Out of the East

by Lafcadio Hearn

Free public domain classic — Noveliopdf

The Project Gutenberg eBook of "Out of the East": Reveries and Studies in New Japan

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: "Out of the East": Reveries and Studies in New Japan

Author: Lafcadio Hearn

Release date: October 24, 2017 [eBook #55802] Most recently updated: October 23, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/55802

Credits: Produced by Marc D'Hooghe at Free Literature (online soon in an extended version,also linking to free sources for education worldwide ... MOOC's, educational materials,...) (Images generously made available by the Internet Archive.)

*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK "OUT OF THE EAST": REVERIES AND STUDIES IN NEW JAPAN ***

"OUT OF THE EAST"

REVERIES AND STUDIES IN NEW JAPAN

LAFCADIO HEARN

AUTHOR OF "GLIMPSES OF UNFAMILIAR JAPAN"

"As far as the east is from the west—"

BOSTON AND NEW YORK HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY The Riverside Press, Cambridge 1895

TO NISHIDA SENTARŌ IN DEAR REMEMBRANCE OF IZUMO DAYS

CONTENTS

I.The Dream of a Summer Day II.With Kyūshū Students III.At Hakata IV.Of the Eternal Feminine V.Bits of Life and Death VI.The Stone Buddha VII.Jiujutsu VIII.The Bed Bridal IX.A Wish fulfilled X.In Yokohama XI.Yuko: A Reminiscence

"The Dream of a Summer Day" first appeared in the "Japan Daily Mail."

OUT OF THE EAST

I

THE DREAM OF A SUMMER DAY

I

The hotel seemed to me a paradise, and the maids thereof celestial beings. This was because I had just fled away from one of the Open Ports, where I had ventured to seek comfort in a European hotel, supplied with all "modern improvements." To find myself at ease once more in a yukata, seated upon cool, soft matting, waited upon by sweet-voiced girls, and surrounded by things of beauty, was therefore like a redemption from all the sorrows of the nineteenth century. Bamboo-shoots and lotus-bulbs were given me for breakfast, and a fan from heaven for a keepsake. The design upon that fan represented only the white rushing burst of one great wave on a

beach, and sea-birds shooting in exultation through the blue overhead. But to behold it was worth all the trouble of the journey. It was a glory of light, a thunder of motion, a triumph of sea-wind,—all in one. It made me want to shout when I looked at it.

Between the cedarn balcony pillars I could see the course of the pretty gray town following the shore-sweep,—and yellow lazy junks asleep at anchor,—and the opening of the bay between enormous green cliffs,—and beyond it the blaze of summer to the horizon. In that horizon there were mountain shapes faint as old memories. And all things but the gray town, and the yellow junks, and the green cliffs, were blue.

Then a voice softly toned as a wind-bell began to tinkle words of courtesy into my reverie, and broke it; and I perceived that the mistress of the palace had come to thank me for the chadai,[1] and I prostrated myself before her. She was very young, and more than pleasant to look upon,—like the moth-maidens, like the butterfly-women, of Kuni-sada. And I thought at once of death;—for the beautiful is sometimes a sorrow of anticipation.

She asked whither I honorably intended to go, that she might order a kuruma for me. And I made answer:—

"To Kumamoto. But the name of your house I much wish to know, that I may always remember it."

"My guest-rooms," she said, "are augustly insignificant, and my maidens honorably rude. But the house is called the House of Urashima. And now I go to order a kuruma."

The music of her voice passed; and I felt enchantment falling all about me,—like the thrilling of a ghostly web. For the name was the name of the story of a song that bewitches men.

[1] A little gift of money, always made to a hotel by the guest shortly after his

arrival.

II

Once you hear the story, you will never be able to forget it. Every summer when I find myself on the coast,—especially of very soft, still days,—it haunts me most persistently. There are many native versions of it which have been the inspiration for countless works of art. But the most impressive and the most ancient is found in the "Manyefushifu," a collection of poems dating from the fifth to the ninth century. From this ancient version the great scholar Aston translated it into prose, and the great scholar Chamberlain into both prose and verse. But for English readers I think the most charming form of it is Chamberlain's version written for children, in the "Japanese Fairy-Tale Series,"—because of the delicious colored pictures by native artists. With that little book before me, I shall try to tell the legend over again in my own words.

Fourteen hundred and sixteen years ago, the fisher-boy Urashima Taro left the shore of Suminoyé in his boat.

Summer days were then as now,—all drowsy and tender blue, with only some light, pure white clouds hanging over the mirror of the sea. Then, too, were the hills the same,—far blue soft shapes melting into the blue sky. And the winds were lazy.

And presently the boy, also lazy, let his boat drift as he fished. It was a queer boat, unpainted and rudderless, of a shape you probably never saw. But still, after fourteen hundred years, there are such boats to be seen in front of the ancient fishing-hamlets of the coast of the Sea of Japan.

After long waiting, Urashima caught something, and drew it up to him. But he found it was only a tortoise.

Now a tortoise is sacred to the Dragon God of the Sea, and the period of its natural life is a thousand—some say ten thousand—years. So that to kill it is very wrong. The boy gently unfastened the creature from his line, and set it free, with a prayer to

the gods.

But he caught nothing more. And the day was very warm; and sea and air and all things were very, very silent. And a great drowsiness grew upon him,—and he slept in his drifting boat.

Then out of the dreaming of the sea rose up a beautiful girl,—just as you can see her in the picture to Professor Chamberlain's "Urashima,"—robed in crimson and blue, with long black hair flowing down her back even to her feet, after the fashion of a prince's daughter fourteen hundred years ago.

Gliding over the waters she came, softly as air; and she stood above the sleeping boy in the boat, and woke him with a light touch, and said:—

"Do not be surprised. My father, the Dragon King of the Sea, sent me to you, because of your kind heart. For to-day you set free a tortoise. And now we will go to my father's palace in the island where summer never dies; and I will be your flower-wife if you wish; and we shall live there happily forever."

And Urashima wondered more and more as he looked upon her; for she was more beautiful than any human being, and he could not but love her. Then he took one oar, and he took another, and they rowed away together,—just as you may still see, off the far western coast, wife and husband rowing together, when the fishing-boats flit into the evening gold.

They rowed away softly and swiftly over the silent blue water down into the south,—till they came to the island where summer never dies,—and to the palace of the Dragon King of the Sea.

[Here the text of the little book suddenly shrinks away as you read, and faint blue ripplings flood the page; and beyond them in a fairy horizon you can see the long low soft shore of the island, and peaked roofs rising through evergreen foliage—the roofs of the Sea God's palace—like the palace of the Mikado Yuriaku, fourteen hundred and sixteen years ago.]

There strange servitors came to receive them in robes of ceremony—creatures of the Sea, who paid greeting to Urashima as the son-in-law of the Dragon King.

So the Sea God's daughter became the bride of Urashima; and it was a bridal of wondrous splendor; and in the Dragon Palace there was great rejoicing.

And each day for Urashima there were new wonders and new pleasures:—wonders of the deepest deep brought up by the servants of the Ocean God;—pleasures of that enchanted land where summer never dies. And so three years passed.

But in spite of all these things, the fisher-boy felt always a heaviness at his heart when he thought of his parents waiting alone. So that at last he prayed his bride to let him go home for a little while only, just to say one word to his father and mother,—after which he would hasten hack to her.

At these words she began to weep; and for a long time she continued to weep silently. Then she said to him: "Since you wish to go, of course you must go. I fear your going very much; I fear we shall never see each other again. But I will give you a little box to take with you. It will help you to come hack to me if you will do what I tell you. Do not open it. Above all things, do not open it,—no matter what may happen! Because, if you open it, you will never be able to come hack, and you will never see me again."

Then she gave him a little lacquered box tied about with a silken cord. [And that box can be seen unto this day in the temple of Kanagawa, by the seashore; and the priests there also keep Urashima Tarō's fishing line, and some strange jewels which he brought back with him from the realm of the Dragon King.]

But Urashima comforted his bride, and promised her never, never to open the box—never even to loosen the silken string. Then he passed away through the summer light over the ever-sleeping sea;—and the shape of the island where summer never dies faded behind him like a dream;—and he saw again before him the blue mountains of Japan, sharpening in the white glow of the northern horizon.

Again at last he glided into his native bay;—again he stood upon its beach. But as he looked, there came upon him a great bewilderment,—a weird doubt.

For the place was at once the same, and yet not the same. The cottage of his fathers had disappeared. There was a village; but the shapes of the houses were all strange, and the trees were strange, and the fields, and even the faces of the people. Nearly all remembered landmarks were gone;—the Shintō temple appeared to have been rebuilt in a new place; the woods had vanished from the neighboring slopes. Only the voice of the little stream flowing through the settlement, and the forms of the mountains, were still the same. All else was unfamiliar and new. In vain he tried to find the dwelling of his parents; and the fisherfolk stared wonderingly at him; and he could not remember having ever seen any of those faces before.

There came along a very old man, leaning on a stick, and Urashima asked him the way to the house of the Urashima family. But the old man looked quite astonished, and made him repeat the question many times, and then cried out:—

"Urashima Tarō! Where do you come from that you do not know the story? Urashima Tarō! Why, it is more than four hundred years since he was drowned, and a monument is erected to his memory in the graveyard. The graves of all his people are in that graveyard,—the old graveyard which is not now used any more. Urashima Tarō! How can you he so foolish as to ask where his house is?" And the old man hobbled on, laughing at the simplicity of his questioner.

But Urashima went to the village graveyard,—the old graveyard that was not used any more,—and there he found his own tombstone, and the tombstones of his father and his mother and his kindred, and the tombstones of many others he had known. So old they were, so moss-eaten, that it was very hard to read the names upon them.

Then he knew himself the victim of some strange illusion, and he took his way hack to the beach,—always carrying in his hand the box, the gift of the Sea God's daughter. But what was this illusion? And what could be in that box? Or might not

that which was in the box be the cause of the illusion? Doubt mastered faith. Recklessly he broke the promise made to his beloved;—he loosened the silken cord;—he opened the box!

Instantly, without any sound, there burst from it a white cold spectral vapor that rose in air like a summer cloud, and began to drift away swiftly into the south, over the silent sea. There was nothing else in the box.

And Urashima then knew that he had destroyed his own happiness,—that he could never again return to his beloved, the daughter of the Ocean King. So that he wept and cried out bitterly in his despair.

Yet for a moment only. In another, he himself was changed. An icy chill shot through all his blood;—his teeth fell out; his face shriveled; his hair turned white as snow; his limbs withered; his strength ebbed; he sank down lifeless on the sand, crushed by the weight of four hundred winters.

Now in the official annals of the Emperors it is written that "in the twenty-first year of the Mikado Yuriaku, the boy Urashima of Midzunoyé, in the district of Yosa, in the province of Tango, a descendant of the divinity Shimanemi, went to Elysium [Hōraï] in a fishing-boat." After this there is no more news of Urashima during the reigns of thirty-one emperors and empresses—that is, from the fifth until the ninth century. And then the annals announce that "in the second year of Tenchiyō, in the reign of the Mikado Go-Junwa, the boy Urashima returned, and presently departed again, none knew whither."[1]

III

The fairy mistress came back to tell me that everything was ready, and tried to lift my valise in her slender hands,—which I prevented her from doing, because it was heavy. Then she laughed, but would not suffer that I should carry it myself, and summoned a sea-creature with Chinese characters upon his back. I made obeisance to her; and she prayed me to remember the unworthy house despite the rudeness of

the maidens. "And you will pay the kurumaya," she said, "only seventy-five sen."

Then I slipped into the vehicle; and in a few minutes the little gray town had vanished behind a curve. I was rolling along a white road overlooking the shore. To the right were pale brown cliffs; to the left only space and sea.

Mile after mile I rolled along that shore, looking into the infinite light. All was steeped in blue,—a marvelous blue, like that which comes and goes in the heart of a great shell. Glowing blue sea met hollow blue sky in a brightness of electric fusion; and vast blue apparitions—the mountains of Higo—angled up through the blaze, like masses of amethyst. What a blue transparency! The universal color was broken only by the dazzling white of a few high summer clouds, motionlessly curled above one phantom peak in the offing. They threw down upon the water snowy tremulous lights. Midges of ships creeping far away seemed to pull long threads after them,—the only sharp lines in all that hazy glory. But what divine clouds! White purified spirits of clouds, resting on their way to the beatitude of Nirvana? Or perhaps the mists escaped from Urashima's box a thousand years ago?

The gnat of the soul of me flitted out into that dream of blue, 'twixt sea and sun,—hummed back to the shore of Suminoyé through the luminous ghosts of fourteen hundred summers. Vaguely I felt beneath me the drifting of a keel. It was the time of the Mikado Yuriaku. And the Daughter of the Dragon King said tinklingly,—"Now we will go to my father's palace where it is always blue." "Why always blue?" I asked. "Because," she said, "I put all the clouds into the Box." "But I must go home," I answered resolutely. "Then," she said, "you will pay the kurumaya only seventy-five sen."

Wherewith I woke into Doyō, or the Period of Greatest Heat, in the twenty-sixth year of Meiji—and saw proof of the era in a line of telegraph poles reaching out of sight on the land side of the way. The kuruma was still fleeing by the shore, before the same blue vision of sky, peak, and sea; but the white clouds were gone!—and

there were no more cliffs close to the road, but fields of rice and of barley stretching to far-off hills. The telegraph lines absorbed my attention for a moment, because on the top wire, and only on the top wire, hosts of little birds were perched, all with their heads to the road, and nowise disturbed by our coming. They remained quite still, looking down upon us as mere passing phenomena. There were hundreds and hundreds in rank, for miles and miles. And I could not see one having its tail turned to the road. Why they sat thus, and what they were watching or waiting for, I could not guess. At intervals I waved my hat and shouted, to startle the ranks. Whereupon a few would rise up fluttering and chippering, and drop back again upon the wire in the same position as before. The vast majority refused to take me seriously.

The sharp rattle of the wheels was drowned by a deep booming; and as we whirled past a village I caught sight of an immense drum under an open shed, beaten by naked men.

"O kurumaya!" I shouted—"that—what is it?"

He, without stopping, shouted back:—- "Everywhere now the same thing is. Much time-in rain has not been: so the gods-to prayers are made, and drums are beaten." We flashed through other villages; and I saw and heard more drums of various sizes, and from hamlets invisible, over miles of parching rice-fields, yet other drums, like echoings, responded.

[1] See The Classical Poetry of the Japanese, by Professor Chamberlain, in Trübner's Oriental Series. According to Western chronology, Urashima went fishing in 477 A.D., and returned in 825.

IV

Then I began to think about Urashima again. I thought of the pictures and poems and proverbs recording the influence of the legend upon the imagination of a race. I thought of an Izumo dancing-girl I saw at a banquet acting the part of Urashima, with a little lacquered box whence there issued at the tragical minute a mist of Kyōto

incense. I thought about the antiquity of the beautiful dance,—and therefore about vanished generations of dancing-girls,—and therefore about dust in the abstract; which, again, led me to think of dust in the concrete, as bestirred by the sandals of the kurumaya to whom I was to pay only seventy-five sen. And I wondered how much of it might be old human dust, and whether in the eternal order of things the motion of hearts might be of more consequence than the motion of dust. Then my ancestral morality took alarm; and I tried to persuade myself that a story which had lived for a thousand years, gaining fresher charm with the passing of every century, could only have survived by virtue of some truth in it. But what truth? For the time being I could find no answer to this question.

The heat had become very great; and I cried,—

"O kurumaya! the throat of Selfishness is dry; water desirable is."

He, still running, answered:—

"The Village of the Long Beach inside of—not far—a great gush-water is. There pure august water will be given."

I cried again:—

"O kurumaya!—those little birds as-for, why this way always facing?"

He, running still more swiftly, responded:—"All birds wind-to facing sit."

I laughed first at my own simplicity; then at my forgetfulness,—remembering I had been told the same thing, somewhere or other, when a boy. Perhaps the mystery of Urashima might also have been created by forgetfulness.

I thought again about Urashima. I saw the Daughter of the Dragon King waiting vainly in the palace made beautiful for his welcome,—and the pitiless return of the Cloud, announcing what had happened,—and the loving uncouth sea-creatures, in their garments of great ceremony, trying to comfort her. But in the real story there was nothing of all this; and the pity of the people seemed to be all for Urashima.

And I began to discourse with myself thus:—

Is it right to pity Urashima at all? Of course he was bewildered by the gods. But who is not bewildered by the gods? What is Life itself but a bewilderment? And Urashima in his bewilderment doubted the purpose of the gods, and opened the box. Then he died without any trouble, and the people built a shrine to him as Urashima Miō-jin. Why, then, so much pity?

Things are quite differently managed in the West. After disobeying Western gods, we have still to remain alive and to learn the height and the breadth and the depth of superlative sorrow. We are not allowed to die quite comfortably just at the best possible time: much less are we suffered to become after death small gods in our own right. How can we pity the folly of Urashima after he had lived so long alone with visible gods.

Perhaps the fact that we do may answer the riddle. This pity must be self-pity; wherefore the legend may be the legend of a myriad souls. The thought of it comes just at a particular time of blue light and soft wind,—and always like an old reproach. It has too intimate relation to a season and the feeling of a season not to be also related to something real in one's life, or in the lives of one's ancestors. But what was that real something? Who was the Daughter of the Dragon King? Where was the island of unending summer? And what was the cloud in the box?

I cannot answer all those questions. I know this only,—which is not at all new:—

I have memory of a place and a magical time in which the Sun and the Moon were larger and brighter than now. Whether it was of this life or of some life before I cannot tell. But I know the sky was very much more blue, and nearer to the world,—almost as it seems to become above the masts of a steamer steaming into equatorial summer. The sea was alive, and used to talk,—and the Wind made me cry out for joy when it touched me. Once or twice during other years, in divine days lived among the peaks, I have dreamed just for a moment that the same wind was

blowing,—but it was only a remembrance.

Also in that place the clouds were wonderful, and of colors for which there are no names at all,—colors that used to make me hungry and thirsty. I remember, too, that the days were ever so much longer than these days,—and that every day there were new wonders and new pleasures for me. And all that country and time were softly ruled by One who thought only of ways to make me happy. Sometimes I would refuse to be made happy, and that always caused her pain, although she was divine;—and I remember that I tried very hard to be sorry. When day was done, and there fell the great hush of the light before moonrise, she would tell me stories that made me tingle from head to foot with pleasure. I have never heard any other stories half so beautiful. And when the pleasure became too great, she would sing a weird little song which always brought sleep. At last there came a parting day; and she wept, and told me of a charm she had given that I must never, never lose, because it would keep me young, and give me power to return. But I never returned. And the years went; and one day I knew that I had lost the charm, and had become ridiculously old.

V

The Village of the Long Beach is at the foot of a green cliff near the road, and consists of a dozen thatched cottages clustered about a rocky pool, shaded by pines. The basin overflows with cold water, supplied by a stream that leaps straight from the heart of the cliff,—just as folks imagine that a poem ought to spring straight from the heart of a poet. It was evidently a favorite halting-place, judging by the number of kuruma and of people resting. There were benches under the trees; and, after having allayed thirst, I sat down to smoke and to look at the women washing clothes and the travelers refreshing themselves at the pool,—while my kurumaya stripped, and proceeded to dash buckets of cold water over his body. Then tea was brought me by a young man with a baby on his back; and I tried to play with the

baby, which said "Ah, bah!"

Such are the first sounds uttered by a Japanese babe. But they are purely Oriental; and in Itomaji should be written Aba. And, as an utterance untaught, Aba is interesting. It is in Japanese child-speech the word for "good-by,"—precisely the last we would expect an infant to pronounce on entering into this world of illusion. To whom or to what is the little soul saying good-by?—to friends in a previous state of existence still freshly remembered?—to comrades of its shadowy journey from nobody—knows—where? Such theorizing is tolerably safe, from a pious point of view, since the child can never decide for us. What its thoughts were at that mysterious moment of first speech, it will have forgotten long before it has become able to answer questions.

Unexpectedly, a queer recollection came to me,—resurrected, perhaps, by the sight of the young man with the baby,—perhaps by the song of the water in the cliff: the recollection of a story:—

Long, long ago there lived somewhere among the mountains a poor wood-cutter and his wife. They were very old, and had no children. Every day the husband went alone to the forest to cut wood, while the wife sat weaving at home.

One day the old man went farther into the forest than was his custom, to seek a certain kind of wood; and he suddenly found himself at the edge of a little spring he had never seen before. The water was strangely clear and cold, and he was thirsty; for the day was hot, and he had been working hard. So he doffed his great straw hat, knelt down, and took a long drink. That water seemed to refresh him in a most extraordinary way. Then he caught sight of his own face in the spring, and started back. It was certainly his own face, but not at all as he was accustomed to see it in the old mirror at home. It was the face of a very young man! He could not believe his eyes. He put up both hands to his head, which had been quite bald only a moment before. It was covered with thick black hair. And his face had become

smooth as a boy's; every wrinkle was gone. At the same moment he discovered himself full of new strength. He stared in astonishment at the limbs that had been so long withered by age; they were now shapely and hard with dense young muscle. Unknowingly he had drunk at the Fountain of Youth; and that draught had transformed him.

First, he leaped high and shouted for joy; then he ran home faster than he had ever run before in his life. When he entered his house his wife was frightened,—because she took him for a stranger; and when he told her the wonder, she could not at once believe him. But after a long time he was able to convince her that the young man she now saw before her was really her husband; and he told her where the spring was, and asked her to go there with him.

Then she said: "You have become so handsome and so young that you cannot continue to love an old woman;—so I must drink some of that water immediately. But it will never do for both of us to be away from the house at the same time. Do you wait here while I go." And she ran to the woods all by herself.

She found the spring and knelt down, and began to drink. Oh! how cool and sweet that water was! She drank and drank and drank, and stopped for breath only to begin again.

Her husband waited for her impatiently; he expected to see her come back changed into a pretty slender girl. But she did not come back at all. He got anxious, shut up the house, and went to look for her.

When he reached the spring, he could not see her. He was just on the point of returning when he heard a little wail in the high grass near the spring. He searched there and discovered his wife's clothes and a baby,—a very small baby, perhaps six months old!

For the old woman had drunk too deeply of the magical water; she had drunk herself far back beyond the time of youth into the period of speechless infancy.

He took up the child in his arms. It looked at him in a sad, wondering way. He carried it home,—murmuring to it,—thinking strange, melancholy thoughts.

In that hour, after my reverie about Urashima, the moral of this story seemed less satisfactory than in former time. Because by drinking too deeply of life we do not become young.

Naked and cool my kurumaya returned, and said that because of the heat he could not finish the promised run of twenty-five miles, but that he had found another runner to take me the rest of the way. For so much as he himself had done, he wanted fifty-five sen.

It was really very hot—more than 100° I afterwards learned; and far away there throbbed continually, like a pulsation of the beat itself, the sound of great drums beating for rain. And I thought of the Daughter of the Dragon King.

"Seventy-five sen, she told me," I observed;—"and that promised to be done has not been done. Nevertheless, seventy-five sen to you shall be given,—because I am afraid of the gods."

And behind a yet unwearied runner I fled away into the enormous blaze—in the direction of the great drums.

II

WITH KYŪSHŪ STUDENTS

I

The students of the Government College, or Higher Middle School, can scarcely be called boys; their ages ranging from the average of eighteen, for the lowest class, to that of twenty-five for the highest. Perhaps the course is too long. The best pupil can hardly hope to reach the Imperial University before his twenty-third year, and will require for his entrance thereinto a mastery of written Chinese as well as a good practical knowledge of either English and German, or of English and French.[1]

Thus he is obliged to learn three languages besides all that relates to the elegant literature of his own; and the weight of his task cannot be understood without knowledge of the fact that his study of Chinese alone is equal to the labor of acquiring six European tongues.

