as the Japanese carp ascends swift rivers against the strongest currents, so the parents hoped that their sons might win their way through the world against any obstacles. I wonder if the reason that fewer fish swim in the air to-day than in former times is because the nation is beginning to believe that the new generation will certainly succeed without the stimulus of an example?

But if the crowd has gathered for none of these reasons there is yet another which may have drawn them out. Perhaps they have gone to worship *Binzeru*, the last of all the picturesque survivals,

poor, disturbed *Binzeru*, who once sat on the altar with the rest of the gods, but was mortal enough to commit the indiscretion of remarking to his colleagues on the beauty of a young girl who came to worship. It was, one would imagine, such a small, such a pardonable fault for a poor image whose life must have been dull enough in all conscience to excuse it. Think of the poor immortal doomed to lend a perpetual and attentive ear to hundreds of dull prayers prayed by dull people, all asking for blessings they had no reason to expect, and yet forbidden to keep an attentive eye on his clients. He pleaded extenuating circumstances, but the gods proved unforgiving. There was a horrid scandal, a prodigious wagging of tongues, and a prompt judgment. Poor *Binzeru*, considered unworthy to sit longer with the Celestials, was sentenced to banishment outside the temple, where he remains to this day. His little huddled figure has a curious pathos about it which always strikes me when I see him in Kyoto performing his appointed office of healer to the sick. He now gives himself literally to the people, either by way of atonement or, as some suggest, with an intent to revenge. The afflicted, having sore

eyes or nose or toes or anything else "rubbable," rub his corresponding member first, their own afterwards, and go home convinced that he has taken their woes upon his unhappy self. Sir Frederick Treves, when he saw this primitive form of faith cure, was amazed. The idea of a people with scientific hospitals not having more dread of the propagation of microbes!

But what could be more typical of Our Little Brown Allies! Half of them sterilise and cauterise in the most approved manner; the other half bring their babies to the temple, rub their diseased eyes with a little spindle lying in front of the wooden god, then rub *Binzeru's* eye with the same spindle and take the children home with not only the diseases they brought out but one or two others as well.

A few years more, no doubt, and everybody, even the simple mothers with their natural leaning towards miracles instead of lotions, will know better. Poor defaced *Binzeru*, with your features almost obliterated by the rubbing of faithful souls, your days are numbered. You may mean well, but you are doomed. Although the Immortals have treated you scurvily, the scientific Japanese

doctors, "now engaged," as the medical reports say, "in the preparation of a tetanus anti-toxin," will prove still more unfeeling. Thirty thousand schools are in conspiracy against you already under their orders. And alas! not only against you, who have really brought further banishment upon yourself, but also upon most of the pretty beliefs which are your contemporaries. In a very few years the youngest schoolboy will know the proper remedy for conjunctivitis, just as he will know that the nightmares are not sent by the gods because the Eater of Dreams is hungry, but because those whom they visit are sleeping under too many bed-clothes; the legend of the Weaving Maiden and her waiting lover and the bridge of birds will be believed only by little children; and the maiden, though longing like her mother for the good-luck cargo of the Treasure Ship, will no longer think that the little paper in the drawer of her wooden pillow can bring it safe to the desired port.

CHAPTER XIV

SOME REFLECTIONS

THE longer one looks behind the *Shoji* the more difficult it becomes to make up one's mind whether Our Little Brown Allies are three parts admirable and one part objectionable or *vice versa*. Just as some unexpected evidence of ingratitude, some ridiculous piece of mimicry, or some ugly streak of treachery makes one ready to damn them utterly, up crops a winning virtue which compels admiration. I mentioned this strange contradictoriness to an English professor who had taught in Japan for many years, not only in the accessible cities where the two civilisations are struggling side by side, but also in the far-away inaccessible country districts where all is as it was in the beginning, hazy, vapoury, soft, gentle, and visionary, where "lotus is still a common article of diet."