The impression produced upon me by the Kumamoto students was very different from that received on my first acquaintance with my Izumo pupils. This was not only because the former had left well behind them the delightfully amiable period of Japanese boyhood, and had developed into earnest, taciturn men, but also because they represented to a marked degree what is called Kyūshū character. Kyūshū still remains, as of yore, the most conservative part of Japan, and Kumamoto, its chief city, the centre of conservative feeling. This conservatism is, however, both rational and practical. Kyūshū was not slow in adopting railroads, improved methods of agriculture, applications of science to certain industries; but remains of all districts of the Empire the least inclined to imitation of Western manners and customs. The ancient samurai spirit still lives on; and that spirit in Kyūshū was for centuries one that exacted severe simplicity in habits of life. Sumptuary laws against extravagance in dress and other forms of luxury used to be rigidly enforced; and though the laws themselves have been obsolete for a generation, their influence continues to appear in the very simple attire and the plain, direct manners of the people. Kumamoto folk are also said to be characterized by their adherence to traditions of conduct which have been almost forgotten elsewhere, and by a certain independent frankness in speech and action, difficult for any foreigner to define, but immediately apparent to an educated Japanese. And here, too, under the shadow of Kiyomasa's mighty fortress,—now occupied by an immense garrison,—national sentiment is declared to be stronger than in the very capital itself,—the spirit of loyalty and the love of country. Kumamoto is proud of all these things, and boasts of her traditions. Indeed, she has nothing else to boast of. A vast, straggling, dull, unsightly town is Kumamoto: there are no quaint, pretty streets, no great temples, no wonderful

gardens. Burnt to the ground in the civil war of the tenth Meiji, the place still gives you the impression of a wilderness of flimsy shelters erected in haste almost before the soil had ceased to smoke. There are no remarkable places to visit (not, at least, within city limits),—no sights,—few amusements. For this very reason the college is thought to be well located: there are neither temptations nor distractions for its inmates. But for another reason, also, rich men far away in the capital try to send their sons to Kumamoto. It is considered desirable that a young man should be imbued with what is called "the Kyūshū spirit," and should acquire what might be termed the Kyūshū "tone." The students of Kumamoto are said to be the most peculiar students in the Empire by reason of this "tone." I have never been able to learn enough about it to define it well; but it is evidently a something akin to the deportment of the old Kyūshū samurai. Certainly the students sent from Tokyo or Kyoto to Kyūshū have to adapt themselves to a very different milieu. The Kumamoto, and also the Kagoshima youths,—whenever not obliged to don military uniform for drill-hours and other special occasions,—still cling to a costume somewhat resembling that of the ancient bushi, and therefore celebrated in sword-songs—-the short robe and hakama reaching a little below the knee, and sandals. The material of the dress is cheap, coarse, and sober in color; cleft stockings (tabi) are seldom worn, except in very cold weather, or during long marches, to keep the sandal-thongs from cutting into the flesh. Without being rough, the manners are not soft; and the lads seem to cultivate a certain outward hardness of character. They can preserve an imperturbable exterior under quite extraordinary circumstances, but under this self-control there is a fiery consciousness of strength which will show itself in a menacing form on rare occasions. They deserve to be termed rugged men, too, in their own Oriental way. Some I know, who, though born to comparative wealth, find no pleasure so keen as that of trying how much physical hardship they can endure. The greater number would certainly give up their lives without hesitation rather than their high principles. And a rumor of national danger would

instantly transform the whole four hundred into a body of iron soldiery. But their outward demeanor is usually impassive to a degree that is difficult even to understand.

For a long time I used to wonder in vain what feelings, sentiments, ideas might be hidden beneath all that unsmiling placidity. The native teachers, de facto government officials, did not appear to be on intimate terms with any of their pupils: there was no trace of that affectionate familiarity I had seen in Izumo; the relation between instructors and instructed seemed to begin and end with the bugle-calls by which classes were assembled and dismissed. In this I afterwards found myself partly mistaken; still such relations as actually existed were for the most part formal rather than natural, and quite unlike those old-fashioned, loving sympathies of which the memory had always remained with me since my departure from the Province of the Gods.

But later on, at frequent intervals, there came to me suggestions of an inner life much more attractive than this outward seeming,—hints of emotional individuality. A few I obtained in casual conversations, but the most remarkable in written themes. Subjects given for composition occasionally coaxed out some totally unexpected blossoming of thoughts and feelings. A very pleasing fact was the total absence of any false shyness, or indeed shyness of any sort: the young men were not ashamed to write exactly what they felt or hoped. They would write about their homes, about their reverential love to their parents, about happy experiences of their childhood, about their friendships, about their adventures during the holidays; and this often in a way I thought beautiful, because of its artless, absolute sincerity. After a number of such surprises, I learned to regret keenly that I had not from the outset kept notes upon all the remarkable compositions received. Once a week I used to read aloud and correct in class a selection from the best handed in, correcting the remainder at home. The very best I could not always presume to read aloud and criticise for the general benefit, because treating of matters too sacred to be methodically

commented upon, as the following examples may show.

I had given as a subject for English composition this question: "What do men remember longest?" One student answered that we remember our happiest moments longer than we remember all other experiences, because it is in the nature of every rational being to try to forget what is disagreeable or painful as soon as possible. I received many still more ingenious answers,—some of which gave proof of a really keen psychological study of the question. But I liked best of all the simple reply of one who thought that painful events are longest remembered. He wrote exactly what follows: I found it needless to alter a single word:—

"What do men remember longest? I think men remember longest that which they hear or see under painful circumstances.

"When I was only four years old, my dear, dear mother died. It was a winter's day. The wind was blowing hard in the trees, and round the roof of our house. There were no leaves on the branches of the trees. Quails were whistling in the distance,—making melancholy sounds. I recall something I did. As my mother was lying in bed,—a little before she died,—I gave her a sweet orange. She smiled and took it, and tasted it. It was the last time she smiled.... From the moment when she ceased to breathe to this hour more than sixteen years have elapsed. But to me the time is as a moment. Now also it is winter. The winds that blew when my mother died blow just as then; the quails utter the same cries; all things are the same. But my mother has gone away, and will never come back again."

The following, also, was written in reply to the same question:—

"The greatest sorrow in my life was my father's death. I was seven years old. I can remember that he had been ill all day, and that my toys had been put aside, and that I tried to be very quiet. I had not seen him that morning, and the day seemed very long. At last I stole into my father's room, and put my lips close to his cheek, and whispered, 'Father! father!'—and his cheek was very cold. He did not speak. My

uncle came, and carried me out of the room, but said nothing. Then I feared my father would die, because his cheek felt cold just as my little sister's had been when she died. In the evening a great many neighbors and other people came to the house, and caressed me, so that I was happy for a time. But they carried my father away during the night, and I never saw him after."

[1] This essay was written early in 1894. Since then, the study of French and of German has been made optional instead of obligatory, and the Higher School course considerably shortened, by a wise decision of the late Minister of Education, Mr. Inouye. It is to be hoped that measures will eventually be taken to render possible making the study of English also optional. Under existing conditions the study is forced upon hundreds who can never obtain any benefit from it.

II

From the foregoing one might suppose a simple style characteristic of English compositions in Japanese higher schools. Yet the reverse is the fact. There is a general tendency to prefer big words to little ones, and long complicated sentences to plain short periods. For this there are some reasons which would need a philological essay by Professor Chamberlain to explain. But the tendency in itself—constantly strengthened by the absurd text-books in use—can be partly understood from the fact that the very simplest forms of English expression are the most obscure to a Japanese,—because they are idiomatic. The student finds them riddles, since the root-ideas behind them are so different from his own that, to explain those ideas, it is first necessary to know something of Japanese psychology; and in avoiding simple idioms he follows instinctively the direction of least resistance.

I tried to cultivate an opposite tendency by various devices. Sometimes I would write familiar stories for the class, all in simple sentences, and in words of one syllable. Sometimes I would suggest themes to write upon, of which the nature

almost compelled simple treatment. Of course I was not very successful in my purpose, but one theme chosen in relation to it—"My First Day at School"—evoked a large number of compositions that interested me in quite another way, as revelations of sincerity of feeling and of character. I offer a few selections, slightly abridged and corrected. Their naïveté is not their least charm,—especially if one reflect they are not the recollections of boys. The following seemed to me one of the best:—

"I could not go to school until I was eight years old. I had often begged my father to let me go, for all my playmates were already at school; but he would not, thinking I was not strong enough. So I remained at home, and played with my brother.

"My brother accompanied me to school the first day. He spoke to the teacher, and then left me. The teacher took me into a room, and commanded me to sit on a bench, then he also left me. I felt sad as I sat there in silence: there was no brother to play with now,—only many strange boys. A bell ring twice; and a teacher entered our classroom, and told us to take out our slates. Then he wrote a Japanese character on the blackboard, and told us to copy it. That day he taught us how to write two Japanese words, and told us some story about a good boy. When I returned home I ran to my mother, and knelt down by her side to tell her what the teacher had taught me. Oh! how great my pleasure then was! I cannot even tell how I felt,—much less write it. I can only say that I then thought the teacher was a more learned man than father, or any one else whom I knew,—the most awful, and yet the most kindly person in the world."

The following also shows the teacher in a very pleasing light:—

"My brother and sister took me to school the first day. I thought I could sit beside them in the school, as I used to do at home; but the teacher ordered me to go to a classroom which was very far away from that of my brother and sister. I insisted upon remaining with my brother and sister; and when the teacher said that could not

be, I cried and made a great noise. Then they allowed my brother to leave his own class, and accompany me to mine. But after a while I found playmates in my own class; and then I was not afraid to be without my brother."

This also is quite pretty and true:—

"A teacher—(I think, the head master) called me to him, and told me that I must become a great scholar. Then he bade some man take me into a classroom where there were forty or fifty scholars. I felt afraid and pleased at the same time, at the thought of having so many playfellows. They looked at me shyly, and I at them. I was at first afraid to speak to them. Little boys are innocent like that. But after a while, in some way or other, we began to play together; and they seemed to be pleased to have me play with them."

The above three compositions were by young men who had their first schooling under the existing educational system, which prohibits harshness on the part of masters. But it would seem that the teachers of the previous era were less tender. Here are three compositions by older students who appear to have had quite a different experience:—

1. "Before Meiji, there were no such public schools in Japan as there are now. But in every province there was a sort of student society composed of the sons of Samurai. Unless a man were a Samurai, his son could not enter such a society. It was under the control of the Lord of the province, who appointed a director to rule the students. The principal study of the Samurai was that of the Chinese language and literature. Most of the Statesmen of the present government were once students in such Samurai schools. Common citizens and country, people had to send their sons and daughters to primary schools called Terakoya, where all the teaching was usually done by one teacher. It consisted of little more than reading, writing, calculating, and some moral instruction. We could learn to write an ordinary letter, or a very easy essay. At eight years old, I was sent to a terakoya, as I was not the son of a

Samurai. At first I did not want to go; and every morning my grandfather had to strike me with his stick to make me go. The discipline at that school was very severe. If a boy did not obey, he was beaten with a bamboo,—being held down to receive his punishment. After a year, many public schools were opened: and I entered a public school."

2. "A great gate, a pompous building, a very large dismal room with benches in rows,—these I remember. The teachers looked very severe; I did not like their faces. I sat on a bench in the room and felt hateful. The teachers seemed unkind; none of the boys knew me, or spoke to me. A teacher stood up by the blackboard, and began to call the names. He had a whip in his band. He called my name. I could not answer, and burst out crying. So I was sent borne. That was my first day at school."

3. "When I was seven years old I was obliged to enter a school in my native village. My father gave me two or three writing-brushes and some paper;—I was very glad to get them, and promised to study as earnestly as I could. But how unpleasant the first day at school was! When I went to the school, none of the students knew me, and I found myself without a friend. I entered a classroom. A teacher, with a whip in his hand, called my name in a large voice. I was very much surprised at it, and so frightened that I could not help crying. The boys laughed very loudly at me; but the teacher scolded them, and whipped one of them, and then said to me, 'Don't be afraid of my voice: what is your name?' I told him my name, snuffling. I thought then that school was a very disagreeable place, where we could neither weep nor laugh. I wanted only to go back home at once; and though I felt it was out of my power to go, I could scarcely bear to stay until the lessons were over. When I returned home at last, I told my father what I had felt at school, and said: 'I do not like to go to school at all.'"

Needless to say the next memory is of Meiji. It gives, as a composition, evidence of what we should call in the West, character. The suggestion of self-reliance at six

years old is delicious: so is the recollection of the little sister taking off her white tabi to deck her child-brother on his first school-day:—

"I was six years old. My mother awoke me early. My sister gave me her own stockings (tabi) to wear,—and I felt very happy. Father ordered a servant to attend me to the school; but I refused to be accompanied: I wanted to feel that I could go all by myself. So I went alone; and, as the school was not far from the house, I soon found myself in front of the gate. There I stood still a little while, because I knew none of the children I saw going in. Boys and girls were passing into the schoolyard, accompanied by servants or relatives; and inside I saw others playing games which filled me with envy. But all at once a little boy among the players saw me, and with a laugh came running to me. Then I was very happy. I walked to and fro with him, hand in hand. At last a teacher called all of us into a schoolroom, and made a speech which I could not understand. After that we were free for the day because it was the first day. I returned home with my friend. My parents were waiting for me, with fruits and cakes; and my friend and I ate them together."

Another writes:—

"When I first went to school I was six years old. I remember only that my grandfather carried my books and slate for me, and that the teacher and the boys were very, very, very kind and good to me,—so that I thought school was a paradise in this world, and did not want to return home."

I think this little bit of natural remorse is also worth the writing down:—

"I was eight years old when I first went to school. I was a bad boy. I remember on the way home from school I had a quarrel with one of my playmates,—younger than I. He threw a very little stone at me which hit me. I took a branch of a tree lying in the road, and struck him across the face with all my might. Then I ran away, leaving him crying in the middle of the road. My heart told me what I had done. After reaching my home, I thought I still heard him crying. My little playmate is not any

more in this world now. Can any one know my feelings?"

All this capacity of young men to turn back with perfect naturalness of feeling to scenes of their childhood appears to me essentially Oriental. In the Occident men seldom begin to recall their childhood vividly before the approach of the autumn season of life. But childhood in Japan is certainly happier than in other lands, and therefore perhaps is regretted earlier in adult life. The following extract from a student's record of his holiday experience touchingly expresses such regret:

"During the spring vacation, I went home to visit my parents. Just before the end of the holidays, when it was nearly time for me to return to the college, I heard that the students of the middle school of my native town were also going to Kumamoto on an excursion, and I resolved to go with them.

"They marched in military order with their rifles. I had no rifle, so I took my place in the rear of the column. We marched all day, keeping time to military songs which we sung all together.

"In the evening we reached Soyeda. The teachers and students of the Soyeda school, and the chief men of the village, welcomed us. Then we were separated into detachments, each of which was quartered in a different hotel. I entered a hotel, with the last detachment, to rest for the night.

"But I could not sleep for a long time. Five years before, on a similar 'military excursion,' I had rested in that very hotel, as a student of the same middle school. I remembered the fatigue and the pleasure; and I compared my feelings of the moment with the recollection of my feelings then as a boy. I could not help a weak wish to be young again like my companions. They were fast asleep, tired with their long march; and I sat up and looked at their faces. How pretty their faces seemed in that young sleep!"

III

The preceding selections give no more indication of the general character of the

students' compositions than might be furnished by any choice made to illustrate a particular feeling. Examples of ideas and sentiments from themes of a graver kind would show variety of thought and not a little originality in method, but would require much space. A few notes, however, copied out of my class-register, will be found suggestive, if not exactly curious.

At the summer examinations of 1893 I submitted to the graduating classes, for a composition theme, the question, "What is eternal in literature?" I expected original answers, as the subject had never been discussed by us, and was certainly new to the pupils, so far as their knowledge of Western thought was concerned. Nearly all the papers proved interesting. I select twenty replies as examples. Most of them immediately preceded a long discussion, but a few were embodied in the text of the essay:—

1. "Truth and Eternity are identical: these make the Full Circle,—in Chinese, Yen-Man."

2. "All that in human life and conduct which is according to the laws of the Universe."

3. "The lives of patriots, and the teachings of those who have given pure maxims to the world."

4. "Filial Piety, and the doctrine of its teachers. Vainly the books of Confucius were burned during the Shin dynasty; they are translated to-day into all the languages of the civilized world."

5. "Ethics, and scientific truth."

6. "Both evil and good are eternal, said a Chinese sage. We should read only that which is good."

7. "The great thoughts and ideas of our ancestors."

8. "For a thousand million centuries truth is truth."

9. "Those ideas of right and wrong upon which all schools of ethics agree."

10. "Books which rightly explain the phenomena of the Universe."

11. "Conscience alone is unchangeable. Wherefore books about ethics based upon conscience are eternal."

12. "Reasons for noble action: these remain unchanged by time."

13. "Books written upon the best moral means of giving the greatest possible happiness to the greatest possible number of people,—that is, to mankind."

14. "The Gokyō (the Five Great Chinese Classics)."

15. "The holy books of China, and of the Buddhists."

16. "All that which teaches the Right and Pure Way of human conduct."

17. "The Story of Kusunoki Masaskigé, who vowed to be reborn seven times to fight against the enemies of his Sovereign."

18. "Moral sentiment, without which the world would be only an enormous clod of earth, and all books waste-paper."

19. "The Tao-te-King."

20. Same as 19, but with this comment. "He who reads that which is eternal, his soul shall hover eternally in the Universe."

IV

Some particularly Oriental sentiments were occasionally drawn out through discussions. The discussions were based upon stories which I would relate to a class by word of mouth, and invite written or spoken comment about. The results of such a discussion are hereafter set forth. At the time it took place, I had already told the students of the higher classes a considerable number of stories. I had told them many of the Greek myths; among which that of Œdipus and the Sphinx seemed especially to please them, because of the hidden moral, and that of Orpheus, like all our musical legends, to have no interest for them. I had also told them a variety of our

most famous modern stories. The marvelous tale of "Rappacini's Daughter" proved greatly to their liking; and the spirit of Hawthorne might have found no little ghostly pleasure in their interpretation of it. "Monos and Daimonos" found favor; and Poe's wonderful fragment, "Silence," was appreciated after a fashion that surprised me. On the other hand, the story of "Frankenstein" impressed them very little. None took it seriously. For Western minds the tale must always hold a peculiar horror, because of the shock it gives to feelings evolved under the influence of Hebraic ideas concerning the origin of life, the tremendous character of divine prohibitions, and the awful punishments destined for those who would tear the veil from Nature's secrets, or mock, even unconsciously, the work of a jealous Creator. But to the Oriental mind, unshadowed by such grim faith,—feeling no distance between gods and men,—conceiving life as a multiform whole ruled by one uniform law that shapes the consequence of every act into a reward or a punishment,—the ghastliness of the story makes no appeal. Most of the written criticisms showed me that it was generally regarded as a comic or semi-comic parable. After all this, I was rather puzzled one morning by the request for a "very strong moral story of the Western kind."

I suddenly resolved—though knowing I was about to venture on dangerous ground—to try the full effect of a certain Arthurian legend which I felt sure somebody would criticise with a vim. The moral is rather more than "very strong;" and for that reason I was curious to hear the result.

So I related to them the story of Sir Bors, which is in the sixteenth book of Sir Thomas Mallory's "Morte d'Arthur,"—"how Sir Bors met his brother Sir Lionel taken and beaten with thorns,—and of a maid which should have been dishonored,—and how Sir Bors left his brother to rescue the damsel,—-and how it was told them that Lionel was dead." But I did not try to explain to them the knightly idealism imaged in the beautiful old tale, as I wished to hear them comment, in their own Oriental way, upon the bare facts of the narrative.

Which they did as follows:—

"The action of Mallory's knight," exclaimed Iwai, "was contrary even to the principles of Christianity,—if it be true that the Christian religion declares all men brothers. Such conduct might be right if there were no society in the world. But while any society exists which is formed of families, family love must be the strength of that society; and the action of that knight was against family love, and therefore against society. The principle he followed was opposed not only to all society, but was contrary to all religion, and contrary to the morals of all countries."

"The story is certainly immoral," said Orito. "What it relates is opposed to all our ideas of love and loyalty, and even seems to us contrary to nature. Loyalty is not a mere duty. It must be from the heart, or it is not loyally. It must be an inborn feeling. And it is in the nature of every Japanese."

"It is a horrible story," said Andō. "Philanthropy itself is only an expansion of fraternal love. The man who could abandon his own brother to death merely to save a strange woman was a wicked man. Perhaps he was influenced by passion."

"No," I said: "you forget I told you that there was no selfishness in his action,—that it must be interpreted as a heroism."

"I think the explanation of the story must be religious," said Yasukochi. "It seems strange to us; but that may be because we do not understand Western ideas very well. Of course to abandon one's own brother in order to save a strange woman is contrary to all our knowledge of right. But if that knight was a man of pure heart, he must have imagined himself obliged to do it because of some promise or some duty. Even then it must have seemed to him a very painful and disgraceful thing to do, and he could not have done it without feeling that he was acting against the teaching of his own heart."

"There you are right," I answered. "But you should also know that the sentiment obeyed by Sir Bors is one which still influences the conduct of brave and noble men

in the societies of the West,—even of men who cannot be called religious at all in the common sense of that word."

"Still, we think it a very bad sentiment," said Iwai; "and we would rather hear another story about another form of society."

Then it occurred to me to tell them the immortal story of Alkestis. I thought for the moment that the character of Herakles in that divine drama would have a particular charm for them. But the comments proved I was mistaken. No one even referred to Herakles. Indeed I ought to have remembered that our ideals of heroism, strength of purpose, contempt of death, do not readily appeal to Japanese youth. And this for the reason that no Japanese gentleman regards such qualities as exceptional. He considers heroism a matter of course—something belonging to manhood and inseparable from it. He would say that a woman may be afraid without shame, but never a man. Then as a mere idealization of physical force, Herakles could interest Orientals very little: their own mythology teems with impersonations of strength; and, besides, dexterity, sleight, quickness, are much more admired by a true Japanese than strength. No Japanese boy would sincerely wish to be like the giant Benkei; but Yoshitsune, the slender, supple conqueror and master of Benkei, remains an ideal of perfect knighthood dear to the hearts of all Japanese youth.

Kamekawa said:—

"The story of Alkestis, or at least the story of Admetus, is a story of cowardice, disloyalty, immorality. The conduct of Admetus was abominable. His wife was indeed noble and virtuous—too good a wife for so shameless a man. I do not believe that the father of Admetus would not have been willing to die for his son if his son had been worthy. I think he would gladly have died for his son had he not been disgusted by the cowardice of Admetus. And how disloyal the subjects of Admetus were! The moment they heard of their king's danger they should have rushed to the palace, and humbly begged that they might be allowed to die in his stead. However

cowardly or cruel he might have been, that was their duty. They were his subjects. They lived by his favor. Yet how disloyal they were! A country inhabited by such shameless people must soon have gone to ruin. Of course, as the story says, 'it is sweet to live.' Who does not love life? Who does not dislike to die? But no brave man—no loyal man even—should so much as think about his life when duty requires him to give it."

"But," said Midzuguchi, who had joined us a little too late to hear the beginning of the narration, "perhaps Admetus was actuated by filial piety. Had I been Admetus, and found no one among my subjects willing to die for me, I should have said to my wife: 'Dear wife, I cannot leave my father alone now, because he has no other son, and his grandsons are still too young to be of use to him. Therefore, if you love me, please die in my place.'"

"You do not understand the story," said Yasukochi. "Filial piety did not exist in Admetus. He wished that his father should have died for him."

"Ah!" exclaimed the apologist in real surprise,—"that is not a nice story, teacher!"

"Admetus," declared Kawabuchi, "was everything which is bad. He was a hateful coward, because he was afraid to die; he was a tyrant, because he wanted his subjects to die for him; he was an unfilial son because he wanted his old father to die in his place; and he was an unkind husband, because he asked his wife—a weak woman with little children —to do what he was afraid to do as a man. What could be baser than Admetus?"

"But Alkestis," said Iwai,—"Alkestis was all that is good. For she gave up her children and everything,—even like the Buddha [Shaka] himself. Yet she was very young. How true and brave! The beauty of her face might perish like a spring-blossoming, but the beauty of her act should be remembered for a thousand times a thousand years. Eternally her soul will hover in the universe. Formless she is now; but it is the Formless who teach us more kindly than our kindest living

teachers,—the souls of all who have done pure, brave, wise deeds."

"The wife of Admetus," said Kumamoto, inclined to austerity in his judgments, "was simply obedient. She was not entirely blameless. For, before her death, it was her highest duty to have severely reproached her husband for his foolishness. And this she did not do,—not at least as our teacher tells the story."

"Why Western people should think that story beautiful," said Zaitsu, "is difficult for us to understand. There is much in it which fills us with anger. For some of us cannot but think of our parents when listening to such a story. After the Revolution of Meiji, for a time, there was much suffering. Often perhaps our parents were hungry; yet we always had plenty of food. Sometimes they could scarcely get money to live; yet we were educated. When we think of all it cost them to educate us, all the trouble it gave them to bring us up, all the love they gave us, and all the pain we caused them in our foolish childhood, then we think we can never, never do enough for them. And therefore we do not like that story of Admetus."

The bugle sounded for recess. I went to the parade-ground to take a smoke. Presently a few students joined me, with their rifles and bayonets—for the next hour was to be devoted to military drill. One said: "Teacher, we should like another subject for composition,—not too easy."

I suggested: "How would you like this for a subject, 'What is most difficult to understand?'"

"That," said Kawabuchi, "is not hard to answer,—the correct use of English prepositions."

"In the study of English by Japanese students,—yes," I answered. "But I did not mean any special difficulty of that kind. I meant to write your ideas about what is most difficult for all men to understand."

"The universe?" queried Yasukochi. "That is too large a subject."

"When I was only six years old," said Orito, "I used to wander along the seashore,

on fine days, and wonder at the greatness of the world. Our home was by the sea. Afterwards I was taught that the problem of the universe will at last pass away, like smoke."

"I think," said Miyakawa, "that the hardest of all things to understand is why men live in the world. From the time a child is born, what does he do? He eats and drinks; he feels happy and sad; he sleeps at night; he awakes in the morning. He is educated; he grows up; he marries; he has children; he gets old; his hair turns first gray and then white; he becomes feebler and feebler,—and he dies.

"What does he do all his life? All his real work in this world is to eat and to drink, to sleep and to rise up; since, whatever be his occupation as a citizen, he toils only that he may be able to continue doing this. But for what purpose does a man really come into the world? Is it to eat? Is it to drink? Is it to sleep? Every day he does exactly the same thing, and yet he is not tired! It is strange.

"When rewarded, he is glad; when punished, he is sad. If he becomes rich, he thinks himself happy. If he becomes poor, he is very unhappy. Why is he glad or sad according to his condition? Happiness and sadness are only temporary things. Why does he study hard? No matter how great a scholar he may become, what is there left of him when he is dead? Only bones."

Miyakawa was the merriest and wittiest in his class; and the contrast between his joyous character and his words seemed to me almost startling. But such swift glooms of thought—especially since Meiji—not unfrequently make apparition in quite young Oriental minds. They are fugitive as shadows of summer clouds; they mean less than they would signify in Western adolescence; and the Japanese lives not by thought, nor by emotion, but by duty. Still, they are not haunters to encourage.

"I think," said I, "a much better subject for you all would be the Sky: the sensations which the sky creates in us when we look at it on such a day as this. See how

wonderful it is!"

It was blue to the edge of the world, with never a floss of cloud. There were no vapors in the horizon; and very far peaks, invisible on most days, now-massed into the glorious light, seemingly diaphanous.

Then Kumashiro, looking up to the mighty arching, uttered with reverence the ancient Chinese words:—

"What thought is so high as It is? What mind is so wide?"

"To-day," I said, "is beautiful as any summer day could be,—only that the leaves are falling, and the semi are gone."

"Do you like semi, teacher?" asked Mori.

"It gives me great pleasure to hear them," I answered. "We have no such cicadæ in the West."

"Human life is compared to the life of a semi," said Orito,—"utsuzemi no yo. Brief as the song of the semi all human joy is, and youth. Men come for a season and go, as do the semi."

"There are no semi now," said Yasukochi; "perhaps the teacher thinks it is sad."

"I do not think it sad," observed Noguchi. "They hinder us from study. I hate the sound they make. When we hear that sound in summer, and are tired, it adds fatigue to fatigue so that we fall asleep. If we try to read or write, or even think, when we hear that sound we have no more courage to do anything. Then we wish that all those insects were dead."

"Perhaps you like the dragon-flies," I suggested. "They are flashing all around us; but they make no sound."

"Every Japanese likes dragon-flies," said Ivumashiro. "Japan, you know, is called Akitsusu, which means the Country of the Dragon-fly."

We talked about different kinds of dragon-flies; and they told me of one I had never

seen,—the Shōro-tombo, or "Ghost dragon-fly," said to have some strange relation to the dead. Also they spoke of the Yamma—a very large kind of dragon-fly, and related that in certain old songs the samurai were called Yamma, because the long hair of a young warrior used to be tied up into a knot in the shape of a dragon-fly.

A bugle sounded; and the voice of the military officer rang out,—

"AtsumarÉ!" (fall in!) But the young men lingered an instant to ask,—

"Well, what shall it be, teacher?—that which is most difficult to understand?"

"No," I said, "the Sky."

And all that day the beauty of the Chinese utterance haunted me, filled me like an exaltation:—

"What thought is so high as It is? What mind is so wide?"

V

There is one instance in which the relation between teachers and students is not formal at all,—one precious survival of the mutual love of other days in the old Samurai Schools. By all the aged Professor of Chinese is reverenced; and his influence over the young men is very great. With a word he could calm any outburst burst of anger; with a smile he could quicken any generous impulse. For he represents to the lads their ideal of all that was brave, true, noble, in the elder life,—the Soul of Old Japan.

His name, signifying "Moon-of-Autumn," is famous in his own land. A little book has been published about him, containing his portrait. He was once a samurai of high rank belonging to the great clan of Aidzu. He rose early to positions of trust and influence. He has been a leader of armies, a negotiator between princes, a statesman, a ruler of provinces—all that any knight could be in the feudal era. But in the intervals of military or political duty he seems to have always been a teacher. There are few such teachers. There are few such scholars. Yet to see him now, you

would scarcely believe how much he was once feared—though loved—by the turbulent swordsmen under his rule. Perhaps there is no gentleness so full of charm as that of the man of war noted for sternness in his youth.

When the Feudal System made its last battle for existence, he heard the summons of his lord, and went into that terrible struggle in which even the women and little children of Aidzu took part. But courage and the sword alone could not prevail against the new methods of war;—the power of Aidzu was broken; and he, as one of the leaders of that power, was long a political prisoner.

But the victors esteemed him; and the Government he had fought against in all honor took him into its service to teach the new generations. From younger teachers these learned Western science and Western languages. But he still taught that wisdom of the Chinese sages which is eternal,—and loyalty, and honor, and all that makes the man.

Some of his children passed away from his sight. But he could not feel alone; for all whom he taught were as sons to him, and so reverenced him. And he became old, very old, and grew to look like a god,—like a Kami-Sama.

The Kami-Sama in art bear no likeness to the Buddhas. These more ancient divinities have no downcast gaze, no meditative impassiveness. They are lovers of Nature; they haunt her fairest solitudes, and enter into the life of her trees, and speak in her waters, and hover in her winds. Once upon the earth they lived as men; and the people of the land are their posterity. Even as divine ghosts, they remain very human, and of many dispositions. They are the emotions, they are the sensations of the living. But as figuring in legend and the art born of legend, they are mostly very pleasant to know. I speak not of the cheap art which treats them irreverently in these skeptical days, but of the older art explaining the sacred texts about them. Of course such representations vary greatly. But were you to ask what is the ordinary traditional aspect of a Kami, I should answer: "An ancient smiling man of

wondrously gentle countenance, having a long white beard, and all robed in white with a white girdle."

Only that the girdle of the aged Professor was of black silk, just such a vision of Shintō he seemed when he visited me the last time.

He had met me at the college, and had said: "I know there has been a congratulation at your house; and that I did not call was not because I am old or because your house is far, but only because I have been long ill. But you will soon see me."

So one luminous afternoon he came, bringing gifts of felicitation,—gifts of the antique high courtesy, simple in themselves, yet worthy a prince: a little plum-tree, every branch and spray one snowy dazzle of blossoms; a curious and pretty bamboo vessel full of wine; and two scrolls bearing beautiful poems,—texts precious in themselves as the work of a rare calligrapher and poet; otherwise precious to me, because written by his own hand. Everything which he said to me I do not fully know. I remember words of affectionate encouragement about my duties,—some wise, keen advice,—a strange story of his youth. But all was like a pleasant dream; for his mere presence was a caress, and the fragrance of his flower-gift seemed as a breathing from the Takama-no-hara. And as a Kami should come and go, so he smiled and went,—leaving all things hallowed. The little plum-tree has lost its flowers: another winter must pass before it blooms again. But something very sweet still seems to haunt the vacant guest-room. Perhaps only the memory of that divine old man;—perhaps a spirit ancestral, some Lady of the Past, who followed his steps all viewlessly to our threshold that day, and lingers with me awhile, just because he loved me.

III

AT HAKATA

I

Traveling by kuruma one can only see and dream. The jolting makes reading too

painful; the rattle of the wheels and the rush of the wind render conversation impossible,—even when the road allows of a fellow-traveler's vehicle running beside your own. After having become familiar with the characteristics of Japanese scenery, you are not apt to notice during such travel, except at long intervals, anything novel enough to make a strong impression. Most often the way winds through a perpetual sameness of rice-fields, vegetable farms, tiny thatched hamlets,—and between interminable ranges of green or blue hills. Sometimes, indeed, there are startling spreads of color, as when you traverse a plain all burning yellow with the blossoming of the natané, or a valley all lilac with the flowering of the gengebana; but these are the passing splendors of very short seasons. As a rule, the vast green monotony appeals to no faculty: you sink into reverie or nod, perhaps, with the wind in your face, to be wakened only by some jolt of extra violence.

Even so, on my autumn way to Hakata, I gaze and dream and nod by turns. I watch the flashing of the dragon-flies, the infinite network of rice-field paths spreading out of sight on either hand, the slowly shifting lines of familiar peaks in the horizon glow, and the changing shapes of white afloat in the vivid blue above all,—asking myself how many times again must I view the same Kyūshū landscape, and deploring the absence of the wonderful.

Suddenly and very softly, the thought steals into my mind that the most wonderful of possible visions is really all about me in the mere common green of the world,—in the ceaseless manifestation of Life.

Ever and everywhere, from beginnings invisible, green things are growing,—out of soft earth, out of hard rock,—forms multitudinous, dumb soundless races incalculably older than man. Of their visible history we know much: names we have given them, and classification. The reason of the forms of their leaves, of the qualities of their fruits, of the colors of their flowers, we also know; for we have learned not a little about the course of the eternal laws that give shape to all

terrestrial things. But why they are,—that we do not know. What is the ghostliness that seeks expression in this universal green,—the mystery of that which multiplies forever issuing out of that which multiplies not? Or is the seeming lifeless itself life,—only a life more silent still, more hidden?

But a stranger and quicker life moves upon the face of the world, peoples wind and flood. This has the ghostlier power of separating itself from earth, yet is always at last recalled thereto, and condemned to feed that which it once fed upon. It feels; it knows; it crawls, swims, runs, flies, thinks. Countless the shapes of it. The green slower life seeks being only. But this forever struggles against non-being. We know the mechanism of its motion, the laws of its growth: the innermost mazes of its structure have been explored? the territories of its sensation have been mapped and named. But the meaning of it, who will tell us? Out of what ultimate came it? Or, more simply, what is it? Why should it know pain? Why is it evolved by pain?

And this life of pain is our own. Relatively, it sees, it knows. Absolutely, it is blind, and gropes, like the slow cold green life which supports it. But does it also support a higher existence,—nourish some invisible life infinitely more active and more complex? Is there ghostliness orbed in ghostliness,—life within life without end? Are there universes interpenetrating universes?

For our era, at least, the boundaries of human knowledge have been irrevocably fixed; and far beyond those limits only exist the solutions of such questions. Yet what constitutes those limits of the possible? Nothing more than human nature itself. Must that nature remain equally limited in those who shall come after us? Will they never develop higher senses, vaster faculties, subtler perceptions? What is the teaching of science?

Perhaps it has been suggested in the profound saying of Clifford, that we were never made, but have made ourselves. This is, indeed, the deepest of all teachings of science. And wherefore has man made himself? To escape suffering and death.

Under the pressure of pain alone was our being shaped; and even so long as pain lives, so long must continue the ceaseless toil of self-change. Once in the ancient past, the necessities of life were physical; they are not less moral than physical now. And of all future necessities, none seems likely to prove so merciless, so mighty, so tremendous, as that of trying to read the Universal Riddle.

The world's greatest thinker—he who has told us why the Riddle cannot be read—has told us also how the longing to solve it must endure, and grow with the growing of man.[1]

And surely the mere recognition of this necessity contains within it the germ of a hope. May not the desire to know, as the possibly highest form of future pain, compel within men the natural evolution of powers to achieve the now impossible,—of capacities to perceive the now invisible? We of to-day are that which we are through longing so to be; and may not the inheritors of our work yet make themselves that which we now would wish to become?

[1] First Principles (The Reconciliation).

II

I am in Hakata, the town of the Girdle-Weavers,—which is a very tall town, with fantastic narrow ways full of amazing color;—and I halt in the Street-of-Prayer-to-the-Gods because there is an enormous head of bronze, the head of a Buddha, smiling at me through a gateway. The gateway is of a temple of the Jōdō sect; and the head is beautiful.

But there is only the head. What supports it above the pavement of the court is hidden by thousands of metal mirrors heaped up to the chin of the great dreamy face. A placard beside the gateway explains the problem. The mirrors are contributions by women to a colossal seated figure of Buddha—to be thirty-five feet high, including the huge lotus on which it is to be enthroned. And the whole is to be made of bronze mirrors. Hundreds have been already used to cast the head; myriads will be needed

to finish the work. Who can venture to assert, in presence of such an exhibition, that Buddhism is passing away?

Yet I cannot feel delighted at this display, which, although gratifying the artistic sense with the promise of a noble statue, shocks it still more by ocular evidence of the immense destruction that the project involves. For Japanese metal mirrors (now being superseded by atrocious cheap looking-glasses of Western manufacture) well deserve to be called things of beauty. Nobody unfamiliar with their gracious shapes can feel the charm of the Oriental comparison of the moon to a mirror. One side only is polished. The other is adorned with designs in relief: trees or flowers, birds or animals or insects, landscapes, legends, symbols of good fortune, figures of gods. Such are even the commonest mirrors. But there are many kinds; and some among them very wonderful, which we call "magic mirrors,"—because when the reflection of one is thrown upon a screen or wall, you can see, in the disk of light, luminous images of the designs upon the back.[1]

Whether there be any magic mirrors in that heap of bronze ex-votos I cannot tell; but there certainly are many beautiful things. And there is no little pathos in the spectacle of all that wonderful quaint work thus cast away, and destined soon to vanish utterly. Probably within another decade the making of mirrors of silver and mirrors of bronze will have ceased forever. Seekers for them will then hear, with something more than regret, the story of the fate of these.

Nor is this the only pathos in the vision of all those domestic sacrifices thus exposed to rain and sun and trodden dust of streets. Surely the smiles of bride and babe and mother have been reflected in not a few: some gentle home life must have been imaged in nearly all. But a ghostlier value than memory can give also attaches to Japanese mirrors. An ancient proverb declares, "The Mirror is the Sold of the Woman,"—and not merely, as might be supposed, in a figurative sense. For countless legends relate that a mirror feels all the joys or pains of its mistress, and

reveals in its dimness or brightness some weird sympathy with her every emotion. Wherefore mirrors were of old employed—and some say are still employed—in those magical rites believed to influence life and death, and were buried with those to whom they belonged.

And the spectacle of all those mouldering bronzes thus makes queer fancies in the mind about wrecks of Souls,—or at least of soul-things. It is even difficult to assure one's self that, of all the movements and the faces those mirrors once reflected, absolutely nothing now haunts them. One cannot help imagining that whatever has been must continue to be somewhere;—that by approaching the mirrors very stealthily, and turning a few of them suddenly face up to the light, one might be able to catch the Past in the very act of shrinking and shuddering away.

Besides, I must observe that the pathos of this exhibition has been specially intensified for me by one memory which the sight of a Japanese mirror always evokes,—the memory of the old Japanese story Matsuyama no Kagami. Though related in the simplest manner and with the fewest possible words,[2] it might well be compared to those wonderful little tales by Goethe, of which the meanings expand according to the experience and capacity of the reader. Mrs. James has perhaps exhausted the psychological possibilities of the story in one direction; and whoever can read her little book without emotion should be driven from the society of mankind. Even to guess the Japanese idea of the tale, one should be able to feel the intimate sense of the delicious colored prints accompanying her text,—the interpretation of the last great artist of the Kano school. (Foreigners, unfamiliar with Japanese home life, cannot fully perceive the exquisiteness of the drawings made for the Fairy-Tale Series; but the silk-dyers of Kyōto and of Ōsaka prize them beyond measure, and reproduce them constantly upon the costliest textures.) But there are many versions; and, with the following outline, readers can readily make nineteenth-century versions for themselves.

[1] See article entitled "On the Magic Mirrors of Japan, by Professors Ayrton and Perry," in vol. xxvii. of the Proceedings of the Royal Society; also an article treating the same subject by the same authors in vol. xxii. of The Philosophical Magazine.

[2] See, for Japanese text and translation, A Romanized Japanese Reader, by Professor B. H. Chamberlain. The beautiful version for children, written by Mrs. F. H. James, belongs to the celebrated Japanese Fairy-Tale Series, published at Tōkyō.

III

Long ago, at a place called Matsuyama, in the province of Echigo, there lived a young samurai husband and wife whose names have been quite forgotten. They had a little daughter.

Once the husband went to Yedo,—probably as a retainer in the train of the Lord of Echigo. On his return he brought presents from the capital,—sweet cakes and a doll for the little girl (at least so the artist tells us), and for his wife a mirror of silvered bronze. To the young mother that mirror seemed a very wonderful thing; for it was the first mirror ever brought to Matsuyama. She did not understand the use of it, and innocently asked whose was the pretty smiling face she saw inside it. When her husband answered her, laughing, "Why, it is your own face! How foolish you are!" she was ashamed to ask any more questions, but hastened to put her present away, still thinking it to be a very mysterious thing. And she kept it hidden many years,—the original story does not say why. Perhaps for the simple reason that in all countries love makes even the most trifling gift too sacred to be shown.

But in the time of her last sickness she gave the mirror to her daughter, saying, "After I am dead you must look into this mirror every morning and evening, and you will see me. Do not grieve." Then she died.

And the girl thereafter looked into the mirror every morning and evening, and did not know that the face in the mirror was her own shadow,—but thought it to be that of her dead mother, whom she much resembled. So she would talk to the shadow,

having the sensation, or, as the Japanese original more tenderly says, "having the heart of meeting her mother" day by day; and she prized the mirror above all things.

At last her father noticed this conduct, and thought it strange, and asked her the reason of it, whereupon she told him all. "Then," says the old Japanese narrator, "he thinking it to be a very piteous thing, his eyes grew dark with tears."

IV

Such is the old story.... But was the artless error indeed so piteous a thing as it seemed to the parent? Or was his emotion vain as my own regret for the destiny of all those mirrors with all their recollections?

I cannot help fancying that the innocence of the maiden was nearer to eternal truth than the feeling of the father. For in the cosmic order of things the present is the shadow of the past, and the future must be the reflection of the present. One are we all, even as Light is, though unspeakable the millions of the vibrations whereby it is made. One are we all,—and yet many, because each is a world of ghosts. Surely that girl saw and spoke to her mother's very soul, while seeing the fair shadow of her own young eyes and lips, uttering love!

And, with this thought, the strange display in the old temple court takes a new meaning,—becomes the symbolism of a sublime expectation. Each of us is truly a mirror, imaging something of the universe,—reflecting also the reflection of ourselves in that universe; and perhaps the destiny of all is to be molten by that mighty Image-maker, Death, into some great sweet passionless unity. How the vast work shall be wrought, only those to come after us may know. We of the present West do not know: we merely dream. But the ancient East believes. Here is the simple imagery of her faith. All forms must vanish at last to blend with that Being whose smile is immutable Rest,—whose knowledge is Infinite Vision.

IV

OF THE ETERNAL FEMININE

For metaphors of man we search the skies, And find our allegory in all the air;— We gaze on Nature with Narcissus-eyes, Enamoured of our shadow everywhere. Watson.

I

What every intelligent foreigner dwelling in Japan must sooner or later perceive is, that the more the Japanese learn of our æsthetics and of our emotional character generally, the less favorably do they seem to be impressed thereby. The European or American who tries to talk to them about Western art, or literature, or metaphysics will feel for their sympathy in vain. He will be listened to politely; but his utmost eloquence will scarcely elicit more than a few surprising comments, totally unlike what he hoped and expected to evoke. Many successive disappointments of this sort impel him to judge his Oriental auditors very much as he would judge Western auditors behaving in a similar way. Obvious indifference to what we imagine the highest expression possible of art and thought, we are led by our own Occidental experiences to take for proof of mental incapacity. So we find one class of foreign observers calling the Japanese a race of children; while another, including a majority of those who have passed many years in the country, judge the nation essentially materialistic, despite the evidence of its religions, its literature, and its matchless art. I cannot persuade myself that either of these judgments is less fatuous than Goldsmith's observation to Johnson about the Literary Club: "There can now be nothing new among us; we have traveled over one another's minds." A cultured Japanese might well answer with Johnson's famous retort: "Sir, you have not yet traveled over my mind, I promise you!" And all such sweeping criticisms seem to me due to a very imperfect recognition of the fact that Japanese thought and sentiment have been evolved out of ancestral habits, customs, ethics, beliefs, directly the opposite of our own in some cases, and in all cases strangely different. Acting on such psychological material, modern scientific education cannot but accentuate and develop race differences. Only half-education can tempt the Japanese to servile

imitation of Western ways. The real mental and moral power of the race, its highest intellect, strongly resists Western influence; and those more competent than I to pronounce upon such matters assure me that this is especially observable in the case of superior men who have traveled or been educated in Europe. Indeed, the results of the new culture have served more than aught else to show the immense force of healthy conservatism in that race superficially characterized by Rein as a race of children. Even very imperfectly understood, the causes of this Japanese attitude to a certain class of Western ideas might well incite us to reconsider our own estimate of those ideas, rather than to tax the Oriental mind with incapacity. Now, of the causes in question, which are multitudinous, some can only be vaguely guessed at. But there is at least one—a very important one—which we may safely study, because a recognition of it is forced upon any one who passes a few years in the Far East.

II

"Teacher, please tell us why there is so much about love and marrying in English novels;—it seems to us very, very strange."

This question was put to me while I was trying to explain to my literature class—young men from nineteen to twenty-three years of age—why they had failed to understand certain chapters of a standard novel, though quite well able to understand the logic of Jevons and the psychology of James. Under the circumstances, it was not an easy question to answer; in fact, I could not have replied to it in any satisfactory way had I not already lived for several years in Japan. As it was, though I endeavored to be concise as well as lucid, my explanation occupied something more than two hours.

There are few of our society novels that a Japanese student can really comprehend; and the reason is, simply, that English society is something of which he is quite unable to form a correct idea. Indeed, not only English society, in a special sense, but even Western life, in a general sense, is a mystery to him. Any social system of

which filial piety is not the moral cement; any social system in which children leave their parents in order to establish families of their own; any social system in which it is considered not only natural but right to love wife and child more than the authors of one's being; any social system in which marriage can be decided independently of the will of parents, by the mutual inclination of the young people themselves; any social system in which the mother-in-law is not entitled to the obedient service of the daughter-in-law, appears to him of necessity a state of life scarcely better than that of the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, or at best a sort of moral chaos. And all this existence, as reflected in our popular fiction, presents him with provoking enigmas. Our ideas about love and our solicitude about marriage furnish some of these enigmas. To the young Japanese, marriage appears a simple, natural duty, for the due performance of which his parents will make all necessary arrangements at the proper time. That foreigners should have so much trouble about getting married is puzzling enough to him; but that distinguished authors should write novels and poems about such matters, and that those novels and poems should be vastly admired, puzzles him infinitely more,—seems to him "very, very strange."