"Tell me," I asked, "why it is that Our Little

Brown Allies are such a bundle of contradictions? Granted that there is the natural confusion of the transition stage through which they are passing, I cannot think that would be sufficient to account for all their puzzling changes of front."

"You are right, it would not," was his reply, "but there is a very easy explanation of the apparent changeableness. The Japanese are not what the botanists call a 'simple' people, with one infallible set of characteristics. They are 'composite.' Like Janus, they are two-faced; or, to be still more exact, they are 'two-spirited.' You know that the old Shinto gods are said to have three distinct spirits, the 'rough,' the 'gentle,' and the 'bestowing,' respectively termed. Sometimes in remote villages you will still find the division so clearly marked that the 'rough spirit' of a deity is worshipped at one temple and the 'gentle spirit' at another. Well, in just the same way mortals are thought to have two distinct spirits, the *Ara-mi-tama* or Rough Spirit, and the *Nigimi-tama* or Gentle Spirit, which alternately rule their actions."

"That may account then for the fact that Our Little Brown Allies have the warmest admirers and the bitterest enemies in the world?"

“Certainly, for it is unusual when individuals see both ‘spirits.’ Those who live long in Japan or in the Far East generally see the Rough Spirit. As a result, they feel their love for the people trickling away in a steady stream. Petty annoyances first draw the cork out of the phial of their affection, and afterwards, in spite of all their efforts, nothing can be done to keep the remnant in.”

Judging from personal experience I think the professor must be right. Many a time I have asked foreigners who have lived all their lives in Japan to tell me frankly how they liked the people. One or two, before answering, asked whether I meant the generation of Young Japanese or the older men, and then replied, when I said “the people as a whole,” “The more I see of the new generation the better I like the old.” Others did not differentiate. “We distrust the nation entirely,” they replied. “The rank and file have a hearty dislike for foreigners and are without the least spark of gratitude. Not being disinterested themselves towards other nations, they cannot fathom any one who is, and seem to suspect us of a hidden and bad motive if we do anything exceptionally kind.” “As a matter of fact,” one wise

old missionary said to me, "there exists at the present moment a very curious state of affairs among Our Little Brown Allies. The Government is much older than the people, speaking politically, and the people are much older than the Government, speaking sociologically. Thus the Government is on a level with the Governments of the West, having laws, soldiers, police, etc. all up-to-date, while the people remain at a stage of development 'corresponding to that which in Europe preceded the Christian era by hundreds of years.' The people, therefore, still feel towards strangers a vague distrust which is a survival from ancient times, and though quite willing to copy the air-cushions and bathing-suits of the foreigner, would often treat him very cavalierly did not the Government, with riper judgment in such matters, step in and tell them not to do so."

To prove his argument, my friend showed me a copy of the proclamation just issued, preparatory to the arrival of the American fleet, by the Governor of *Kanagawa Prefecture*. The document merits quoting in full, not only because such a Governmental direction of manners is unknown in the Western world, but because its English construc-

tion, evidently put together by some half-educated "student" clerk in the prefectural office, is as much a curiosity as the sentiments expressed in it.

As Regards Foreigners in General

It is ordered:

That people shall not crowd round foreigners in the streets or in front of the shops.

That shopkeepers shall not charge any excessive price to foreigners on goods sold.

That when any accident or mishap happens to a foreigner at the railway station, in the train, on the ship, in the street, advice shall be given to him that the matter be immediately notified to the police or the officials.

That another dog shall not be set on, or sticks or stones thrown at dogs accompanying foreigners.

That courtesy and cordiality be observed in the treatment of foreigners, especially at any Governmental office, a seat shall be given him.

That due recognition must be given to the fact that it is the custom with foreigners that a gentleman does not take off his hat in an office, a

lady does not take off her bonnet even when giving greeting to others, and a married couple walk hand-in-hand.

That as foreigners are very anxious about the avoidance of cruelty to animals, care shall be taken to treat animals very kindly.

That no comments or ridicule and mean words shall be given in regard to the dress, bearing, and words of foreigners.

That when entering the premises or rooms of a foreigner permission shall be obtained beforehand from the porter or servant.