My young questioner said "strange" for politeness' sake. His real thought would have been more accurately rendered by the word "indecent." But when I say that to the Japanese mind our typical novel appears indecent, highly indecent, the idea thereby suggested to my English readers will probably be misleading. The Japanese are not morbidly prudish. Our society novels do not strike them as indecent because the theme is love. The Japanese have a great deal of literature about love. No; our novels seem to them indecent for somewhat the same reason that the Scripture text, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife," appears to them one of the most immoral sentences ever written. In other words, their criticism requires a sociological explanation. To explain fully why our novels are, to their thinking, indecent, I should have to describe the whole structure, customs, and ethics of the Japanese family, totally different from anything in

Western life; and to do this even in a superficial way would require a volume. I cannot attempt a complete explanation; I can only cite some facts of a suggestive character.

To begin with, then, I may broadly state that a great deal of our literature, besides its fiction, is revolting to the Japanese moral sense, not because it treats of the passion of love per se, but because it treats of that passion in relation to virtuous maidens, and therefore in relation to the family circle. Now, as a general rule, where passionate love is the theme in Japanese literature of the best class, it is not that sort of love which leads to the establishment of family relations. It is quite another sort of love,—a sort of love about which the Oriental is not prudish at all,—the mayoi, or infatuation of passion, inspired by merely physical attraction; and its heroines are not the daughters of refined families, but mostly hetæræ, or professional dancing-girls. Neither does this Oriental variety of literature deal with its subject after the fashion of sensuous literature in the West,—French literature, for example: it considers it from a different artistic standpoint, and describes rather a different order of emotional sensations.

A national literature is of necessity reflective: and we may presume that what it fails to portray can have little or no outward manifestation in the national life. Now, the reserve of Japanese literature regarding that love which is the great theme of our greatest novelists and poets is exactly paralleled by the reserve of Japanese society in regard to the same topic. The typical woman often figures in Japanese romance as a heroine; as a perfect mother; as a pious daughter, willing to sacrifice all for duty; as a loyal wife, who follows her husband into battle, fights by his side, saves his life at the cost of her own; never as a sentimental maiden, dying, or making others die, for love. Neither do we find her on literary exhibition as a dangerous beauty, a charmer of men; and in the real life of Japan she has never appeared in any such rôle. Society, as a mingling of the sexes, as an existence of which the supremely refined charm is the charm of woman, has never existed in the East. Even in Japan,

society, in the special sense of the word, remains masculine. Nor is it easy to believe that the adoption of European fashions and customs within some restricted circles of the capital indicates the beginning of such a social change as might eventually remodel the national life according to Western ideas of society. For such a remodeling would involve the dissolution of the family, the disintegration of the whole social fabric, the destruction of the whole ethical system,—the breaking up, in short, of the national life.

Taking the word "woman" in its most refined meaning, and postulating a society in which woman seldom appears, a society in which she is never placed "on display," a society in which wooing is utterly out of the question, and the faintest compliment to wife or daughter is an outrageous impertinence, the reader can at once reach some startling conclusions as to the impression made by our popular fiction upon members of that society. But, although partly correct, his conclusions must fall short of the truth in certain directions, unless he also possess some knowledge of the restraints of that society and of the ethical notions behind the restraints. For example, a refined Japanese never speaks to you about his wife (I am stating the general rule), and very seldom indeed about his children, however proud of them he may be. Rarely will he be heard to speak about any of the members of his family, about his domestic life, about any of his private affairs. But if he should happen to talk about members of his family, the persons mentioned will almost certainly be his parents. Of them he will speak with a reverence approaching religious feeling, yet in a manner quite different from that which would be natural to an Occidental, and never so as to imply any mental comparison between the merits of his own parents and those of other men's parents. But he will not talk about his wife even to the friends who were invited as guests to his wedding. And I think I may safely say that the poorest and most ignorant Japanese, however dire his need, would never dream of trying to obtain aid or to invoke pity by the mention of his wife—perhaps not even of his wife and children. But he would not hesitate to ask help for the sake of

his parents or his grandparents. Love of wife and child, the strongest of all sentiments with the Occidental, is judged by the Oriental to be a selfish affection. He professes to be ruled by a higher sentiment,—duty: duty, first, to his Emperor; next, to his parents. And since love can he classed only as an ego-altruistic feeling, the Japanese thinker is not wrong in his refusal to consider it the loftiest of motives, however refined or spiritualized it may he.

In the existence of the poorer classes of Japan there are no secrets; but among the upper classes family life is much less open to observation than in any country of the West, not excepting Spain. It is a life of which foreigners see little, and know almost nothing, all the essays which have been written about Japanese women to the contrary notwithstanding.[1] Invited to the home of a Japanese friend, you may or may not see the family. It will depend upon circumstances.

If you see any of them, it will probably be for a moment only, and in that event you will most likely see the wife. At the entrance you give your card to the servant, who retires to present it, and presently returns to usher you into the zashiki, or guest-room, always the largest and finest apartment in a Japanese dwelling, where your kneeling-cushion is ready for you, with a smoking-box before it. The servant brings you tea and cakes. In a little time the host himself enters, and after the indispensable salutations conversation begins. Should you be pressed to stay for dinner, and accept the invitation, it is probable that the wife will do you the honor, as her husband's friend, to wait upon you during an instant. You may or may not be formally introduced to her; but a glance at her dress and coiffure should be sufficient to inform you at once who she is, and you must greet her with the most profound respect. She will probably impress you (especially if your visit be to a samurai home) as a delicately refined and very serious person, by no means a woman of the much-smiling and much-bowing kind. She will say extremely little, but will salute you, and will serve you for a moment with a natural grace of which the mere spectacle is a revelation, and glide away again, to remain invisible until the instant

of your departure, when she will reappear at the entrance to wish you good-by. During other successive visits you may have similar charming glimpses of her; perhaps, also, some rarer glimpses of the aged father and mother; and if a much favored visitor, the children may at last come to greet you, with wonderful politeness and sweetness. But the innermost intimate life of that family will never be revealed to you. All that you see to suggest it will be refined, courteous, exquisite, but of the relation of those souls to each other you will know nothing. Behind the beautiful screens which mask the further interior, all is silent, gentle mystery. There is no reason, to the Japanese mind, why it should be otherwise. Such family life is sacred; the home is a sanctuary, of which it were impious to draw aside the veil. Nor can I think this idea of the sacredness of home and of the family relation in any wise inferior to our highest conception of the home and the family in the West.

Should there be grown-up daughters in the family, however, the visitor is less likely to see the wife. More timid, but equally silent and reserved, the young girls will make the guest welcome. In obedience to orders, they may even gratify him by a performance upon some musical instrument, by exhibiting some of their own needlework or painting, or by showing to him some precious or curious objects among the family heirlooms. But all submissive sweetness and courtesy are inseparable from the high-bred reserve belonging to the finest native culture. And the guest must not allow himself to be less reserved. Unless possessing the privilege of great age, which would entitle him to paternal freedom of speech, he must never venture upon personal compliment, or indulge in anything resembling light flattery. What would be deemed gallantry in the West may be gross rudeness in the East. On no account can the visitor compliment a young girl about her looks, her grace, her toilette, much less dare address such a compliment to the wife. But, the reader may object, there are certainly occasions upon which a compliment of some character cannot be avoided. This is true, and on such an occasion politeness requires, as a preliminary, the humblest apology for making the compliment, which will then be

accepted with a phrase more graceful than our "Pray do not mention it;"—that is, the rudeness of making a compliment at all.

But here we touch the vast subject of Japanese etiquette, about which I must confess myself still profoundly ignorant. I have ventured thus much only in order to suggest how lacking: in refinement much of our Western society fiction must appear to the Oriental mind.

To speak of one's affection for wife or children, to bring into conversation anything closely related to domestic life, is totally incompatible with Japanese ideas of good breeding. Our open acknowledgment, or rather exhibition, of the domestic relation consequently appears to cultivated Japanese, if not absolutely barbarous, at least uxorious. And this sentiment may be found to explain not a little in Japanese life which has given foreigners a totally incorrect idea about the position of Japanese women. It is not the custom in Japan for the husband even to walk side by side with his wife in the street, much less to give her his arm, or to assist her in ascending or descending a flight of stairs. But this is not any proof upon his part of want of affection. It is only the result of a social sentiment totally different from our own; it is simply obedience to an etiquette founded upon the idea that public displays of the marital relation are improper. Why improper? Because they seem to Oriental judgment to indicate a confession of personal, and therefore selfish sentiment For the Oriental the law of life is duty. Affection must, in every time and place, be subordinated to duty. Any public exhibition of personal affection of a certain class is equivalent to a public confession of moral weakness. Does this mean that to love one's wife is amoral weakness? No; it is the duty of a man to love his wife; but it is moral weakness to love her more than his parents, or to show her, in public, more attention than he shows to his parents. Nay, it would be a proof of moral weakness to show her even the same degree of attention. During the lifetime of the parents her position in the household is simply that of an adopted daughter, and the most affectionate of husbands must not even for a moment allow himself to forget the

etiquette of the family.

Here I must touch upon one feature of Western literature never to be reconciled with Japanese ideas and customs. Let the reader reflect for a moment how large a place the subject of kisses and caresses and embraces occupies in our poetry and in our prose fiction; and then let him consider the fact that in Japanese literature these have no existence whatever. For kisses and embraces are simply unknown in Japan as tokens of affection, if we except the solitary fact that Japanese mothers, like mothers all over the world, lip and hug their little ones betimes. After babyhood there is no more hugging or kissing. Such actions, except in the case of infants, are held to be highly immodest. Never do girls kiss one another; never do parents kiss or embrace their children who have become able to walk. And this rule holds good of all classes of society, from the highest nobility to the humblest peasantry. Neither have we the least indication throughout Japanese literature of any time in the history of the race when affection was more demonstrative than it is to-day. Perhaps the Western reader will find it hard even to imagine a literature in the whole course of which no mention is made of kissing, of embracing, even of pressing a loved hand; for hand-clasping is an action as totally foreign to Japanese impulse as kissing. Yet on these topics even the naïve songs of the country folk, even the old ballads of the people about unhappy lovers, are quite as silent as the exquisite verses of the court poets. Suppose we take for an example the ancient popular ballad of Shuntokumaru, which has given origin to various proverbs and household words familiar throughout western Japan. Here we have the story of two betrothed lovers, long separated by a cruel misfortune, wandering in search of each other all over the Empire, and at last suddenly meeting before Kiomidzu Temple by the favor of the gods. Would not any Aryan poet describe such a meeting as a rushing of the two into each other's arms, with kisses and cries of love? But how does the old Japanese ballad describe it? In brief, the twain only sit down together and stroke each other a little. Now, even this reserved form of caress is an extremely rare indulgence of emotion. You may see

again and again fathers and sons, husbands and wives, mothers and daughters, meeting after years of absence, yet you will probably never see the least approach to a caress between them. They will kneel down and salute each other, and smile, and perhaps cry a little for joy; but they will neither rush into each other's arms, nor utter extraordinary phrases of affection. Indeed, such terms of affection as "my dear," "my darling," "my sweet," "my love," "my life," do not exist in Japanese, nor any terms at all equivalent to our emotional idioms. Japanese affection is not uttered in words; it scarcely appears even in the tone of voice: it is chiefly shown in acts of exquisite courtesy and kindness. I might add that the opposite emotion is under equally perfect control; but to illustrate this remarkable fact would require a separate essay.

[1] I do not, however, refer to those extraordinary persons who make their short residence in teahouses and establishments of a much worse kind, and then go home to write books about the women of Japan.

III

He who would study impartially the life and thought of the Orient must also study those of the Occident from the Oriental point of view. And the results of such a comparative study he will find to be in no small degree retroactive. According to his character and his faculty of perception, he will be more or less affected by those Oriental influences to which he submits himself. The conditions of Western life will gradually begin to assume for him new, undreamed-of meanings, and to lose not a few of their old familiar aspects. Much that he once deemed right and true he may begin to find abnormal and false. He may begin to doubt whether the moral ideals of the West are really the highest. He may feel more than inclined to dispute the estimate placed by Western custom upon Western civilization. Whether his doubts be final is another matter: they will be at least rational enough and powerful enough to modify permanently some of his prior convictions,—among others his conviction

of the moral value of the Western worship of Woman as the Unattainable, the Incomprehensible, the Divine, the ideal of "la femme que tu ne connaîtras pas,"[1]—the ideal of the Eternal Feminine. For in this ancient East the Eternal Feminine does not exist at all. And after having become quite accustomed to live without it, one may naturally conclude that it is not absolutely essential to intellectual health, and may even dare to question the necessity for its perpetual existence upon the other side of the world.

[1] A phrase from Baudelaire.

IV

To say that the Eternal Feminine does not exist in the Far East is to state but a part of the truth. That it could be introduced thereinto, in the remotest future, is not possible to imagine. Few, if any, of our ideas regarding it can even be rendered into the language of the country: a language in which nouns have no gender, adjectives no degrees of comparison, and verbs no persons; a language in which, says Professor Chamberlain, the absence of personification is "a characteristic so deep-seated and so all-pervading as to interfere even with the use of neuter nouns in combination with transitive verbs."[1] "In fact," he adds, "most metaphors and allegories are incapable of so much as explanation to Far-Eastern minds;" and he makes a striking citation from Wordsworth in illustration of his statement. Yet even poets much more lucid than Wordsworth are to the Japanese equally obscure. I remember the difficulty I once had in explaining to an advanced class this simple line from a well-known ballad of Tennyson,—"She is more beautiful than day." My students could understand the use of the adjective "beautiful" to qualify "day," and the use of the same adjective, separately, to qualify the word "maid." But that there could exist in any mortal mind the least idea of analogy between the beauty of day and the beauty of a young woman was quite beyond their understanding. In order to convey to them the poet's thought, it was necessary to analyze it

psychologically,—to prove a possible nervous analogy between two modes of pleasurable feeling excited by two different impressions.

Thus, the very nature of the language tells us how ancient and how deeply rooted in racial character are those tendencies by which we must endeavor to account—if there be any need of accounting at all—for the absence in this Far East of a dominant ideal corresponding to our own. They are causes incomparably older than the existing social structure, older than the idea of the family, older than ancestor worship, enormously older than that Confucian code which is the reflection rather than the explanation of many singular facts in Oriental life. But since beliefs and practices react upon character, and character again must react upon practices and beliefs, it has not been altogether irrational to seek in Confucianism for causes as well as for explanations. Far more irrational have been the charges of hasty critics against Shintō and against Buddhism as religious influences opposed to the natural rights of woman. The ancient faith of Shintō has been at least as gentle to woman as the ancient faith of the Hebrews. Its female divinities are not less numerous than its masculine divinities, nor are they presented to the imagination of worshipers in a form much less attractive than the dreams of Greek mythology. Of some, like So-tohori-no-Iratsumé, it is said that the light of their beautiful bodies passes through their garments; and the source of all life and light, the eternal Sun, is a goddess, fair Amaterasu-oho-mi-kami. Virgins serve the ancient gods, and figure in all the pageants of the faith; and in a thousand shrines throughout the land the memory of woman as wife and mother is worshiped equally with the memory of man as hero and father. Neither can the later and alien faith of Buddhism be justly accused of relegating woman to a lower place in the spiritual world than monkish Christianity accorded her in the West. The Buddha, like the Christ, was horn of a virgin; the most lovable divinities of Buddhism, Jizo excepted, are feminine, both in Japanese art and in Japanese popular fancy; and in the Buddhist as in the Roman Catholic hagiography, the lives of holy women hold honored place. It is true that

Buddhism, like early Christianity, used its utmost eloquence in preaching against the temptation of female loveliness; and it is true that in the teaching of its founder, as in the teaching of Paul, social and spiritual supremacy is accorded to the man. Yet, in our search for texts on this topic, we must not overlook the host of instances of favor shown by the Buddha to women of all classes, nor that remarkable legend of a later text, in which a dogma denying to woman the highest spiritual opportunities is sublimely rebuked.

In the eleventh chapter of the Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law, it is written that mention was made before the Lord Buddha of a young girl who had in one instant arrived at supreme knowledge; who had in one moment acquired the merits of a thousand meditations, and the proofs of the essence of all laws. And the girl came and stood in the presence of the Lord.

But the Bodhissattva Pragnakuta doubted, saying, "I have seen the Lord Sakyamuni in the time when he was striving for supreme enlightenment, and I know that he performed good works innumerable through countless æons. In all the world there is not one spot so large as a grain of mustard-seed where he has not surrendered his body for the sake of living creatures. Only after all this did he arrive at enlightenment. Who then may believe this girl could in one moment have arrived at supreme knowledge?"

And the venerable priest Sariputra likewise doubted, saying, "It may indeed happen, O Sister, that a woman fulfill the six perfect virtues; but as yet there is no example of her having attained to Buddhaship, because a woman cannot attain to the rank of a Bodhissattva."

But the maiden called upon the Lord Buddha to be her witness. And instantly in the sight of the assembly her sex disappeared; and she manifested herself as a Bodhissattva, filling all directions of space with the radiance of the thirty-two signs. And the world shook in six different ways. And the priest Sariputra was silent.[2]

[1] See Things Japanese, second edition, pp. 255, 256; article "Language."

[2] See the whole wonderful passage in Kern's translation of this magnificent Sutra, Sacred Books of the East, vol. xxi. chap. xi.

V

But to feel the real nature of what is surely one of the greatest obstacles to intellectual sympathy between the West and the Far East, we must fully appreciate the immense effect upon Occidental life of this ideal which has no existence in the Orient. We must remember what that ideal has been to Western civilization,—to all its pleasures and refinements and luxuries; to its sculpture, painting, decoration, architecture, literature, drama, music; to the development of countless industries. We must think of its effect upon manners, customs, and the language of taste, upon conduct and ethics, upon endeavor, upon philosophy and religion, upon almost every phase of public and private life,—in short, upon national character. Nor should we forget that the many influences interfused in the shaping of it—Teutonic, Celtic, Scandinavian, classic, or mediæval, the Greek apotheosis of human beauty, the Christian worship of the mother of God, the exaltations of chivalry, the spirit of the Renascence steeping and coloring all the preëxisting idealism in a new sensuousness—must have had their nourishment, if not their birth, in a race feeling ancient as Aryan speech, and as alien the most eastern East.

Of all these various influences combined to form our ideal, the classic element remains perceptibly dominant. It is true that the Hellenic conception of human beauty, so surviving, has been wondrously informed with a conception of soul beauty never of the antique world nor of the Renascence. Also it is true that the new philosophy of evolution, forcing recognition of the incalculable and awful cost of the Present to the Past, creating a totally new comprehension of duty to the Future, enormously enhancing our conception of character values, has aided more than all preceding influences together toward the highest possible spiritualization of the ideal

of woman. Yet, however further spiritualized it may become through future intellectual expansion, this ideal must in its very nature remain fundamentally artistic and sensuous.

We do not see Nature as the Oriental sees it, and as his art proves that he sees it. We see it less realistically, we know it less intimately, because, save through the lenses of the specialist, we contemplate it anthropomorphically. In one direction, indeed, our æsthetic sense has been cultivated to a degree incomparably finer than that of the Oriental; but that direction has been passional. We have learned something of the beauty of Nature through our ancient worship of the beauty of woman. Even from the beginning it is probable that the perception of human beauty has been the main source of all our æsthetic sensibility. Possibly we owe to it likewise our idea of proportion;[1] our exaggerated appreciation of regularity; our fondness for parallels, curves, and all geometrical symmetries. And in the long process of our æsthetic evolution, the ideal of woman has at last become for us an æsthetic abstraction. Through the illusion of that abstraction only do we perceive the charms of our world, even as forms might be perceived through some tropic atmosphere whose vapors are iridescent.

Nor is this all. Whatsoever has once been likened to woman by art or thought has been strangely informed and transformed by that momentary symbolism: wherefore, through all the centuries Western fancy has been making Nature more and more feminine. Whatsoever delights us imagination has feminized,—the infinite tenderness of the sky,—the mobility of waters,—the rose of dawn,—the vast caress of Day,—Night, and the lights of heaven,—even the undulations of the eternal hills. And flowers, and the flush of fruit, and all things fragrant, fair, and gracious; the genial seasons with their voices; the laughter of streams, and whisper of leaves, and ripplings of song within the shadows;—all sights, or sounds, or sensations that can touch our love of loveliness, of delicacy, of sweetness, of gentleness, make for us vague dreams of woman. Where our fancy lends masculinity to Nature, it is only in

grimness and in force,—as if to enhance by rugged and mighty contrasts the witchcraft of the Eternal Feminine. Nay, even the terrible itself, if fraught with terrible beauty,—even Destruction, if only shaped with the grace of destroyers,—becomes for us feminine. And not beauty alone, of sight or sound, but well-nigh all that is mystic, sublime, or holy, now makes appeal to us through some marvelously woven intricate plexus of passional sensibility. Even the subtlest forces of our universe speak to us of woman; new sciences have taught us new names for the thrill her presence wakens in the blood, for that ghostly shock which is first love, for the eternal riddle of her fascination. Thus, out of simple human passion, through influences and transformations innumerable, we have evolved a cosmic emotion, a feminine pantheism.

[1] On the origin of the idea of bilateral symmetry, see Herbert Spencer's essay, "The Sources of Architectural Types."

VI

And now may not one venture to ask whether all the consequences of this passional influence in the æsthetic evolution of our Occident have been in the main beneficial? Underlying all those visible results of which we boast as art triumphs, may there not be lurking invisible results, some future revelation of which will cause more than a little shock to our self-esteem? Is it not quite possible that our æsthetic faculties have been developed even abnormally in one direction by the power of a single emotional idea which has left us nearly, if not totally blind to many wonderful aspects of Nature? Or rather, must not this be the inevitable effect of the extreme predominance of one particular emotion in the evolution of our æsthetic sensibility? And finally, one may surely be permitted to ask if the predominating influence itself has been the highest possible, and whether there is not a higher, known perhaps to the Oriental soul.

I may only suggest these questions, without hoping to answer them satisfactorily.

But the longer I dwell in the East, the more I feel growing upon me the belief that there are exquisite artistic faculties and perceptions, developed in the Oriental, of which we can know scarcely more than we know of those unimaginable colors, invisible to the human eye, yet proven to exist by the spectroscope. I think that such a possibility is indicated by certain phases of Japanese art.

Here it becomes as difficult as dangerous to particularize. I dare hazard only some general observations. I think this marvelous art asserts that, out of the infinitely varied aspects of Nature, those which for us hold no suggestion whatever of sex character, those which cannot be looked at anthropomorphically, those which are neither masculine nor feminine, but neuter or nameless, are those most profoundly loved and comprehended by the Japanese. Nay, he sees in Nature much that for thousands of years has remained invisible to us; and we are now learning from him aspects of life and beauties of form to which we were utterly blind before. We have finally made the startling discovery that his art—notwithstanding all the dogmatic assertions of Western prejudice to the contrary, and notwithstanding the strangely weird impression of unreality which at first it produced—is never a mere creation of fantasy, but a veritable reflection of what has been and of what is: wherefore we have recognized that it is nothing less than a higher education in art simply to look at his studies of bird life, insect life, plant life, tree life. Compare, for example, our very finest drawings of insects with Japanese drawings of similar subjects. Compare Giacomelli's illustrations to Michelet's "L'Insecte" with the commonest Japanese figures of the same creatures decorating the stamped leather of a cheap tobacco pouch or the metal work of a cheap pipe. The whole minute exquisiteness of the European engraving has accomplished only an indifferent realism, while the Japanese artist, with a few dashes of his brush, has seized and reproduced, with an incomprehensible power of interpretation, not only every peculiarity of the creature's shape, but every special characteristic of its motion. Each figure flung from the Oriental painter's brush is a lesson, a revelation, to perceptions unbeclouded by

prejudice, an opening of the eyes of those who can see, though it be only a spider in a wind-shaken web, a dragon-fly riding a sunbeam, a pair of crabs running through sedge, the trembling of a fish's fins in a clear current, the lilt of a flying wasp, the pitch of a flying duck, a mantis in fighting position, or a semi toddling up a cedar branch to sing. All this art is alive, intensely alive, and our corresponding art looks absolutely dead beside it.

Take, again, the subject of flowers. An English or German flower painting, the result of months of trained labor, and valued at several hundred pounds, would certainly not compare as a nature study, in the higher sense, with a Japanese flower painting executed in twenty brush strokes, and worth perhaps five sen. The former would represent at best but an ineffectual and painful effort to imitate a massing of colors. The latter would prove a perfect memory of certain flower shapes instantaneously flung upon paper, without any model to aid, and showing, not the recollection of any individual blossom, but the perfect realization of a general law of form expression, perfectly mastered, with all its moods, tenses, and inflections. The French alone, among Western art critics, seem fully to understand these features of Japanese art; and among all Western artists it is the Parisian alone who approaches the Oriental in his methods. Without lifting his brush from the paper, the French artist may sometimes, with a single wavy line, create the almost speaking figure of a particular type of man or woman. But this high development of faculty is confined chiefly to humorous sketching; it is still either masculine or feminine. To understand what I mean by the ability of the Japanese artist, my reader must imagine just such a power of almost instantaneous creation as that which characterizes certain French work, applied to almost every subject except individuality, to nearly all recognized general types, to all aspects of Japanese nature, to all forms of native landscape, to clouds and flowing water and mists, to all the life of woods and fields, to all the moods of seasons and the tones of horizons and the colors of the morning and the evening. Certainly, the deeper spirit of this magical art seldom reveals itself at first sight to

unaccustomed eyes, since it appeals to so little in Western æsthetic experience. But by gentle degrees it will so enter into an appreciative and unprejudiced mind as to modify profoundly therein almost every preëxisting sentiment in relation to the beautiful. All of its meaning will indeed require many years to master, but something of its reshaping power will be felt in a much shorter time when the sight of an American illustrated magazine or of any illustrated European periodical has become almost unbearable.

Psychological differences of far deeper import are suggested by other facts, capable of exposition in words, but not capable of interpretation through Western standards of æsthetics or Western feeling of any sort. For instance, I have been watching two old men planting young trees in the garden of a neighboring temple. They sometimes spend nearly an hour in planting a single sapling. Having fixed it in the ground, they retire to a distance to study the position of all its lines, and consult together about it. As a consequence, the sapling is taken up and replanted in a slightly different position. This is done no less than eight times before the little tree can be perfectly adjusted into the plan of the garden. Those two old men are composing a mysterious thought with their little trees, changing them, transferring them, removing or replacing them, even as a poet changes and shifts his words, to give to his verse the most delicate or the most forcible expression possible.

In every large Japanese cottage there are several alcoves, or tokonoma, one in each of the principal rooms. In these alcoves the art treasures of the family are exhibited.[1] Within each toko a kakemono is hung; and upon its slightly elevated floor (usually of polished wood) are placed flower vases and one or two artistic objects. Flowers are arranged in the toko vases according to ancient rules which Mr. Conder's beautiful hook will tell you a great deal about; and the kakemono and the art objects there displayed are changed at regular intervals, according to occasion and season. Now, in a certain alcove, I have at various times seen many different things of beauty: a Chinese statuette of ivory, an incense vase of

bronze,—representing a cloud-riding pair of dragons,—the wood carving of a Buddhist pilgrim resting by the wayside and mopping his bald pate, masterpieces of lacquer ware and lovely Kyōto porcelains, and a large stone placed on a pedestal of heavy, costly wood, expressly made for it. I do not know whether you could see any beauty in that stone; it is neither hewn nor polished, nor does it possess the least imaginable intrinsic value. It is simply a gray water-worn stone from the bed of a stream. Yet it cost more than one of those Kyōto vases which sometimes replace it, and which you would be glad to pay a very high price for.

In the garden of the little house I now occupy in Kumamoto, there are about fifteen rocks, or large stones, of as many shapes and sizes. They also have no real intrinsic value, not even as possible building material. And yet the proprietor of the garden paid for them something more than seven hundred and fifty Japanese dollars, or considerably more than the pretty house itself could possibly have cost. And it would be quite wrong to suppose the cost of the stones due to the expense of their transportation from the bed of the Shira-kawa. No; they are worth seven hundred and fifty dollars only because they are considered beautiful to a certain degree, and because there is a large local demand for beautiful stones. They are not even of the best class, or they would have cost a great deal more. Now, until you can perceive that a big rough stone may have more æsthetic suggestiveness than a costly steel engraving, that it is a thing of beauty and a joy forever, you cannot begin to understand how a Japanese sees Nature. "But what," you may ask, "can be beautiful in a common stone?" Many things; but I will mention only one,—irregularity.

In my little Japanese house, the fusuma, or sliding screens of opaque paper between room and room, have designs at which I am never tired of looking. The designs vary in different parts of the dwelling; I will speak only of the fusuma dividing my study from a smaller apartment. The ground color is a delicate cream-yellow; and the golden pattern is very simple,—the mystic-jewel symbols of Buddhism scattered over the surface by pairs. But no two sets of pairs are placed at exactly the same

distance from each other; and the symbols themselves are curiously diversified, never appearing twice in exactly the same position or relation. Sometimes one jewel is transparent, and its fellow opaque; sometimes both are opaque or both diaphanous; sometimes the transparent one is the larger of the two; sometimes the opaque is the larger; sometimes both are precisely the same size; sometimes they overlap, and sometimes do not touch; sometimes the opaque is on the left, sometimes on the right; sometimes the transparent jewel is above, sometimes below. Vainly does the eye roam over the whole surface in search of a repetition, or of anything resembling regularity, either in distribution, juxtaposition, grouping, dimensions, or contrasts. And throughout the whole dwelling nothing resembling regularity in the various decorative designs can be found. The ingenuity by which it is avoided is amazing,—rises to the dignify of genius. Now, all this is a common characteristic of Japanese decorative art; and after having lived a few years under its influences, the sight of a regular pattern upon a wall, a carpet, a curtain, a ceiling, upon any decorated surface, pains like a horrible vulgarism. Surely, it is because we have so long been accustomed to look at Nature anthropomorphically that we can still endure mechanical ugliness in our own decorative art, and that we remain insensible to charms of Nature which are clearly perceived even by the eyes of the Japanese child, wondering over its mother's shoulder at the green and blue wonder of the world.

"He" saith a Buddhist text, "who discerns that nothingness is law,—such a one hath wisdom."

[1] The tokonoma, or toko, is said to have been first introduced into Japanese architecture about four hundred and fifty years ago, by the Buddhist priest Eisai, who had studied in China. Perhaps the alcove was originally devised and used for the exhibition of sacred objects; but to-day, among the cultivated, it would be deemed in very had taste to display either images of the gods or sacred paintings in the toko of a guest-room. The toko is still, however, a sacred place in a certain sense.

No one should ever step upon it, or squat within it, or even place in it anything not pure, or anything offensive to taste. There is an elaborate code of etiquette in relation to it. The most honored among guests is always placed nearest to it; and guests take their places, according to rank, nearer to or further from it.

V

BITS OF LIFE AND DEATH

I

July 25. Three extraordinary visits have been made to my house this week.

The first was that of the professional well-cleaners. For once every year all wells must be emptied and cleansed, lest the God of Wells, Suijin-Sama, be wroth. On this occasion I learned some things relating to Japanese wells and the tutelar deity of them, who has two names, being also called Mizuha-nome-no-mikoto.

Suijin-Sama protects all wells, keeping their water sweet and cool, provided that house-owners observe his laws of cleanliness, which are rigid. To those who break them sickness comes, and death. Rarely the god manifests himself, taking the form of a serpent. I have never seen any temple dedicated to him. But once each month a Shinto priest visits the homes of pious families having wells, and he repeats certain ancient prayers to the Well-God, and plants nobori, little paper flags, which are symbols, at the edge of the well. After the well has been cleaned, also, this is done. Then the first bucket of the new water must be drawn up by a man; for if a woman first draw water, the well will always thereafter remain muddy.

The god has little servants to help him in his work. These are the small fishes the Japanese call funa.[1] One or two funa are kept in every well, to clear the water of larvae. When a well is cleaned, great care is taken of the little fish. It was on the occasion of the coming of the well-cleaners that I first learned of the existence of a pair of funa in my own well. They were placed in a tub of cool water while the well was refilling, and thereafter were replunged into their solitude.

The water of my well is clear and ice-cold. But now I can never drink of it without a thought of those two small white lives circling always in darkness, and startled through untold years by the descent of plashing buckets.

The second curious visit was that of the district firemen, in full costume, with their hand-engines. According to ancient custom, they make a round of all their district once a year during the dry spell, and throw water over the hot roofs, and receive some small perquisite from each wealthy householder. There is a belief that when it has not rained for a long time roofs may be ignited by the mere heat of the sun. The firemen played with their hose upon my roofs, trees, and garden, producing considerable refreshment; and in return I bestowed on them wherewith to buy saké.

The third visit was that of a deputation of children asking for some help to celebrate fittingly the festival of Jizō, who has a shrine on the other side of the street, exactly opposite my house. I was very glad to contribute to their fund, for I love the gentle god, and I knew the festival would be delightful. Early next morning, I saw that the shrine had already been decked with flowers and votive lanterns. A new bib had been put about Jizō's neck, and a Buddhist repast set before him. Later on, carpenters constructed a dancing-platform in the temple court for the children to dance upon; and before sundown the toy-sellers had erected and stocked a small street of booths inside the precincts. After dark I went out into a great glory of lantern fires to see the children dance; and I found, perched before my gate, an enormous dragon-fly more than three feet long. It was a token of the children's gratitude for the little help I had given them,—a kazari, a decoration. I was startled for the moment by the realism of the thing; but upon close examination I discovered that the body was a pine branch wrapped with colored paper, the four wings were four fire-shovels, and the gleaming head was a little teapot. The whole was lighted by a candle so placed as to make extraordinary shadows, which formed part of the design. It was a wonderful instance of art sense working without a speck of artistic material, yet it was all the labor of a poor little child only eight years old!

[1] A sort of small silver carp.

II

July 30. The next house to mine, on the south side,—a low, dingy structure,—is that of a dyer. You can always tell where a Japanese dyer is by the long pieces of silk or cotton stretched between bamboo poles before his door to dry in the sun,—broad bands of rich azure, of purple, of rose, pale blue, pearl gray. Yesterday my neighbor coaxed me to pay the family a visit; and after having been led through the front part of their little dwelling, I was surprised to find myself looking from a rear veranda at a garden worthy of some old Kyōto palace. There was a dainty landscape in miniature, and a pond of clear water peopled by goldfish having wonderfully compound tails.

When I had enjoyed this spectacle awhile, the dyer led me to a small room fitted up as a Buddhist chapel. Though everything had had to be made on a reduced scale, I did not remember to have seen a more artistic display in any temple. He told me it had cost him about fifteen hundred yen. I did not understand how even that sum could have sufficed.

There were three elaborately carven altars,-a triple blaze of gold lacquer-work; a number of charming Buddhist images; many exquisite vessels; an ebony reading-desk; a mokugyō[1]; two fine bells,—in short, all the paraphernalia of a temple in miniature. My host had studied at a Buddhist temple in his youth, and knew the sutras, of which he had all that are used by the Jōdō sect. He told me that he could celebrate any of the ordinary services. Daily, at a fixed hour, the whole family assembled in the chapel for prayers; and he generally read the Kyō for them. But on extraordinary occasions a Buddhist priest from the neighboring temple would come to officiate.

He told me a queer story about robbers. Dyers are peculiarly liable to be visited by robbers; partly by reason of the value of the silks intrusted to them, and also because

the business is known to be lucrative. One evening the family were robbed. The master was out of the city; his old mother, his wife, and a female servant were the only persons in the house at the time. Three men, having their faces masked and carrying long swords, entered the door. One asked the servant whether any of the apprentices were still in the building; and she, hoping to frighten the invaders away, answered that the young men were all still at work. But the robbers were not disturbed by this assurance. One posted himself at the entrance, the other two strode into the sleeping-apartment. The women started up in alarm, and the wife asked, "Why do you wish to kill us?" He who seemed to be the leader answered, "We do not wish to kill you; we want money only. But if we do not get it, then it will be this"—striking his sword into the matting. The old mother said, "Be so kind as not to frighten my daughter-in-law, and I will give you whatever money there is in the house. But you ought to know there cannot be much, as my son has gone to Kyōto." She handed them the money-drawer and her own purse. There were, just twenty-seven yen and eighty-four sen. The head robber counted it, and said, quite gently, "We do not want to frighten you. We know you are a very devout believer in Buddhism, and we think you would not tell a lie. Is this all?" "Yes, it is all," she answered. "I am, as you say, a believer in the teaching of the Buddha, and if you come to rob me now, I believe it is only because I myself, in some former life, once robbed you. This is my punishment for that fault, and so, instead of wishing to deceive you, I feel grateful at this opportunity to atone for the wrong which I did to you in my previous state of existence." The robber laughed, and said, "You are a good old woman, and we believe you. If you were poor, we would not rob you at all. Now we only want a couple of kimono and this,"—laying his hand on a very fine silk overdress. The old woman replied, "All my son's kimono I can give you, but I beg you will not take that, for it does not belong to my son, and was confided to us only for dyeing. What is ours I can give, but I cannot give what belongs to another." "That is quite right," approved the robber, "and we shall not take it."

After receiving a few robes, the robbers said good-night, very politely, but ordered the women not to look after them. The old servant was still near the door. As the chief robber passed her, he said, "You told us a lie,—so take that!"—and struck her senseless. None of the robbers were ever caught.

[1] A hollow wooden block shaped like a dolphin's head. It is tapped in accompaniment to the chanting of the Buddhist sutras.

III

August 29. When a body has been burned, according to the funeral rites of certain Buddhist sects, search is made among the ashes for a little bone called the Hotoke-San, or "Lord Buddha," popularly supposed to be a little bone of the throat. What bone it really is I do not know, never having had a chance to examine such a relic.

According to the shape of this little bone when found after the burning, the future condition of the dead may be predicted. Should the next state to which the soul is destined be one of happiness, the bone will have the form of a small image of Buddha. But if the next birth is to be unhappy, then the bone will have either an ugly shape, or no shape at all.

A little boy, the son of a neighboring tobacconist, died the night before last, and to-day the corpse was burned. The little hone left over from the burning was discovered to have the form of three Buddhas,—San-Tai,—which may have afforded some spiritual consolation to the bereaved parents.[1]

[1] At the great temple of Tennōji, at Ōsaka, all such bones are dropped into a vault; and according to the sound each makes in falling, further evidence about the Gōsho is said to be obtained. After a hundred years from the time of beginning this curious collection, all these bones are to be ground into a kind of paste, out of which a colossal statue of Buddha is to be made.

IV

September 13. A letter from Matsue, Izumo, tells me that the old man who used to supply me with pipestems is dead. (A Japanese pipe, you must know, consists of three pieces, usually,—a metal bowl large enough to hold a pea, a metal mouthpiece, and a bamboo stem which is renewed at regular intervals.) He used to stain his pipestems very prettily: some looked like porcupine quills, and some like cylinders of snakeskin. He lived in a queer narrow little street at the verge of the city. I know the street because in it there is a famous statue of Jizō called Shiroko-ō,—"White-Child-Jizō,"—which I once went to see. They whiten its face, like the face of a dancing-girl, for some reason which I have never been able to find out.

The old man had a daughter, O-Masu, about whom a story is told. O-Masu is still alive. She has been a happy wife for many years; but she is dumb. Long ago, an angry mob sacked and destroyed the dwelling and the storehouses of a rice speculator in the city. His money, including a quantity of gold coin (koban), was scattered through the street. The rioters—rude, honest peasants—did not want it: they wished to destroy, not to steal. But O-Masu's father, the same evening, picked up a koban from the mud, and took it home. Later on a neighbor denounced him, and secured his arrest. The judge before whom he was summoned tried to obtain certain evidence by cross-questioning O-Masu, then a shy girl of fifteen. She felt that if she continued to answer she would be made, in spite of herself, to give testimony unfavorable to her father; that she was in the presence of a trained inquisitor, capable, without effort, of forcing her to acknowledge everything she knew. She ceased to speak, and a stream of blood gushed from her mouth. She had silenced herself forever by simply biting off her tongue. Her father was acquitted. A merchant who admired the act demanded her in marriage, and supported her father in his old age.

V

October 10. There is said to be one day—only one—in the life of a child during which it can remember and speak of its former birth.

On the very day that it becomes exactly two years old, the child is taken by its mother into the most quiet part of the house, and is placed in a mi, or rice-winnowing basket. The child sits down in the mi. Then the mother says, calling the child by name, "Omae no zensé wa, nande attakane?—iute, gōran."[1] Then the child always answers in one word. For some mysterious reason, no more lengthy reply is ever given. Often the answer is so enigmatic that some priest or fortune-teller must be asked to interpret it. For instance, yesterday, the little son of a copper-smith living near us answered only "Umé" to the magical question. Now umé might mean a plum-flower, a plum, or a girl's name,—"Flower-of-the-Plum." Could it mean that the boy remembered having been a girl? Or that he had been a plum-tree? "Souls of men do not enter plum-trees," said a neighbor. A fortune-teller this morning declared, on being questioned about the riddle, that the boy had probably been a scholar, poet, or statesman, because the plum-tree is the symbol of Tenjin, patron of scholars, statesmen, and men of letters.

[1] "Thy previous life as for,—what was it? Honorably look [or, please look] and tell."

VI

November 17. An astonishing book might be written about those things in Japanese life which no foreigner can understand. Such a book should include the study of certain rare but terrible results of anger.

As a national rule, the Japanese seldom allow themselves to show anger. Even among the common classes, any serious menace is apt to take the form of a smiling assurance that your favor shall be remembered, and that its recipient is grateful. (Do not suppose, however, that this is ironical, in our sense of the word: it is only euphemistic,—ugly things not being called by their real names.) But this smiling

assurance may possibly mean death. When vengeance comes, it comes unexpectedly. Neither distance nor time, within the empire, can offer any obstacles to the avenger who can walk fifty miles a day, whose whole baggage can be tied up in a very small towel, and whose patience is almost infinite. He may choose a knife, but is much more likely to use a sword,—a Japanese sword. This, in Japanese hands, is the deadliest of weapons; and the killing of ten or twelve persons by one angry man may occupy less than a minute. It does not often happen that the murderer thinks of trying to escape. Ancient custom requires that, having taken another life, he should take his own; wherefore to fall into the hands of the police would be to disgrace his name. He has made his preparations beforehand, written his letters, arranged for his funeral, perhaps—as in one appalling instance last year—even chiseled his own tombstone. Having fully accomplished his revenge, he kills himself.

There has just occurred, not far from the city, at the village called Sugikamimura, one of those tragedies which are difficult to understand. The chief actors were, Narumatsu Ichirō, a young shopkeeper; his wife, O-Noto, twenty years of age, to whom he had been married only a year; and O-Noto's maternal uncle, one Sugimoto Ivasaku, a man of violent temper, who had once been in prison. The tragedy was in four acts.

Act I. Scene: Interior of public bathhouse. Sugimoto Nasaku in the bath. Enter Narumatsu Ichirō, who strips, gets into the smoking water without noticing his relative, and cries out,—

"Aa! as if one should be in Jigoku, so hot this water is!"

(The word "Jigoku" signifies the Buddhist hell; but, in common parlance, it also signifies a prison,—this time an unfortunate coincidence.)

Kasaku (terribly angry). "A raw baby, you, to seek a hard quarrel! What do you not like?"

Ichirō (surprised and alarmed, but rallying against the tone of Kasaku). "Nay! What? That I said need not by you be explained. Though I said the water was hot, your help to make it hotter was not asked."

Kasaku (now dangerous). "Though for my own fault, not once, but twice in the hell of prison I had been, what should there be wonderful in it? Either an idiot child or a low scoundrel you must be!"

(Each eyes the other for a spring, but each hesitates, although things no Japanese should suffer himself to say have been said. They are too evenly matched, the old and the young.)

Kasaku (growing cooler as Ichirō becomes angrier). "A child, a raw child, to quarrel with me! What should a baby do with a wife? Your wife is my blood, mine,—the blood of the man from hell! Give her back to my house."

Ichirō (desperately, now fully assured Kasaku is physically the better man). "Return my wife? You say to return her? Right quickly shall she be returned, at once!"

So far everything is clear enough. Then Ichiro hurries home, caresses his wife, assures her of his love, tells her all, and sends her, not to Kasaku's house, but to that of her brother. Two days later, a little after dark, O-Noto is called to the door by her husband, and the two disappear in the night.

Act II. Night scene. House of Kasaku closed: light appears through chinks of sliding shutters. Shadow of a woman approaches. Sound of knocking. Shutters slide back.

Wife of Kasaku (recognizing O-Noto). "Aa! aa! Joyful it is to see you! Deign to enter, and some honorable tea to take."

O-Noto (speaking very sweetly). "Thanks indeed. But where is Kasaku San?"

Wife of Kasaku. "To the other village he has gone, but must soon return. Deign to come in and wait for him."

O-Noto (still more sweetly). "Very great thanks. A little, and I come. But first I must

tell my brother."

(Bows, and slips off into the darkness, and becomes a shadow again, which joins another shadow. The two shadows remain motionless.)

Act III. Scene: Bank of a river at night, fringed by pines. Silhouette of the house of Kasaku far away. O-Noto and Ichiro under the trees, Ichirō with a lantern. Both have white towels tightly bound round their heads; their robes are girded well up, and their sleeves caught back with tasuki cords, to leave the arms free. Each carries a long sword.

It is the hour, as the Japanese most expressively say, "when the sound of the river is loudest." There is no other sound but a long occasional humming of wind in the needles of the pines; for it is late autumn, and the frogs are silent. The two shadows do not speak, and the sound of the river grows louder.

Suddenly there is the noise of a plash far off,—somebody crossing the shallow stream; then an echo of wooden sandals,—irregular, staggering,—the footsteps of a drunkard, coming nearer and nearer. The drunkard lifts up his voice: it is Kasaku's voice. He sings,—

"Suita okata ni suirarete; Ya-ton-ton!"[1]

—a song of love and wine.

Immediately the two shadows start toward the singer at a run,—a noiseless flitting, for their feet are shod with waraji. Kasaku still sings. Suddenly a loose stone turns under him; he wrenches his ankle, and utters a growl of anger. Almost in the same instant a lantern is held close to his face. Perhaps for thirty seconds it remains there. No one speaks. The yellow light shows three strangely inexpressive masks rather than visages. Kasaku sobers at once,—recognizing the faces, remembering the incident of the bathhouse, and seeing the swords. But he is not afraid, and presently bursts into a mocking laugh.

"Hé! hé! The Ichirō pair! And so you take me, too, for a baby? What are you doing

with such things in your hands? Let me show you how to use them."

But Ichirō, who has dropped the lantern, suddenly delivers, with the full swing of both hands, a sword-slash that nearly severs Kasaku's right arm from the shoulder; and as the victim staggers, the sword of the woman cleaves through his left shoulder. He falls with one fearful cry, "Hitogoroshi!" which means "murder." But he does not cry again. For ten whole minutes the swords are busy with him. The lantern, still glowing, lights the ghastliness. Two belated pedestrians approach, hear, see, drop their wooden sandals from their feet, and flee back into the darkness without a word. Ichirō and O-Noto sit down by the lantern to take breath, for the work was hard.

The son of Kasaku, a boy of fourteen, comes running to find his father. He has heard the song, then the cry; but he has not yet learned fear. The two suffer him to approach. As he nears O-Noto, the woman seizes him, flings him down, twists his slender arms under her knees, and clutches the sword. But Ichirō, still panting, cries, "No! no! Not the boy! He did us no wrong!" O-Noto releases him. He is too stupefied to move.

She slaps his face terribly, crying, "Go!" He runs,—not daring to shriek.

Ichirō and O-Noto leave the chopped mass, walk to the house of Kasaku, and call loudly. There is no reply;—only the pathetic, crouching silence of women and children waiting death. But they are bidden not to fear. Then Ichirō cries:—

"Honorable funeral prepare! Kasaku by my hand is now dead!"