That when sitting on the same seat with a foreign lady in a train, tramcar, or waiting-room, trunks shall be put down so that any part of the seat shall not be left unused.

That staring shall not be made at foreigners except when necessary.

That care shall be taken not to put on dirty shoes when entering any foreign house.

That impediment shall not be given to the foreigner at play or on bicycle by throwing fragments of tile, stone, or stick or by arraying many children in the street.

That no disrespect shall be displayed towards

foreign religions or words to the same effect shall be written on the sign-boards of shows.

That it shall be borne in mind that foreigners are disgusted with the habit of spitting anywhere and of scattering about the skin of fruits and cigarette ends in the train or on ship.

That the finger shall not be pointed at foreigner.

That tobacco shall not be smoked in the presence of the foreign lady, or in any place where decency commands the avoidance of smoking.

That when a foreign lady enters a room the gentleman shall take his seat after the lady has been seated.

That those learning foreign languages shall not try unnecessary talk with foreigners for the mere purpose of practising their tongue.

That punctuality shall be observed when discharging any engagement.

That the talk with the foreigner shall be limited to necessary matters and shall be done in as little time as possible.

That when visiting a foreigner such time as is most convenient for him shall be chosen.

That the age of a foreigner shall not be asked unless some special necessity demands it.

That when clearing the teeth or the nostrils in the presence of a foreigner handkerchief shall be used.

That whether within or outside the room, legs and thighs shall not be exposed in the presence of a foreigner, and at the same time care shall be taken not to look at the nude body of a foreigner when he takes a bath or changes his dress.

That when meeting with (foreign) funeral procession, due respect shall be paid to it, and any despising words shall not be uttered.

That the notion shall be destroyed that a foreigner pays as much as demanded.

That at such places where foreigners swarm and at pleasure resorts a notice in some European language telling of the neighbouring places noted for views or historic interest shall be posted.

That when accosted by a foreigner, silence shall be avoided, even if the accosted man cannot understand the language spoken, and such an answer as he thinks is proper shall be given in Japanese.

That the collars, cuffs, gloves, and shoes shall be kept clean.

That when walking with a foreigner pace shall be kept with him.

That it shall be understood that when a foreigner looks at his watch he suggests that he has some urgent engagement.

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On reading this extraordinary "Proclamation," I could not but notice two curious points. The first was the striking ignorance of Our Little Brown Allies—at least those in *Kanagawa Prefecture*—of all the Western habits to which they have given so much attention and study. Fancy their still needing to be told that "foreign ladies do not remove their bonnets even when greeting others," or that foreign gentlemen do not care to be stared at in their baths, or have their ages asked by passers-by! Fancy the gubernatorial staff still fondly imagining that European married couples walk hand-in-hand!

But what is more curious yet, fancy the people, even if they do not know, calmly submitting to directions as to when they should use their handkerchiefs and when refrain from giving "an impediment to the foreigner at play or on bicycle by throwing fragments of tile, stone, or stick" at him. In any other country the kind of person who would

find his amusement in propelling one of these missiles at the stranger would be unlikely to stop and think before he did it, "The Government told me not to."

The quality of personal individualism, however, makes no appeal to Our Little Brown Allies, and is therefore non-existent, its place being taken by a national individuality so strong that although it is an attribute of the ungrateful, contemptuous, pushing, Japan-for-the-Japanese Rough Spirit, one cannot but admire it.

On the topic of duty the entire people has one mind—the mind of those in authority over them. They are quite willing to suffer criticism, to suppress their personal desires for the well-being of the nation, and that quality will some day make them dangerous, for a people with one idea is always dangerous.