"And by mine!" shrills O-Noto.

Then the footsteps recede.

Act IV. Scene: Interior of Ichirō's house. Three persons kneeling in the guest-room: Ichirō, his wife, and an aged woman, who is weeping.

Ichirō. "And now, mother, to leave you alone in this world, though you have no other son, is indeed an evil thing. I can only pray your forgiveness. But my uncle

will always care for you, and to his house you must go at once, since it is time we two should die. No common, vulgar death shall we have, but an elegant, splendid death,—Rippana! And you must not see it. Now go."

She passes away, with a wail. The doors are solidly barred behind her. All is ready.

O-Noto thrusts the point of the sword into her throat. But she still struggles. With a last kind word Ichiro ends her pain by a stroke that severs the head.

And then?

Then he takes his writing-box, prepares the inkstone, grinds some ink, chooses a good brush, and, on carefully selected paper, composes five poems, of which this is the last:—

"Meido yori Yu dempō ga Aru naraba, Hay aha an chaku Mōshi okuran."[2]

Then he cuts his own throat perfectly well.

Now, it was clearly shown, during the official investigation of these facts, that Ichirō and his wife had been universally liked, and had been from their childhood noted for amiability.

The scientific problem of the origin of the Japanese has never yet been solved. But sometimes it seems to me that those who argue in favor of a partly Malay origin have some psychological evidence in their favor. Under the submissive sweetness of the gentlest Japanese woman—a sweetness of which the Occidental can scarcely form any idea—there exist possibilities of hardness absolutely inconceivable without ocular evidence. A thousand times she can forgive, can sacrifice herself in a thousand ways unutterably touching: but let one particular soul-nerve be stung, and fire shall forgive sooner than she. Then there may suddenly appear in that frail-seeming woman an incredible courage, an appalling, measured, tireless purpose of honest vengeance. Under all the amazing self-control and patience of the man there exists an adamantine something very dangerous to reach. Touch it wantonly, and there can be no pardon. But resentment is seldom likely to be excited by mere

hazard. Motives are keenly judged. An error can be forgiven; deliberate malice never.

In the house of any rich family the guest is likely to be shown some of the heirlooms. Among these are almost sure to be certain articles belonging to those elaborate tea ceremonies peculiar to Japan. A pretty little box, perhaps, will be set before you. Opening it, you see only a beautiful silk bag, closed with a silk running-cord decked with tiny tassels. Very soft and choice the silk is, and elaborately figured. What marvel can be hidden under such a covering? You open the bag, and see within another bag, of a different quality of silk, but very fine. Open that, and lo! a third, which contains a fourth, which contains a fifth, which contains a sixth, which contains a seventh bag, which contains the strangest, roughest, hardest vessel of Chinese clay that you ever beheld. Yet it is not only curious but precious: it may be more than a thousand years old.

Even thus have centuries of the highest social culture wrapped the Japanese character about with many priceless soft coverings of courtesy, of delicacy, of patience, of sweetness, of moral sentiment. But underneath these charming multiple coverings there remains the primitive clay, hard as iron;—kneaded perhaps with all the mettle of the Mongol,—all the dangerous suppleness of the Malay.

[1] The meaning is, "Give to the beloved one a little more [wine]." The "Ya-ton-ton" is only a burden, without exact meaning, like our own "With a hey! and a ho!" etc.

[2] The meaning is about as follows: "If from the Meido it be possible to send letters or telegrams, I shall write and forward news of our speedy safe arrival there."

VII

December 28. Beyond the high fence inclosing my garden in the rear rise the thatched roofs of some very small houses occupied by families of the poorest class. From one of these little dwellings there continually issues a sound of groaning,—the deep groaning of a man in pain. I have heard it for more than a week, both night and

day, but latterly the sounds have been growing longer and louder, as if every breath were an agony. "Somebody there is very sick," says Manyemon, my old interpreter, with an expression of extreme sympathy.

The sounds have begun to make me nervous. I reply, rather brutally, "I think it would be better for all concerned if that somebody were dead."

Manyemon makes three times a quick, sudden gesture with both hands, as if to throw off the influence of my wicked words, mutters a little Buddhist prayer, and leaves me with a look of reproach. Then, conscience-stricken, I send a servant to inquire if the sick person has a doctor, and whether any aid can be given. Presently the servant returns with the information that a doctor is regularly attending the sufferer, and that nothing else can be done.

I notice, however, that, in spite of his cobwebby gestures, Manyemon's patient nerves have also become affected by those sounds. He has even confessed that he wants to stay in the little front room, near the street, so as to be away from them as far as possible. I can neither write nor read. My study being in the extreme rear, the groaning is there almost as audible as if the sick man were in the room itself. There is always in such utterances of suffering a certain ghastly timbre by which the intensity of the suffering can be estimated; and I keep asking myself, How can it be possible for the human being making those sounds by which I am tortured, to endure much longer?

It is a positive relief, later in the morning, to hear the moaning drowned by the beating of a little Buddhist drum in the sick man's room, and the chanting of the Namu myō ho renge kyō by a multitude of voices. Evidently there is a gathering of priests and relatives in the house. "Somebody is going to die," Manyemon says. And he also repeats the holy words of praise to the Lotus of the Good Law.

The chanting and the tapping of the drum continue for several hours. As they cease, the groaning is heard again. Every breath a groan! Toward evening it grows

worse—horrible. Then it suddenly stops. There is a dead silence of minutes. And then we hear a passionate burst of weeping,—the weeping of a woman,—and voices calling a name. "Ah! somebody is dead!" Manyemon says.

We hold council. Manyemon has found out that the people are miserably poor; and I, because my conscience smites me, propose to send them the amount of the funeral expenses, a very small sum. Manyemon thinks I wish to do this out of pure benevolence, and says pretty things. We send the servant with a kind message, and instructions to learn if possible the history of the dead man. I cannot help suspecting some sort of tragedy; and a Japanese tragedy is generally interesting.

December 29. As I had surmised, the story of the dead man was worth learning. The family consisted of four,—the father and mother, both very old and feeble, and two sons. It was the eldest son, a man of thirty-four, who had died. He had been sick for seven years. The younger brother, a kurumaya, had been the sole support of the whole family. He had no vehicle of his own, but hired one, paying five sen a day for the use of it. Though strong and a swift runner, he could earn little: there is in these days too much competition for the business to be profitable. It taxed all his powers to support his parents and his ailing brother; nor could he have done it without unfailing self-denial. He never indulged himself even to the extent of a cup of saké; he remained unmarried; he lived only for his filial and fraternal duty.

This was the story of the dead brother: When about twenty years of age, and following the occupation of a fish-seller, he had fallen in love with a pretty servant at an inn. The girl returned his affection. They pledged themselves to each other. But difficulties arose in the way of their marriage.

The girl was pretty enough to have attracted the attention of a man of some means, who demanded her hand in the customary way. She disliked him; but the conditions he was able to offer decided her parents in his favor. Despairing of union, the two lovers resolved to perform jōshi. Somewhere or other they met at night, renewed

their pledge in wine, and bade farewell to the world. The young man then killed his sweetheart with one blow of a sword, and immediately afterward cut his own throat with the same weapon. But people rushed into the room before he had expired, took away the sword, sent for the police, and summoned a military surgeon from the garrison. The would-be suicide was removed to the hospital, skillfully nursed back to health, and after some months of convalescence was put on trial for murder.

What sentence was passed I could not fully learn. In those days, Japanese judges used a good deal of personal discretion when dealing with emotional crime; and their exercise of pity had not yet been restricted by codes framed upon Western models. Perhaps in this case they thought that to have survived a jōshi was in itself a severe punishment. Public opinion is less merciful, in such instances, than law. After a term of imprisonment the miserable man was allowed to return to his family, but was placed under perpetual police surveillance. The people shrank from him. He made the mistake of living on. Only his parents and brother remained to him. And soon he became a victim of unspeakable physical suffering; yet he clung to life.

The old wound in his throat, although treated at the time as skillfully as circumstances permitted, began to cause terrible pain. After its apparent healing, some slow cancerous growth commenced to spread from it, reaching into the breathing-passages above and below where the sword-blade had passed. The surgeon's knife, the torture of the cautery, could only delay the end. But the man lingered through seven years of continually increasing agony. There are dark beliefs about the results of betraying the dead,—of breaking the mutual promise to travel together to the Meido. Men said that the hand of the murdered girl always reopened the wound,—undid by night all that the surgeon could accomplish by day. For at night the pain invariably increased, becoming most terrible at the precise hour of the attempted shinjū!

Meanwhile, through abstemiousness and extraordinary self-denial, the family found

means to pay for medicines, for attendance, and for more nourishing food than they themselves ever indulged in. They prolonged by all possible means the life that was their shame, their poverty, their burden. And now that death has taken away that burden, they weep!

Perhaps all of us learn to love that which we train ourselves to make sacrifices for, whatever pain it may cause. Indeed, the question might be asked whether we do not love most that which causes us most pain.

VI

THE STONE BUDDHA

I

On the ridge of the hill behind the Government College,—above a succession of tiny farm fields ascending the slope by terraces,—there is an ancient village cemetery. It is no longer used: the people of Kurogamimura now bury their dead in a more secluded spot; and I think their fields are beginning already to encroach upon the limits of the old graveyard.

Having an idle hour to pass between two classes, I resolve to pay the ridge a visit. Harmless thin black snakes wiggle across the way as I climb; and immense grasshoppers, exactly the color of parched leaves, whirr away from my shadow. The little field path vanishes altogether under coarse grass before reaching the broken steps at the cemetery gate; and in the cemetery itself there is no path at all—only weeds and stones. But there is a fine view from the ridge: the vast green Plain of Higo, and beyond it bright blue hills in a half-ring against the horizon light, and even beyond them the cone of Aso smoking forever.

Below me, as in a bird's-eye view, appears the college, like a miniature modern town, with its long ranges of many windowed buildings, all of the year 1887. They represent the purely utilitarian architecture of the nineteenth century: they might be situated equally well in Kent or in Auckland or in New Hampshire without

appearing in the least out of tone with the age. But the terraced fields above and the figures toiling in them might be of the fifth century. The language cut upon the haka whereon I lean is transliterated Sanscrit. And there is a Buddha beside me, sitting upon his lotus of stone just as he sat in the days of Kato Kiyomasa. His meditative gaze slants down between his half-closed eyelids upon the Government College and its tumultuous life; and he smiles the smile of one who has received an injury not to be resented. This is not the expression wrought by the sculptor: moss and scurf have distorted it. I also observe that his hands are broken. I am sorry, and try to scrape the moss away from the little symbolic protuberance on his forehead, remembering the ancient text of the "Lotus of the Good Law:"—

"There issued a ray of light from the circle of hair between the brows of the Lord. It extended over eighteen hundred thousand Buddha fields, so that all those Buddha fields appeared wholly illuminated by its radiance, down to the great hell Aviki, and up to the limit of existence. And all the beings in each of the Six States of existence became visible,—all without exception. Even the Lord Buddhas in those Buddha fields who had reached final Nirvana, all became visible."

II

The sun is high behind me; the landscape before me as in an old Japanese picture-book. In old Japanese color-prints there are, as a rule, no shadows. And the Plain of Higo, all shadowless, broadens greenly to the horizon, where the blue spectres of the peaks seem to float in the enormous glow. But the vast level presents no uniform hue: it is banded and seamed by all tones of green, intercrossed as if laid on by long strokes of a brush. In this again the vision resembles some scene from a Japanese picture-book.

Open such a book for the first time, and you receive a peculiarly startling impression, a sensation of surprise, which causes you to think: "How strangely, how curiously, these people feel and see Nature!" The wonder of it grows upon you, and

you ask: "Can it be possible their senses are so utterly different from ours?" Yes, it is quite possible; but look a little more. You do so, and there defines a third and ultimate idea, confirming the previous two. You feel the picture is more true to Nature than any Western painting of the same scene would be,—that it produces sensations of Nature no Western picture could give. And indeed there are contained within it whole ranges of discoveries for you to make. Before making them, however, you will ask yourself another riddle, somewhat thus: "All this is magically vivid; the inexplicable color is Nature's own. But why does the thing seem so ghostly?"

Well, chiefly because of the absence of shadows. What prevents you from missing them at once is the astounding skill in the recognition and use of color-values. The scene, however, is not depicted as if illumined from one side, but as if throughout suffused with light. Now there are really moments when landscapes do wear this aspect; but our artists rarely study them.

Be it nevertheless observed that the old Japanese loved shadows made by the moon, and painted the same, because these were weird and did not interfere with color. But they had no admiration for shadows that blacken and break the charm of the world under the sun. When their noon-day landscapes are flecked by shadows at all,'tis by very thin ones only,—mere deepenings of tone, like those fugitive half-glooms which run before a summer cloud. And the inner as well as the outer world was luminous for them. Psychologically also they saw life without shadows.

Then the West burst into their Buddhist peace, and saw their art, and bought it up till an Imperial law was issued to preserve the best of what was left. And when there was nothing more to be bought, and it seemed possible that fresh creation might reduce the market price of what had been bought already, then the West said: "Oh, come now! you must n't go on drawing and seeing things that way, you know! It is n't Art! You, must really learn to see shadows, you know,—and pay me to teach

you."

So Japan paid to learn how to see shadows in Nature, in life, and in thought. And the West taught her that the sole business of the divine sun was the making of the cheaper kind of shadows. And the West taught her that the higher-priced shadows were the sole product of Western civilization, and bade her admire and adopt. Then Japan wondered at the shadows of machinery and chimneys and telegraph-poles; and at the shadows of mines and of factories, and the shadows in the hearts of those who worked there; and at the shadows of houses twenty stories high, and of hunger begging under them; and shadows of enormous charities that multiplied poverty; and shadows of social reforms that multiplied vice; and shadows of shams and hypocrisies and swallow-tail coats; and the shadow of a foreign God, said to have created mankind for the purpose of an auto-da-fé. Whereat Japan became rather serious, and refused to study any more silhouettes. Fortunately for the world, she returned to her first matchless art; and, fortunately for herself, returned to her own beautiful faith. But some of the shadows still clung to her life; and she cannot possibly get rid of them. Never again can the world seem to her quite so beautiful as it did before.

III

Just beyond the cemetery, in a tiny patch of hedged-in land, a farmer and his ox are plowing the black soil with a plow of the Period of the Gods; and the wife helps the work with a hoe more ancient than even the Empire of Japan. All the three are toiling with a strange earnestness, as though goaded without mercy by the knowledge that labor is the price of life.

That man I have often seen before in the colored prints of another century. I have seen him in kakemono of much more ancient date. I have seen him on painted screens of still greater antiquity. Exactly the same! Other fashions beyond counting have passed: the peasant's straw hat, straw coat, and sandals of straw remain. He

himself is older, incomparably older, than his attire. The earth he tills has indeed swallowed him up a thousand times a thousand times; but each time it has given back to him his life with force renewed. And with this perpetual renewal he is content: he asks no more. The mountains change their shapes; the rivers shift their courses; the stars change their places in the sky: he changes never. Yet, though unchanging, is he a maker of change. Out of the sum of his toil are wrought the ships of iron, the roads of steel, the palaces of stone; his are the hands that pay for the universities and the new learning, for the telegraphs and the electric lights and the repeating-rifles, for the machinery of science and the machinery of commerce and the machinery of war. He is the giver of all; he is given in return—the right to labor forever. Wherefore he plows the centuries under, to plant new lives of men. And he will thus toil on till the work of the world shall have been done,—till the time of the end of man.

And what will be that end? Will it be ill or well? Or must it for all of us remain a mystery insolvable?

Out of the wisdom of the West is answer given: "Man's evolution is a progress into perfection and beatitude. The goal of evolution is Equilibration. Evils will vanish, one by one, till only that which is good survive. Then shall knowledge obtain its uttermost expansion; then shall mind put forth its most wondrous blossoms; then shall cease all struggle and all bitterness of soul, and all the wrongs and all the follies of life. Men shall become as gods, in all save immortality; and each existence shall be prolonged through centuries; and all the joys of life shall be made common in many a paradise terrestrial, fairer than poet's dream. And there shall be neither riders nor ruled, neither governments nor laws; for the order of all things shall be resolved by love."

But thereafter?

"Thereafter? Oh, thereafter by reason of the persistence of Force and other cosmic

laws, dissolution must come: all integration must yield to disintegration. This is the testimony of science."

Then all that may have been won, must be lost; all that shall have been wrought, utterly undone. Then all that shall have been overcome, must overcome; all that may have been suffered for good, must be suffered again for no purpose interpretable. Even as out of the Unknown was born the immeasurable pain of the Past, so into the Unknown must expire the immeasurable pain of the Future. What, therefore, the worth of our evolution? what, therefore, the meaning of life—of this phantom-flash between darknesses? Is your evolution only a passing out of absolute mystery into universal death? In the hour when that man in the hat of straw shall have crumbled back, for the last mundane time, into the clay he tills, of what avail shall have been all the labor of a million years?

"Nay!" answers the West. "There is not any universal death in such a sense. Death signifies only change. Thereafter will appear another universal life. All that assures us of dissolution, not less certainly assures us of renewal. The Cosmos, resolved into a nebula, must recondense to form another swarm of worlds. And then, perhaps, your peasant may reappear with his patient ox, to till some soil illumined by purple or violet suns." Yes, but after that resurrection? "Why, then another evolution, another equilibration, another dissolution. This is the teaching of science. This is the infinite law."

But then that resurrected life, can it be ever new? Will it not rather be infinitely old? For so surely as that which is must eternally be, so must that which will be have eternally been. As there can be no end, so there can have been no beginning; and even Time is an illusion, and there is nothing new beneath a hundred million suns. Death is not death, not a rest, not an end of pain, but the most appalling of mockeries. And out of this infinite whirl of pain you can tell us no way of escape. Have you then made us any wiser than that straw-sandaled peasant is? He knows all

this. He learned, while yet a child, from the priests who taught him to write in the Buddhist temple school, something of his own innumerable births, and of the apparition and disparition of universes, and of the unity of life. That which you have mathematically discovered was known to the East long before the coming of the Buddha. How known, who may say? Perhaps there have been memories that survived the wrecks of universes. But be that as it may, your annunciation is enormously old: your methods only are new, and serve merely to confirm ancient theories of the Cosmos, and to recomplicate the complications of the everlasting Riddle.

Unto which the West makes answer:—"Not so! I have discerned the rhythm of that eternal action whereby worlds are shapen or dissipated; I have divined the Laws of Pain evolving all sentient existence, the Laws of Pain evolving thought; I have discovered and proclaimed the means by which sorrow may be lessened; I have taught the necessity of effort, and the highest duty of life. And surely the knowledge of the duty of life is the knowledge of largest worth to man."

Perhaps. But the knowledge of the necessity and of the duty, as you have proclaimed them, is a knowledge very, very much older than you. Probably that peasant knew it fifty thousand years ago, on this planet. Possibly also upon other long—vanished planets, in cycles forgotten by the gods. If this be the Omega of Western wisdom, then is he of the straw sandals our equal in knowledge, even though he be classed by the Buddha among the ignorant ones only,—they who "people the cemeteries again and again."

"He cannot know," makes answer Science; "at the very most he only believes, or thinks that he believes. Not even his wisest priests can prove. I alone have proven; I alone have given proof absolute. And I have proved for ethical renovation, though accused of proving for destruction. I have defined the uttermost impassable limit of human knowledge; but I have also established for all time the immovable

foundations of that highest doubt which is wholesome, since it is the substance of hope. I have shown that even the least of human thoughts, of human acts, may have perpetual record,—making self-registration through tremulosities invisible that pass to the eternities. And I have fixed the basis of a new morality upon everlasting truth, even though I may have left of ancient creeds only their empty shell."

Creeds of the West—yes! But not of the creed of this older East. Not yet have you even measured it. What matter that this peasant cannot prove, since thus much of his belief is that which you have proved for all of us? And he holds still another belief that reaches beyond yours. He too has been taught that acts and thoughts outlive the lives of men. But he has been taught more than this. He has been taught that the thoughts and acts of each being, projected beyond the individual existence, shape other lives unborn; he has been taught to control his most secret wishes, because of their immeasurable inherent potentialities. And he has been taught all this in words as plain and thoughts as simply woven as the straw of his rain-coat. What if he cannot prove his premises? you have proved them, for him and for the world. He has only a theory of the future, indeed; but you have furnished irrefutable evidence that it is not founded upon dreams. And since all your past labors have only served to confirm a few of the beliefs stored up in his simple mind, is it any folly to presume that your future labors also may serve to prove the truth of other beliefs of his, which you have not yet taken the trouble to examine?

"For instance, that earthquakes are caused by a big fish?"

Do not sneer! Our Western notions about such things were just as crude only a few generations back. No! I mean the ancient teaching that acts and thoughts are not merely the incidents of life, but its creators. Even as it has been written, "All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts; it is made up of our thoughts."

IV

And there comes to me the memory of a queer story.

The common faith of the common people, that the misfortunes of the present are results of the follies committed in a former state of existence, and that the errors of this life will influence the future birth, is curiously reinforced by various superstitions probably much older than Buddhism, but not at variance with its faultless doctrine of conduct. Among these, perhaps the most remarkable is the belief that even our most secret thoughts of evil may have ghostly consequences upon other people's lives.

The house now occupied by one of my friends used to be haunted. You could never imagine it to have been haunted, because it is unusually luminous, extremely pretty, and comparatively new. It has no dark nooks or corners. It is surrounded with a large bright garden,—a Kyūshū landscape garden without any big trees for ghosts to hide behind. Yet haunted it was, and in broad day.

First you must learn that in this Orient there are two sorts of haunters: the Shi-ryō and the Iki-ryō. The Shi-ryō are merely the ghosts of the dead; and here, as in most lands, they follow their ancient habit of coming at night only. But the Iki-ryō, which are the ghosts of the living, may come at all hours; and they are much more to be feared, because they have power to kill.

Now the house of which I speak was haunted by an Iki-ryō.

The man who built it was an official, wealthy and esteemed. He designed it as a home for his old age; and when it was finished he filled it with beautiful things, and hung tinkling wind bells along its eaves. Artists of skill painted the naked precious wood of its panels with blossoming sprays of cherry and plum tree, and figures of gold-eyed falcons poised on crests of pine, and slim fawns feeding under maple shadows, and wild ducks in snow, and herons flying, and iris flowers blooming, and long-armed monkeys clutching at the face of the moon in water: all the symbols of the seasons and of good fortune.

Fortunate the owner was; yet he knew one sorrow—he had no heir. Therefore, with his wife's consent, and according to antique custom, he took a strange woman into his home that she might give him a child,—a young woman from the country, to whom large promises were made. When she had borne him a son, she was sent away; and a nurse was hired for the boy, that he might not regret his real mother. All this had been agreed to beforehand; and there were ancient usages to justify it. But all the promises made to the mother of the boy had not been fulfilled when she was sent away.

And after a little time the rich man fell sick; and he grew worse thereafter day by day; and his people said there was an Iki-ryō in the house. Skilled physicians did all they could for him; but he only became weaker and weaker; and the physicians at last confessed they had no more hope. And the wife made offerings at the Ujigami, and prayed to the Gods; but the Gods gave answer: "He must die unless he obtain forgiveness from one whom he wronged, and undo the wrong by making just amend. For there is an Iki-ryō in your house."

Then the sick man remembered, and was conscience-smitten, and sent out servants to bring the woman back to his home. But she was gone,—somewhere lost among the forty millions of the Empire. And the sickness ever grew worse; and search was made in vain; and the weeks passed. At last there came to the gate a peasant who said that he knew the place to which the woman had gone, and that he would journey to find her if supplied with means of travel. But the sick man, hearing, cried out: "No! she would never forgive me in her heart, because she could not. It is too late!" And he died.

After which the widow and the relatives and the little boy abandoned the new house; and strangers entered thereinto.

Curiously enough, the people spoke harshly concerning the mother of the boy—holding her to blame for the haunting.

I thought it very strange at first, not because I had formed any positive judgment as to the rights and wrongs of the case. Indeed I could not form such a judgment; for I could not learn the full details of the story. I thought the criticism of the people very strange, notwithstanding.

Why? Simply because there is nothing voluntary about the sending of an Iki-ryō. It is not witchcraft at all. The Iki-ryō goes forth without the knowledge of the person whose emanation it is. (There is a kind of witchcraft which is believed to send Things,—but not Iki-ryō.) You will now understand why I thought the condemnation of the young woman very strange.

But you could scarcely guess the solution of the problem. It is a religious one, involving conceptions totally unknown to the West. She from whom the Iki-ryō proceeded was never blamed by the people as a witch. They never suggested that it might have been created with her knowledge. They even sympathized with what they deemed to be her just plaint. They blamed her only for having been too angry,—for not sufficiently controlling her unspoken resentment,—because she should have known that anger, secretly indulged, can have ghostly consequences.

I ask nobody to take for granted the possibility of the Iki-ryō, except as a strong form of conscience. But as an influence upon conduct, the belief certainly has value. Besides, it is suggestive. Who is really able to assure us that secret evil desires, pent-up resentments, masked hates, do not exert any force outside of the will that conceives and nurses them? May there not be a deeper meaning than Western ethics recognize in those words of the Buddha,—"Hatred ceases not by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love: this is an old rule"? It was very old then, even in his day. In ours it has been said, "Whensoever a wrong is done you, and you do not resent it, then so much evil dies in the world." But does it? Are we quite sure that not to resent it is enough? Can the motive tendency set loose in the mind by the sense of a wrong be nullified simply by non-action on the part of the wronged? Can any force die?

The forces we know may be transformed only. So much also may be true of the forces we do not know; and of these are Life, Sensation, Will,—all that makes up the infinite mystery called "I."

V

"The duty of Science," answers Science, "is to systematize human experience, not to theorize about ghosts. And the judgment of the time, even in Japan, sustains this position taken by Science. What is now being taught below there,—my doctrines, or the doctrines of the Man in the Straw Sandals?"

Then the Stone Buddha and I look down upon the college together; and as we gaze, the smile of the Buddha—perhaps because of a change in the light—seems to me to have changed its expression, to have become an ironical smile. Nevertheless he is contemplating the fortress of a more than formidable enemy. In all that teaching of four hundred youths by thirty-three teachers, there is no teaching of faith, but only teaching of fact,—only teaching of the definite results of the systematization of human experience. And I am absolutely certain that if I were to question, concerning the things of the Buddha, any of those thirty-three instructors (saving one dear old man of seventy, the Professor of Chinese), I should receive no reply. For they belong unto the new generation, holding that such topics are fit for the consideration of Men-in-Straw-Rain—coats only, and that in this twenty-sixth year of Meiji, the scholar should occupy himself only with the results of the systematization of human experience. Yet the systematization of human experience in no wise enlightens us as to the Whence, the Whither, or, worst of all!—the Why.

"The Laws of Existence which proceed from a cause,—the cause of these hath the Buddha explained, as also the destruction of the same. Even of such truths is the great Sramana the teacher."

And I ask myself, Must the teaching of Science in this land efface at last the memory of the teaching of the Buddha?

"As for that," makes answer Science, "the test of the right of a faith to live must be sought in its power to accept and to utilize my revelations. Science neither affirms what it cannot prove, nor denies that which it cannot rationally disprove. Theorizing about the Unknowable, it recognizes and pities as a necessity of the human mind. You and the Man-in-the-Straw-Rain-coat may harmlessly continue to theorize for such time as your theories advance in lines parallel with my facts, but no longer."

And seeking inspiration from the deep irony of Buddha's smile, I theorize in parallel lines.

VI

The whole tendency of modern knowledge, the whole tendency of scientific teaching, is toward the ultimate conviction that the Unknowable, even as the Brahma of ancient Indian thought, is inaccessible to prayer. Not a few of us can feel that Western Faith must finally pass away forever, leaving us to our own resources when our mental manhood shall have been attained, even as the fondest of mothers must leave her children at last. In that far day her work will all have been done; she will have fully developed our recognition of certain eternal spiritual laws; she will have fully ripened our profounder human sympathies; she will have fully prepared us by her parables and fairy tales, by her gentler falsehoods, for the terrible truth of existence;—prepared us for the knowledge that there is no divine love save the love of man for man; that we have no All-Father, no Saviour, no angel guardians; that we have no possible refuge but in ourselves.

Yet even in that strange day we shall only have stumbled to the threshold of the revelation given by the Buddha so many ages ago: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves; be ye a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no other refuge. The Buddhas are only teachers. Hold ye fast to the truth as to a lamp. Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for refuge to any beside yourselves."

Does the utterance shock? Yet the prospect of such a void awakening from our long

fair dream of celestial aid and celestial love would never be the darkest prospect possible for man. There is a darker, also foreshadowed by Eastern thought. Science may hold in reserve for us discoveries infinitely more appalling than the realization of Richter's dream,—the dream of the dead children seeking vainly their father Jesus. In the negation of the materialist even, there was a faith of consolation—self-assurance of individual cessation, of oblivion eternal. But for the existing thinker there is no such faith. It may remain for us to learn, after having vanquished all difficulties possible to meet upon this tiny sphere, that there await us obstacles to overcome beyond it,—obstacles vaster than any system of worlds,—obstacles weightier than the whole inconceivable Cosmos with its centuries of millions of systems; that our task is only beginning; and that there will never be given to us even the ghost of any help, save the help of unutterable and unthinkable Time. We may have to learn that the infinite whirl of death and birth, out of which we cannot escape, is of our own creation, of our own seeking—that the forces integrating worlds are the errors of the Past;—that the eternal sorrow is but the eternal hunger of insatiable desire;—and that the burnt-out suns are rekindled only by the inextinguishable passions of vanished lives.

VII

JIUJUTSU

Man at his birth is supple and weak; at his death, firm and strong. So is it with all things.... Firmness and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness, the concomitants of life. Hence he who relies on his own strength shall not conquer.

Tao-Te-King.

I

There is one building in the grounds of the Government College quite different in structure from the other edifices. Except that it is furnished with horizontally sliding

glass windows instead of paper ones, it might be called a purely Japanese building. It is long, broad, and of one story; and it contains but a single huge room, of which the elevated floor is thickly cushioned with one hundred mats. It has a Japanese name, too,—Zuihōkwan,—signifying "The Hall of Our Holy Country;" and the Chinese characters which form that name were painted upon the small tablet above its entrance by the hand of a Prince of the Imperial blood. Within there is no furniture; nothing but another tablet and two pictures hanging upon the wall. One of the pictures represents the famous "White-Tiger Band" of seventeen brave boys who voluntarily sought death for loyalty's sake in the civil war. The other is a portrait in oil of the aged and much beloved Professor of Chinese, Akizuki of Aidzu, a noted warrior in his youth, when it required much more to make a soldier and a gentleman than it does to-day. And the tablet bears Chinese characters written by the hand of Count Katsu, which signify: "Profound knowledge is the best of possessions."

But what is the knowledge taught in this huge unfurnished apartment? It is something called jiujutsu. And what is jiujutsu?

Here I must premise that I know practically nothing of jiujutsu. One must begin to study it in early youth, and must continue the study a very long time in order to learn it even tolerably well. To become an expert requires seven years of constant practice, even presupposing natural aptitudes of an uncommon order. I can give no detailed account of jiujutsu, but merely venture some general remarks about its principle.

Jiujutsu is the old samurai art of fighting without weapons. To the uninitiated it looks like wrestling. Should you happen to enter the Zuihōkwan while jiujutsu is being practiced, you would see a crowd of students watching ten or twelve lithe young comrades, barefooted and barelimbed, throwing each other about on the matting. The dead silence might seem to you very strange. No word is spoken, no sign of approbation or of amusement is given, no face even smiles. Absolute

impassiveness is rigidly exacted by the rules of the school of jiujutsu. But probably only this impassibility of all, this hush of numbers, would impress you as remarkable.

A professional wrestler would observe more. He would see that those' young men are very cautious about putting forth their strength, and that the grips, holds, and flings are both peculiar and risky. In spite of the care exercised, he would judge the whole performance to be dangerous play, and would be tempted, perhaps, to advise the adoption of Western "scientific" rules.

The real thing, however,—not the play,—is much more dangerous than a Western wrestler could guess at sight. The teacher there, slender and light as he seems, could probably disable an ordinary wrestler in two minutes. Jiujutsu is not an art of display at all: it is not a training for that sort of skill exhibited to public audiences; it is an art of self-defense in the most exact sense of the term; it is an art of war. The master of that art is able, in one moment, to put an untrained antagonist completely hors de combat. By some terrible legerdemain he suddenly dislocates a shoulder, unhinges a joint, bursts a tendon, or snaps a bone,—without any apparent effort. He is much more than an athlete: he is an anatomist. And he knows also touches that kill—as by lightning. But this fatal knowledge he is under oath never to communicate except under such conditions as would render its abuse almost impossible. Tradition exacts that it be given only to men of perfect self-command and of unimpeachable moral character.

The fact, however, to which I want to call attention is that the master of jiujutsu never relies upon his own strength. He scarcely uses his own strength in the greatest emergency. Then what does he use? Simply the strength of his antagonist. The force of the enemy is the only means by which that enemy is overcome. The art of jiujutsu teaches you to rely for victory solely upon the strength of your opponent; and the greater his strength, the worse for him and the better for you. I remember that I was

not a little astonished when one of the greatest teachers of jiujutsu[1] told me that he found it extremely difficult to teach a certain very strong pupil, whom I had innocently imagined to be the best in the class. On asking why, I was answered: "Because he relies upon his enormous muscular strength, and uses it." The very name "jiujutsu" means to conquer by yielding.

I fear I cannot explain at all; I can only suggest. Every one knows what a "counter" in boxing means. I cannot use it for an exact simile, because the boxer who counters opposes his whole force to the impetus of the other; while a jiujutsu expert does precisely the contrary. Still there remains this resemblance between a counter in boxing and a yielding in jiujutsu,—that the suffering is in both cases due to the uncontrollable forward impetus of the man who receives it. I may venture then to say, loosely, that in jiujutsu there is a sort of counter for every twist, wrench, pull, push, or bend: only, the jiujutsu expert does not oppose such movements at all. No: he yields to them. But he does much more than yield to them. He aids them with a wicked sleight that causes the assailant to put out his own shoulder, to fracture his own arm, or, in a desperate case, even to break his own neck or back.

[1] Kano Jigoro. Mr. Kano contributed some years ago to the Transactions of the Asiatic Society a very interesting paper on the history of Jiujutsu.

II

With even this vaguest of explanations, you will already have been able to perceive that the real wonder of jiujutsu is not in the highest possible skill of its best professor, but in the uniquely Oriental idea which the whole art expresses. What Western brain could have elaborated this strange teaching,—never to oppose force to force, but only to direct and utilize the power of attack; to overthrow the enemy solely by his own strength,—to vanquish him solely by his own effort? Surely none! The Occidental mind appears to work in straight lines; the Oriental, in wonderful curves and circles. Yet how fine a symbolism of Intelligence as a means to foil brute

force! Much more than a science of defense is this jiujutsu: it is a philosophical system; it is an economical system; it is an ethical system (indeed, I had forgotten to say that a very large part of jiujutsu-training is purely moral); and it is, above all, the expression of a racial genius as yet but faintly perceived by those Powers who dream of further aggrandizement in the East.

Twenty-five years ago,—and even more recently,—-foreigners might have predicted, with every appearance of reason, that Japan would adopt not only the dress, but the manners of the Occident; not only our means of rapid transit and communication, but also our principles of architecture; not only our industries and our applied science, but likewise our metaphysics and our dogmas. Some really believed that the country would soon be thrown open to foreign settlement; that Western capital would be tempted by extraordinary privileges to aid in the development of various resources; and even that the nation would eventually proclaim, through Imperial Edict, its sudden conversion to what we call Christianity. But such beliefs were due to an unavoidable but absolute ignorance of the character of the race,—of its deeper capacities, of its foresight, of its immemorial spirit of independence. That Japan might only be practicing jiujutsu, nobody supposed for a moment: indeed at that time nobody in the West had ever heard of jiujutsu.

And, nevertheless, jiujutsu it all was. Japan adopted a military system founded upon the best experience of France and Germany, with the result that she can call into the field a disciplined force of 250,000 men, supported by a formidable artillery. She created a strong navy, comprising some of the finest cruisers in the world;—modeling her naval system upon the best English and French teaching. She made herself dockyards under French direction, and built or bought steamers to carry her products to Korea, China, Manilla, Mexico, India, and the tropics of the Pacific. She constructed, both for military and commercial purposes, nearly two thousand miles of railroad. With American and English help she established the cheapest and perhaps the most efficient telegraph and postal service in existence.

She built lighthouses to such excellent purpose that her coast is said to be the best lighted in either hemisphere; and she put into operation a signal service not inferior to that of the United States. From America she obtained also a telephone system, and the best methods of electric lighting. She modeled her public-school system upon a thorough study of the best results obtained in Germany, France, and America, but regulated it so as to harmonize perfectly with her own institutions. She founded a police system upon a French model, but shaped it to absolute conformity with her own particular social requirements. At first she imported machinery for her mines, her mills, her gun-factories, her railways, and hired numbers of foreign experts: she is now dismissing all her teachers. But what she has done and is doing would require volumes even to mention. Suffice to say, in conclusion, that she has selected and adopted the best of everything represented by our industries, by our applied sciences, by our economical, financial, and legal experience; availing herself in every case of the highest results only, and invariably shaping her acquisitions to meet her own needs.

Now in all this she has adopted nothing for a merely imitative reason. On the contrary, she has approved and taken only what can help her to increase her strength. She has made herself able to dispense with nearly all foreign technical instruction; and she has kept firmly in her own hands, by the shrewdest legislation, all of her own resources. But she has not adopted Western dress, Western habits of life, Western architecture, or Western religion; since the introduction of any of these, especially the last, would have diminished instead of augmenting her force. Despite her railroad and steamship lines, her telegraphs and telephones, her postal service and her express companies, her steel artillery and magazine-rifles, her universities and technical schools, she remains just as Oriental to-day as she was a thousand years ago. She has been able to remain herself, and to profit to the utmost possible limit by the strength of the enemy. She has been, and still is, defending herself by the most admirable system of intellectual self-defense ever heard of,—by a

marvelous national jiujutsu.

III

Before me lies an album more than thirty years old. It is filled with photographs taken at the time when Japan was entering upon her experiments with foreign dress and with foreign institutions. All are photographs of samurai or daimyô; and many possess historical value as reflections of the earliest effects of foreign influence upon native fashions.

Naturally the military class were the earliest subjects of the new influence; and they seem to have attempted several curious compromises between the Western and the Eastern costume. More than a dozen photographs represent feudal leaders surrounded by their retainers,—all in a peculiar garb of their own composition. They have frock coats, waistcoats, and trousers of foreign style and material; but under the coat the long silk girdle or obi is still worn, simply for the purpose of holding the swords. (For the samurai were never in a literal sense traîneurs de sabre; and their formidable but exquisitely finished weapons were never made to be slung at the side,—besides being in most cases much too long to be carried in the Western way.) The cloth of the suits is broadcloth; but the samurai will not surrender his mon, or crest, and tries to adapt it to his novel attire by all manner of devices. One has faced the lappets of his coat with white silk; and his family device is either dyed or embroidered upon the silk six times—three mon to each lappet. All the men, or nearly all, wear European watches with showy guards; one is examining his timepiece curiously, probably a very recent acquisition. All wear Western shoes, too,—shoes with elastic sides. But none seem to have yet adopted the utterly abominable European hat—destined, unfortunately, to become popular at a later day. They still retain the jingasa,—a strong wooden headpiece, heavily lacquered in scarlet and gold. And the jingasa and the silken girdle remain the only satisfactory parts of their astounding uniform. The trousers and coats are ill fitting; the shoes are

inflicting slow tortures; there is an indescribably constrained, slouchy, shabby look common to all thus attired. They have not only ceased to feel free: they are conscious of not looking their best. The incongruities are not grotesque enough to be amusing; they are merely ugly and painful. What foreigner in that time could have persuaded himself that the Japanese were not about to lose forever their beautiful taste in dress?

Other photographs show still more curious results of foreign influences. Here are samurai who refuse to adopt the Western fashions, but who have compromised with the new mania by having their haori and hakama made of the heaviest and costliest English broadcloth,—a material utterly unsuited for such use both because of its weight and its inelasticity. Already you can see that creases have been formed which no hot iron can ever smooth away.

It is certainly an æsthetic relief to turn from these portraits to those of a few conservatives who paid no attention to the mania at all, and clung to their native warrior garb to the very last. Here are nagabakama worn by horsemen,—and jin-baori, or war-coats, superbly embroidered,—and kamishimo,—and shirts of mail,—and full suits of armor. Here also are various forms of kaburi,—the strange but imposing head-dresses anciently worn on state occasions by princes and by samurai of high rank,—curious cobwebby structures, of some light black material. In all this there is dignity, beauty, or the terrible grace of war.

But everything is totally eclipsed by the last photograph of the collection,—a handsome youth with the sinister, splendid gaze of a falcon,—Matsudaira Buzen-no-Kami, in full magnificence of feudal war costume. One hand bears the tasseled signal-wand of a leader of armies; the other rests on the marvelous hilt of his sword. His helmet is a blazing miracle; the steel upon his breast and shoulders was wrought by armorers whose names are famed in all the museums of the West. The cords of his war-coat are golden; and a wondrous garment of heavy silk—all

embroidered with billowings and dragonings of gold—flows from his mailed waist to his feet, like a robe of fire. And this is no dream;—this was!—I am gazing at a solar record of one real figure of mediæval life! How the man flames in his steel and silk and gold, like some splendid iridescent beetle,—but a War beetle, all horns and mandibles and menace despite its dazzlings of jewel-color!

IV

From the princely magnificence of feudal costume as worn by Matsudaira—Buzen-no-Kami to the nondescript garments of the transition period, how vast a fall! Certainly the native dress and the native taste in dress might well have seemed doomed to pass away forever. And when even the Imperial Court had temporarily adopted Parisian modes, few foreigners could have doubted that the whole nation was about to change garb. As a fact, there then began in the chief cities that passing mania for Western fashions which was reflected in the illustrated journals of Europe, and which created for a while the impression that picturesque Japan had become transformed into a land of "loud" tweeds, chimney-pot hats, and swallow-tail coats. But in the capital itself to-day, among a thousand passers-by, you may see scarcely one in Western dress, excepting, of course, the uniformed soldiers, students, and police. The former mania really represented a national experiment; and the results of that experiment were not according to Western expectation. Japan has adopted various styles of Western uniform,[1] with some excellent modifications, for her army, her navy, and her police, simply because such attire is the best possible for such callings. Foreign civil costume has been adopted by the Japanese official world, but only to be worn during office-hours in buildings of Western construction furnished with modern desks and chairs.[2] At home even the general, the admiral, the judge, the police-inspector, resume the national garb. And, finally, both teachers and students in all but the primary schools are expected to wear uniform, as the educational training is partly military. This obligation, once stringent, has, however, been considerably relaxed; in many schools the uniform being now obligatory only

during drill-time and upon certain ceremonial occasions. In all Kyūshū schools, except the Normal, the students are free to wear their robes, straw sandals, and enormous straw hats, when not on parade. But everywhere after class-hours both teachers and students return at home to their kimono and their girdles of white crape silk.

In brief, then, Japan has fairly resumed her national dress; and it is to be hoped that she will never again abandon it. Not only is it the sole attire perfectly adapted to her domestic habits; it is also, perhaps, the most dignified, the most comfortable, and the most healthy in the world. In some respects, indeed, the native fashions have changed during the era of Meiji much more than in previous eras; but this was largely due to the abolition of the military caste. As to forms, the change has been slight; as to color, it has been great. The fine taste of the race still appears in the beautiful tints and colors and designs of those silken or cotton textures woven for apparel. But the tints are paler, the colors are darker, than those worn by the last generation;—the whole national costume, in all its varieties, not excepting even the bright attire of children and of young girls, is much more sober of tone than in feudal days. All the wondrous old robes of dazzling colors have vanished from public life: you can study them now only in the theatres, or in those marvelous picture-books reflecting the fantastic and beautiful visions of the Japanese classic drama, which preserves the Past.

[1] What seems to be the only serious mistake Japan has made in this regard is the adoption of leather shoes for her infantry. The fine feet of young men accustomed to the freedom of sandals, and ignorant of the existence of what we call corns and bunions, are cruelly tortured by this unnatural footgear. On long marches they are allowed to wear sandals, however; and a change in footgear may yet be made. With sandals, even a Japanese boy can easily walk his thirty miles a day, almost unfatigued.

[2] A highly educated Japanese actually observed to a friend of mine: "The truth is that we dislike Western dress. We have been temporarily adopting it only as certain animals take particular colors in particular seasons,—for protective reasons".

V

Indeed, to give up the native dress would involve the costly necessity of changing nearly all the native habits of life. Western costume is totally unsuited to a Japanese interior; and would render the national squatting, or kneeling, posture extremely painful or difficult for the wearer. The adoption of Western dress would thus necessitate the adoption of Western domestic habits: the introduction into home of chairs for resting, tables for eating, stoves or fireplaces for warmth (since the warmth of the native robes alone renders these Western comforts at present unnecessary), carpets for floors, glass for windows,—in short, a host of luxuries which the people have always been well able to do without. There is no furniture (according to the European sense of the term) in a Japanese home,—no beds, tables, or chairs. There may be one small book-case, or rather "book-box;" and there are nearly always a pair of chests of drawers in some recess hidden by sliding paper screens; but such articles are quite unlike any Western furniture. As a rule, you will see nothing in a Japanese room except a small brazier of bronze or porcelain, for smoking purposes; a kneeling-mat, or cushion, according to season; and in the alcove only, a picture or a flower vase. For thousands of years Japanese life has been on the floor. Soft as a hair mattress and always immaculately clean, the floor is at once the couch, the dining-table, and most often the writing-table; although there exist tiny pretty writing-tables about one foot high. And the vast economy of such habits of life renders it highly improbable they will ever be abandoned, especially while the pressure of population and the struggle of life continue to increase. It should also be remembered that there exists no precedent of a highly civilized people—such as were the Japanese before the Western aggression upon them—abandoning ancestral habits out of a mere spirit of imitation. Those who

imagine the Japanese to be merely imitative also imagine them to be savages. As a fact, they are not imitative at all: they are assimilative and adoptive only, and that to the degree of genius.

It is probable that careful study of Western experience with fire-proof building-material will eventually result in some changes in Japanese municipal architecture. Already, in some quarters of Tōkyō, there are streets of brick houses. But these brick dwellings are matted in the ancient manner; and their tenants follow the domestic habits of their ancestors. The future architecture of brick or stone is not likely to prove a mere copy of Western construction; it is almost certain to develop new and purely Oriental features of rare interest.

Those who believe the Japanese dominated by some blind admiration for everything Occidental might certainly expect at the open ports to find less of anything purely Japanese (except curios) than in the interior: less of Japanese architecture; less of national dress, manners, and customs; less of native religion, and shrines, and temples. But exactly the reverse is the fact. Foreign buildings there are, but, as a general rule, in the foreign concessions only, and for the use of foreigners. The usual exceptions are a fire-proof post-office, a custom-house, and perhaps a few breweries and cotton-mills. But not only is Japanese architecture excellently represented at all the foreign ports: it is better represented there than in almost any city of the interior. The edifices heighten, broaden, expand; but they remain even more Oriental than elsewhere. At Kobe, at Nagasaki, at Ōsaka, at Yokohama, everything that is essentially and solely Japanese (except moral character) accentuates as if in defiance of foreign influence. Whoever has looked over Kobe from some lofty roof or balcony will have seen perhaps the best possible example of what I mean,—the height, the queerness, the charm of a Japanese port in the nineteenth century, the blue-gray sea of tile-slopes ridged and banded with white, the cedar world of gables and galleries and architectural conceits and whimsicalities indescribable. And nowhere outside of the Sacred City of Kyōto, can you witness a native religious

festival to better advantage than in the open ports; while the multitude of shrines, of temples, of torii, of all the sights and symbols of Shintō and of Buddhism, are scarcely paralleled in any city of the interior except Nikko, and the ancient capitals of Nara and Saikyō. No! the more one studies the characteristics of the open ports, the more one feels that the genius of the race will never voluntarily yield to Western influence, beyond the rules of jiujutsu.