For example, though it is a penal offence, under Japanese law, for a man to be a Freemason, as all the proceedings of all societies in Japan must remain open to official surveillance, we have seen Marquis Hayashi allowed to join the ranks of the prescribed order because it was thought that the great influence of the Masonic body would thus

more likely be exerted in favour of Japan against Russia, where the craft is prohibited and no exceptions are made. Of course, scores of Japanese joined all the churches in America—including Dowie's—to spread the Japanese view of the late war. And I happen to remember that, in a certain foreign port in China, a Japanese actually tried to become a Jew and draw, as it were, the sympathies of the powerful financial groups more closely towards his country. An article in *Israel's Messenger* described how at first the young would-be convert was very coldly received, but the applicant was "nevertheless undaunted." [I can easily believe that, having seen the aggravating persistence of Our Little Brown Allies in things both large and small.] In short, after a time, either his sincerity could no longer be doubted, or the religious community saw the hopelessness of combating such a determination—take it whichever way you like—and he was accordingly accepted as a member of the Jewish faith and baptised under the name of "Isaac." At last accounts he was "making very good progress in Hebrew."

What next? one wonders. Shall we see Our

Little Brown Allies joining St. Andrew's and St. Patrick's societies all over the Far East, and rolling up on 30th November and 17th March in kilts and shillelaghs?

They are quite capable of doing so for the good of the cause. Precedents exist in individual cases; just as quaint things have been done already. There was the youthful artist who sat all day on the roof of a public bath-house because he belonged to a Government art school and wanted to keep up his country's reputation for success in "life classes." Unfortunately he forgot to notify the police-station of his laudable intentions, and one evening at sundown an officer of the law, misjudging his motives and thinking him a burglar, crept up to him, as the newspaper said, "with cat-like tread and laid hold of him as a suspicious individual." So deeply offended was the youth at the manner in which his noble purpose had been misinterpreted that he further aggravated his offence by remaining silent before the judge, until the blacksmith, to whom he was apprenticed, came and gave evidence that he was a steady character and not a kleptomaniac. "Then for what purpose were you on the roof?" sternly demanded the

official, giving the lad one more chance to clear himself. The youth blushed, hesitated, finally explained, in halting sentences, that he was an artist-patriot in his spare moments, when blacksmithing was slack, and that he made a specialty of the female nude, "the female body appealing to him on account of its soft and graceful lines." Owing to the difficulty of obtaining a good model, as he was too poor to hire one, he hit upon the original device of obtaining glimpses of the "female form divine" by peeping into a bath-house as the ladies were emerging from their ablutions. He would have preferred, he confessed, to stand in the doorway or look through a window, as his position upon the tiles was both uncomfortable and inelegant. But, doors and windows being modestly closed, he was perforce obliged to seek a vantage point on the roof, where he had apparently made good use of a crack in the tiles, for he produced in court some spirited sketches of ladies reaching round for their towels or slipping into the water. Like that other youth who was found in the music-room of a German mail steamer measuring chairs, tables, etc., because his master was about to build liners for the Japanese Govern-

ment and wanted to know how to furnish them, this enthusiastic youth was let off with a reprimand and told not to do it again.

The Rough Spirit among Our Little Brown Allies is the one which has discovered that the "doors of opportunity are labelled Push and Pull," and if, of late years, it has tended to overshadow the Gentle Spirit, this is because "capacity for aggression and cunning" are necessary for races who would hold their own in the world against nations hardened by the discipline of competition. The qualities most necessary for practical success in life according to Western standards are just those qualities wanting in the old Japanese civilisation—a civilisation dominated in all things by the Gentle Spirit, which condemned competition and large success snatched by the strong at the expense of the weak. Consequently, without doubt, Young Japan will have to rely upon the least amiable qualities of her character for her success in the universal struggle.

Enough of the Gentle Spirit is still left, however, to win for Our Little Brown Allies warm friends and ardent admirers whose judgment seems in some cases totally blinded by their admiration.

Why? Simply because what is left of the older life is full of charm unspeakable and of illusion. Usually these admirers do not live in the country but feel the spell through poetical descriptions of Bushido and the Yamato Spirit, or poetic accounts of surface delights, like "matted floors clean enough to eat off," and "dainty little ladies who live in dolls' houses," etc., the picturesque surface being always most carefully presented.

A very few, like my friend the professor, love the country and suffer the new-fashioned people for the sake of some village of the gods which remains as it was in the beginning. "What I love in Japan," said Hearn, after a long sojourn in Matsue, "is the Japanese—the poor simple humanity of the country. There is nothing in the world approaching the natural, naïve charm of their civilisation. It makes the old men divine—such a contrast to the new Japanese; there is an ugly, distorted quality about him which makes him a unique monster; he is like an awry caricature of a Western mean fellow."

Matsue is in the province of Idzumo, where the most perfect old-style communities still exist. I can call to mind one specially delightful village

hidden away in the folds of the hills. No railway approaches it, and the journey there must be made by pack-horse over unbeaten tracks. A seat high up on sweet, swaying, new-mown grass seems at first precarious enough, but the Japanese pack-horses are sure-footed because of the straw *waraji* which swaddle their feet. These straw shoes are replaced by the buxom, red-cheeked peasant girl in charge every few miles, as they wear through with monotonous regularity, and from this constant re-shoeing comes the odd Japanese custom of measuring distance by sandal lengths. "In how many *waraji* shall we reach our journey's end?" the impatient traveller asks.

In a day's march we are there—welcomed to some wood-cutter's cottage with the charm of manner of ancient times. We squat on the mats about the sunken kitchen fireplace, which, I must confess, smokes horribly, and receive the coarse "evening rice" in a gently-regulated precedence once punctiliously enforced in every household in the country, the richest as well as the poorest. Being the honourable guest, I am served first. Next come the grandparents, withered and brown as old ivory carvings. After they have received

their portion the sequence is interrupted for the three-year-old baby-san (who could scarcely be expected to wait for etiquette) but is resumed when the father is served, then the oldest son, then the mother, and last of all the second son, whom the peasants jestingly name Master Cold Rice (*Hi-ameshi San*). We eat in silence, as custom discourages frivolous remarks at meal-times, and having eaten and smoked tiny pipes we retire to our "obedient"—though uncomfortable—beds.

At sunrise all are astir again. The wood-cutters start off in search of faggots, calling to me the polite phrase, "Ohayo," ("It is honourably early") as they pass. The children gather at the little schoolhouse, the women attend to household duties or work on the tiny farms. Day by day the same round is trodden—except when some festival at the "*Ujigami*"—parish temple—makes a break in their simple lives. No discontent, no striving, no restlessness mars the harmony of the scene. I notice that the Government controls the village very fitfully, that it is left largely to its own devices. If quarrels disturb this simple society they are settled, with grim justice, by a council of elders. A father, I was

told, had just lately killed his son for disobedience, but as public opinion found the action justifiable it was not reported to the Government authorities. On the other hand, when a son, to whom his parents had voluntarily surrendered the headship of the family, misused his newly-acquired power to turn his father out of doors, punishment fell on him swift and sure. The villagers, however, dwelt with pardonable pride on the fact that this was the only case of filial impiety within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

They pride themselves on keeping intact the simplicity of the old customs, the amiability of manners, and the strange power of presenting outwardly the best aspects of character. A simple trust in the gods is still the motive power of their actions, and a worship of the dead the foundation of their beliefs. No half-education tempts them to a servile imitation of Western ways; they choose to ignore the mimicry of Young Japan. They want none of her copied manufactures; they want none of her superficial culture. Mentally and morally they strongly resist Western influence. In fact, the only point at which their way of thought touches hers is in the curious cult of

loyalty. They, like the new generation, are ready to make a necessary personal sacrifice for the common good. They are ready to fight for a civilisation they care little to adopt.

Where the national honour, success, or prosperity, the national "good name," is concerned the Rough and Gentle Spirits join forces in a common cause. Naturally each desires to gain the great end in a different way, but it seems certain now that the rougher way must prevail, and therefore, sooner or later, the Gentle Spirit, with proverbial gentleness, will efface itself at need, though well aware of the cost—the incalculable cost in beauty, refinement, courtesy which must be paid.

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