VI

The expectation that Japan would speedily announce to the world her adoption of Christianity was not so unreasonable as some other expectations of former days. Yet it might well seem to have been more so. There were no precedents upon which to build so large a hope. No Oriental race has ever yet been converted to Christianity. Even under British rule, the wonderful labors of the Catholic propaganda in India have been brought to a standstill. In China, after centuries of missions, the very name of Christianity is detested,—and not without cause, since no small number of aggressions upon China have been made in the name of Western religion. Nearer home, we have made even less progress in our efforts to convert Oriental races. There is not the ghost of a hope for the conversion of the Turks, the Arabs, the Moors, or of any Islamic people; and the memory of the Society for the Conversion of the Jews only serves to create a smile. But, even leaving the Oriental races out of the question, we have no conversions whatever to boast of. Never within modern history has Christendom been able to force the acceptance of its dogmas upon a people able to maintain any hope of national existence. The nominal[1] success of missions among a few savage tribes, or the vanishing Maori races, only proves the rule; and unless we accept the rather sinister declaration of Napoleon that missionaries may have great political usefulness, it is not easy to escape the conclusion that the whole work of the foreign mission societies has been little more than a vast expenditure of energy, time, and money, to no real purpose.

In this last decade of the nineteenth century, at all events, the reason should be obvious. A religion means much more than mere dogma about the supernatural: it is the synthesis of the whole ethical experience of a race, the earliest foundation, in many cases, of its wiser laws, and the record, as well as the result, of its social evolution. It is thus essentially a part of the race-life, and cannot possibly be replaced in any natural manner by the ethical and social experience of a totally alien people,—that is to say, by a totally alien religion. And no nation in a healthy social state can voluntarily abandon the faith so profoundly identified with its ethical life. A nation may reshape its dogmas: it may willingly even accept another faith; but it will not voluntarily cast away its older belief, even when the latter has lost all ethical or social usefulness. When China accepted Buddhism, she gave up neither the moral codes of her ancient sages, nor her primitive ancestor-worship; when Japan accepted Buddhism, she did not forsake the Way of the Gods. Parallel examples are yielded by the history of the religions of antique Europe. Only religions the most tolerant can be voluntarily accepted by races totally alien to those that evolved them; and even then only as an addition to what they already possess, never as a substitute for it. Wherefore the great success of the ancient Buddhist missions. Buddhism was an absorbing but never a supplanting power: it incorporated alien faiths into its colossal system, and gave them new interpretation. But the religion of Islam and the religion of Christianity—Western Christianity—have always been religions essentially intolerant, incorporating nothing and zealous to supplant everything. To introduce Christianity, especially into an Oriental country, necessitates the destruction not only of the native faith but of the native social systems as well. Now the lesson of history is that such wholesale destruction, can be accomplished only by force, and, in the case of a highly complex society, only by the most brutal force. And force, the principal instrument of Christian propagandism in the past, is still the force behind our missions. Only we have, or affect to have, substituted money power and menace for the franker edge of the sword; occasionally fulfilling the menace for commercial

reasons in proof of our Christian professions. We force missionaries upon China, for example, under treaty clauses extorted by war; and pledge ourselves to support them with gunboats, and to exact enormous indemnities for the lives of such as get themselves killed. So China pays blood-money at regular intervals, and is learning more and more each year to understand the value of what we call Christianity. And the saying of Emerson, that by some a truth can never be comprehended until its light happens to fall upon a fact, has been recently illustrated by some honest protests against the immorality of missionary aggressions in China,—protests which would never have been listened to before it was discovered that the mission troubles were likely to react against purely commercial interests.

But in spite of the foregoing considerations there was really at one time fair reason for believing the nominal conversion of Japan quite possible. Men could not forget that after the Japanese Government had been forced by political necessity to extirpate the wonderful Jesuit missions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the very word Christian had become a term of hatred and scorn.[2]

But the world had changed since then; Christianity had changed; and more than thirty different Christian sects were ready to compete for the honor of converting Japan. Out of so large a variety of dogmas, representing the principal shades both of orthodoxy and of heterodoxy, Japan might certainly be able to choose a form of Christianity to her own taste! And the conditions of the country were more propitious than ever before for the introduction of some Western religion. The whole social system had been disorganized to the very core; Buddhism had been disestablished, and was tottering under the blow; Shintō appeared to be incapable of resistance; the great military caste had been abolished; the system of rule had been changed; the provinces had been shaken by war; the Mikado, veiled for centuries, had shown himself to his astonished people; the tumultuous flood of new ideas threatened to sweep away all customs and to wreck all beliefs; and the preaching of Christianity had been once more tolerated by law. Nor was this all. In the hour of its

prodigious efforts to reconstruct society, the Government had actually considered the question of Christianity—just as shrewdly and as impartially as it had studied the foreign educational, military, and naval systems. A commission was instructed to report upon the influence of Christianity in checking crime and vice abroad. The result confirmed the impartial verdict of Kaempffer, in the seventeenth century, upon the ethics of the Japanese: "They profess a great respect and veneration for their Gods, and worship them in various ways. And I think I may affirm that, in the practice of virtue, in purity of life, and outward devotion, they far outdo the Christians."

In short, it was wisely decided that the foreign religion, besides its inappropriateness to the conditions of Oriental society, had proved itself less efficacious as an ethical influence in the West than Buddhism had done in the East. Certainly, in the great jiujutsu there could have been little to gain, but much to lose, by a patriarchal society established on the principle of reciprocal duties, through the adoption of the teaching that a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife.[3]

The hope of making Japan Christian by Imperial edict has passed; and with the reorganization of society, the chances of making Christianity, by any means whatever, the national religion, grow less and less. Probably missionaries must be tolerated for some time longer, in spite of their interference in matters altogether outside of their profession; but they will accomplish no moral good, and in the interim they will be used by those whom they desire to use. In 1894 there were in Japan some eight hundred Protestant, ninety-two Roman Catholic, and three Greek Catholic missionaries; and the total expenditure for all the foreign missions in Japan must represent not much less than a million dollars a year,—probably represents more. As a result of this huge disbursement, the various Protestant sects claim to have made about 50,000 converts, and the Catholics an equal number; leaving some thirty-nine million nine hundred thousand unconverted souls. Conventions, and very

malignant ones, forbid all unfavorable criticism of mission reports; but in spite of them I must express my candid opinion that even the above figures are not altogether trustworthy. Concerning the Roman Catholic missions, it is worthy of note that they profess with far smaller means to have done as much work as their rivals; and that even their enemies acknowledge a certain solidity in that work—which begins, rationally enough, with the children. But it is difficult not to feel skeptical as to mission reports: when one knows that among the lowest classes of Japanese there are numbers ready to profess conversion for the sake of obtaining pecuniary assistance or employment; when one knows that poor boys pretend to become Christians for the sake of obtaining instruction in some foreign language; when one hears constantly of young men, who, after professing Christianity for a time, openly return to their ancient gods; when one sees—immediately after the distribution by missionaries of foreign contributions for public relief in time of flood, famine, or earthquake—sudden announcement of hosts of conversions, one is obliged to doubt not only the sincerity of the converted, but the morality of the methods. Nevertheless, the expenditure of one million dollars a year in Japan for one hundred years might produce very large results, the nature of which may be readily conceived, though scarcely admired; and the existing weakness of the native religions, both in regard to educational and financial means of self-defense, tempts aggression. Fortunately there now seems to be more than a mere hope that the Imperial Government will come to the aid of Buddhism in matters educational. On the other hand, there is at least a faint possibility that Christendom, at no very distant era, may conclude that her wealthiest missions are becoming transformed into enormous mutual benefit societies.

[1] Nominal, because the simple fact is that the real object of missions is impossible. This whole question has been very strongly summed up in a few lines by Herbert Spencer:—

"Everywhere, indeed, the special theological bias, accompanying a special set of

doctrines, inevitably prejudges many sociological questions. One who holds a creed to be absolutely true, and who by implication holds the multitudinous other creeds to be absolutely false in so far as they differ from his own, cannot entertain the supposition that the value of a creed is relative. That each religious system is, in its general characters, a natural part of the society in which it is found, is an entirely alien conception, and indeed a repugnant one. His system of dogmatic theology he thinks good for all places and all times. He does not doubt that, when planted among a horde of savages, it will be duly understood by them, duly appreciated by them, and will work upon them results such as those he experiences from it. Thus prepossessed, he passes over the proofs that a people is no more capable of receiving a higher form of religion than it is capable of receiving a higher form of government; and that inevitably along with such religion, as with such government, there will go on a degradation which presently reduces it to one differing but nominally from its predecessor. In other words, his special theological bias blinds him to an important class of sociological truths."

[2] The missionary work was begun by St. Francis Xavier, who landed at Kagoshima in Kyūshū on the 15th of August, 1549. A curious fact is that the word Bateren, a corruption of the Portuguese or Spanish padre, and so adopted into the language two centuries ago, still lingers among the common people in some provinces as a synonym for "wicked magician." Another curious fact worth mentioning is that a particular kind of bamboo screen—from behind which a person can see all that goes on outside the house without being himself seen—is still called a Kirishitan (Christian).

Griffis explains the larger success of the Jesuit missions of the sixteenth century partly by the resemblance between the outer forms of Roman Catholicism and the outer forms of Buddhism. This shrewd judgment has been confirmed by the researches of Ernest Satow (see Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan, vol. ii. part 2), who has published facsimiles of some documents proving that the grant to

the foreign missionaries by the Lord of Yamaguchi was made that they might "preach the law of Buddha,"—the new religion being at first taken for a higher form of Buddhism. But those who have read the old Jesuit letters from Japan, or even the more familiar compilation of Charlevoix, must recognize that the success of the missions could not be thus entirely explained. It presents us with psychological phenomena of a very remarkable order,—phenomena perhaps never again to be repeated in the history of religion, and analogous to those strange forms of emotionalism classed by Hecker as contagious (see his Epidemics of the Middle Ages). The old Jesuits understood the deeper emotional character of the Japanese infinitely better than any modern missionary society: they studied with marvelous keenness all the springs of the race-life, and knew how to operate them. Where they failed, our modern Evangelical propagandists need not hope to succeed. Still, even in the most flourishing period of the Jesuit missions, only six hundred thousand converts were claimed.

[3] A recent French critic declared that the comparatively small number of public charities and benevolent institutions in Japan proved the race deficient in humanity! Now the truth is that in Old Japan the principle of mutual benevolence rendered such institutions unnecessary. And another truth is that the vast number of such institutions in the West testifies much more strongly to the inhumanity than to the charity of our own civilization.

VII

The idea that Japan would throw open her interior to foreign industrial enterprise, soon after the beginning of Meiji, proved as fallacious as the dream of her sudden conversion to Christianity. The country remained, and still remains, practically closed against foreign settlement. The Government itself had never seemed inclined to pursue a conservative policy, and had made various attempts to bring about such a revision of treaties as would have made Japan a new field for large investments of

Western capital Events, however, proved that the national course was not to be controlled by statecraft only, but was to be directed by something much less liable to error,—the Race-Instinct.

The world's greatest philosopher, writing in 1867, uttered this judgment: "Of the way in which disintegrations are liable to be set up in a society that has evolved to the limit of its type, and reached a state of moving equilibrium, a good illustration is furnished by Japan. The finished fabric into which its people had organized themselves maintained an almost constant state so long as it was preserved from fresh external forces. But as soon as it received an impact from European civilization,—partly by armed aggression, partly by commercial impulse, partly by the influence of ideas,—this fabric began to fall to pieces. There is now in progress a political dissolution. Probably a political reorganization will follow; but, be this as it may, the change thus far produced by outer action is a change towards dissolution,—a change from integrated motions to disintegrated motions."[1]

The political reorganization suggested by Mr. Spencer not only followed rapidly, but seemed more than likely to prove all that could be desired, providing the new formative process were not seriously and suddenly interfered with. Whether it would be interfered with by treaty revision, however, appeared a very doubtful question. While some Japanese politicians worked earnestly for the removal of every obstacle to foreign settlement in the interior, others felt that such settlement would mean a fresh introduction into the yet unstable social organism of disturbing elements sure to produce new disintegrations. The argument of the former was that by the advocated revision of existing treaties the revenue of the Empire could be much increased, and that the probable number of foreign settlers would be quite small. But conservative thinkers considered that the real danger of opening the country to foreigners was not the danger of the influx of numbers; and on this point the Race-Instinct agreed with them. It comprehended the peril only in a vague way, but in a way that touched the truth.

One side of that truth ought to be familiar to Americans,—the Occidental side. The Occidental has discovered that, under any conditions of fair play, he cannot compete with the Oriental in the struggle for life: he has fully confessed the fact, both in Australia and in the United States, by the passage of laws to protect himself against Asiatic emigration. For outrages upon Chinese or Japanese immigrants he has nevertheless offered a host of absurd "moral reasons." The only true reason can be formulated in six words: The Oriental can underlive the Occidental. Now in Japan the other face of the question was formulated thus: The Occidental can overlive the Oriental[2] under certain favorable conditions. One condition would be a temperate climate; the other, and the more important, that, in addition to full rights of competition, the Occidental should have power for aggression. Whether he would use such power was not a common-sense question: the real question was, could he use it? And this answered in the affirmative, all discussion as to the nature of his possible future policy of aggrandizement—whether industrial, financial, political, or all three in one—were pure waste of time. It was enough to know that he might eventually find ways and means to master, if not to supplant, the native race; crushing opposition, paralyzing competition by enormous combinations of capital, monopolizing resources, and raising the standard of living above the native capacity. Elsewhere various weaker races had vanished or were vanishing under Anglo-Saxon domination. And in a country so poor as Japan, who could give assurance that the mere admission of foreign capital did not constitute a national danger? Doubtless Japan would never have to fear conquest by any single Western power: she could hold her own, on her own soil, against any one foreign nation. Neither would she have to face the danger of invasion by a combination of military powers: the mutual jealousies of the Occident would render impossible any attack for the mere purpose of territorial acquisition. But she might reasonably fear that, by prematurely opening her interior to foreign settlement, she would condemn herself to the fate of Hawaii,—that her land would pass into alien ownership, that her politics would be

regulated by foreign influence, that her independence would become merely nominal, that her ancient empire would eventually become transformed into a sort of cosmopolitan industrial republic.

Such were the ideas fiercely discussed by opposite parties until the eve of the war with China. Meanwhile the Government had been engaged upon difficult negotiations. To open the country in the face of the anti-foreign reaction seemed in the highest degree dangerous; yet to have the treaties revised without opening the country seemed impossible. It was evident that the steady pressure of the Western powers upon Japan was to be maintained unless their hostile combination could be broken either by diplomacy or by force. The new treaty with England, devised by the shrewdness of Aoki, met the dilemma. By this treaty the country is to be opened; but British subjects cannot own land. They can even hold land only on leases terminating, according to Japanese law, ipso facto with the death of the lessor. No coasting-trade is permitted them—not even to some of the old treaty ports; and all other trade is to be heavily taxed. The foreign concessions are to revert to Japan; British settlers pass under Japanese jurisdiction; England, in fact, loses everything, and Japan gains all by this treaty.

The first publication of the articles stupefied the English merchants, who declared themselves betrayed by the mother-country,—legally tied hand and foot and delivered into Oriental bondage. Some declared their resolve to leave the country before the treaty should be put in force. Certainly Japan may congratulate herself upon her diplomacy. The country is, indeed, to be opened; but the conditions have been made such as not only to deter foreign capital seeking investment, but as even to drive existing capital away. Should similar conditions be obtained from other powers, Japan will have much more than regained all that she lost by former treaties contrived to her disadvantage. The Aoki document surely represents the highest possible feat of jiujutsu in diplomacy.

But no one can well predict what may occur before this or any other new treaty be put into operation. It is still uncertain whether Japan will ultimately win all her ends by jiujutsu, although never in history did any race display such courage and such genius in facing colossal odds. Within the memory of men not yet old, Japan has developed her military power to a par with that of more than one country of Europe; industrially she is fast becoming a competitor of Europe in the markets of the East; educationally she has placed herself also in the front rank of progress, having established a system of schools less costly but scarcely less efficient than those of any Western country. And she has done this in spite of being steadily robbed each year by unjust treaties, in spite of enormous losses by floods and earthquakes, in spite of political troubles at home, in spite of the efforts of foreign proselytizers to sap the national spirit, and in spite of the extraordinary poverty of her people.

[1] First Principles, 2d Ed., § 178.

[2] That is, of course, the Japanese. I do not believe that under any circumstances the Occidentals could overlive the Chinese,—no matter what might be the numerical disproportion. Even the Japanese acknowledge their incapacity to compete with the Chinese; and one of the best arguments against the unreserved opening of the country is the danger of Chinese immigration.

VIII

Should Japan fail in her glorious purpose, her misfortune will certainly not be owing to any lack of national spirit. That quality she possesses in a degree without existing modern parallel,—in a degree that so trite a word as "patriotism" is utterly powerless to represent. However psychologists may theorize on the absence or the limitations of personal individuality among the Japanese, there can be no question at all that, as a nation, Japan possesses an individuality much stronger than our own. Indeed we may doubt whether Western civilization has not cultivated the qualities of the individual even to the destruction of national feeling.

On the topic of duty the entire people has but one mind. Any schoolboy will say to you, if questioned about this subject: "The duty of every Japanese to our Emperor is to help to make our country strong and wealthy, and to help to defend and preserve our national independence." All know the danger. All are morally and physically trained to meet it. Every public school gives its students a preparatory course of military discipline; every town has its bataillons scolaires. Even the children too young to be regularly drilled are daily taught to sing in chorus the ancient songs of loyalty and the modern songs of war. And new patriot songs are composed at regular intervals, and introduced by Government approval into the schools and the camps. It is quite an experience to hear four hundred students chanting one of these at the school in which I teach. The young men are all in uniform on such occasions, and marshaled in military rank. The commanding officer gives the order to "mark time," and all the feet begin to beat the ground together, with a sound as of a drum-roll. Then the leader sings a verse, and the students repeat it with surprising spirit, throwing a peculiar emphasis always on the last syllable of each line, so that the vocal effect is like a crash of musketry. It is a very Oriental, but also a very impressive manner of chanting: you can hear the fierce heart of Old Japan beating through every Word. But still more impressive is the same kind of singing by the soldiery. And at this very moment, while writing these lines, I hear from the ancient castle of Kumamoto, like a pealing of thunder, the evening song of its garrison of eight thousand men, mingled with the long, sweet, melancholy calling of a hundred bugles.[1]

The Government never relaxes its efforts to keep aglow the old sense of loyalty and love of country. New festivals have lately been established to this noble end; and the old ones are celebrated with increasing fervor each succeeding year. Always on the Emperor's birthday, His Imperial Majesty's photograph is solemnly saluted in all the public schools and public offices of the Empire, with appropriate songs and ceremonies.[2] Occasionally some students, under missionary instigation, refuse this

simple tribute of loyalty and gratitude, on the extraordinary ground that they are "Christians," and thus get themselves ostracized by their comrades—sometimes to such an extent that they find it unpleasant to remain in the school. Then the missionaries write home to sectarian papers some story about the persecution of Christians in Japan, "for refusing to worship an Idol of the Emperor"![3] Such incidents are, of course, infrequent, and serve only to indicate those methods by which the foreign evangelizers manage to defeat the real purpose of their mission.

Probably their fanatical attacks, not only upon the native spirit, the native religion, and the native code of ethics, but even upon the native dress and customs, may partly account for some recent extraordinary displays of national feeling by the Japanese Christians themselves. Some have openly expressed their desire to dispense altogether with the presence of foreign proselytizers, and to create a new and peculiar Christianity, to be essentially Japanese and essentially national in spirit. Others have gone much further,—demanding that all mission schools, churches, and other property, now held (to satisfy or evade law) in Japanese names, shall be made over in fact as well as name to Japanese Christians, as a proof of the purity of the motives professed. And in sundry cases it has already been found necessary to surrender mission schools altogether to native direction.

I spoke in a former paper of the splendid enthusiasm with which the entire nation had seconded the educational efforts and purposes of the Government.[4] Not less zeal and self-denial have been shown in aid of the national measures of self-defense. The Emperor himself having set the example, by devoting a large part of his private income to the purchase of ships-of-war, no murmur was excited by the edict requiring one tenth of all government salaries for the same purpose. Every military or naval officer, every professor or teacher, and nearly every employee of the Civil Service[5] thus contributes monthly to the naval defense. Minister, peer, or member of Parliament, is no more exempt than the humblest post-office clerk. Besides these contributions by edict, to continue for six years, generous donations are voluntarily

made by rich land-owners, merchants, and hankers throughout the Empire. For, in order to save herself, Japan must become strong quickly: the outer pressure upon her is much too serious to admit of delay. Her efforts are almost incredible, and their success is not improbable. But the odds against her are vast; and she may—stumble. Will she stumble? It is very hard to predict. But a future misfortune could scarcely be the result of any weakening of the national spirit. It would be far more likely to occur as a result of political mistakes,—of rash self-confidence.

[1] This was written in 1893.

[2] The ceremony of saluting His Majesty's picture is only a repetition of the ceremony required on presentation at court. A bow; three steps forward; a deeper how; three more steps forward, and a very low how. On retiring from the Imperial presence, the visitor walks backward, bowing again three times as before.

[3] This is an authentic text.

[4] See Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan.

[5] Letter-carriers and ordinary policemen are exempted. But the salary of a policeman is only about six yen a month; that of a letter-carrier much less.

IX

It still remains to ask what is the likely fate of the old morality in the midst of all this absorption, assimilation, and reaction. And I think an answer is partly suggested in the following conversation which I had recently with a student of the University. It is written from memory, and is therefore not exactly verbatim, but has interest as representing the thought of the new generation—-witnesses of the vanishing of the gods:—

"Sir, what was your opinion when you first came to this country, about the Japanese? Please to be quite frank with me."

"The young Japanese of to-day?"

"No."

"Then you mean those who still follow the ancient customs, and maintain the ancient forms of courtesy,—the delightful old men, like your former Chinese teacher, who still represent the old samurai spirit?"

"Yes. Mr. A—— is an ideal samurai. I mean such as he."

"I thought them all that is good and noble. They seemed to me just like their own gods."

"And do you still think so well of them?"

"Yes. And the more I see the Japanese of the new generation, the more I admire the men of the old."

"We also admire them. But, as a foreigner, you must also have observed their defects."

"What defects?"

"Defects in practical knowledge of the Western kind."

"But to judge the men of one civilization by the standard requirements of another, which is totally different in organization, would be unjust. It seems to me that the more perfectly a man represents his own civilization, the more we must esteem him as a citizen, and as a gentleman. And judged by their own standards, which were morally very high, the old Japanese appear to me almost perfect men."

"In what respect?"

"In kindness, in courtesy, in heroism, in self-control, in power of self-sacrifice, in filial piety, in simple faith, and in the capacity to be contented with a little."

"But would such qualities be sufficient to assure practical success in the struggle of Western life?"

"Not exactly; but some of them would assist."

"The qualities really necessary for practical success in Western life are just those

qualities wanting to the old Japanese—are they not?"

"I think so."

"And our old society cultivated those qualities of unselfishness, and courtesy, and benevolence which you admire, at the sacrifice of the individual. But Western society cultivates the individual by unrestricted competition,—competition in the power of thinking and acting."

"I think that is true."

"But in order that Japan be able to keep her place among nations, she must adopt the industrial and commercial methods of the West. Her future depends upon her industrial development; but there can be no development if we continue to follow our ancient morals and manners."

"Why?"

"Not to be able to compete with the West means ruin; but to compete with the West we must follow the methods of the West; and these are quite contrary to the old morality."

"Perhaps."

"I do not think it can be doubted. To do any kind of business upon a very large scale, men must not be checked by the idea that no advantage should be sought which could injure the business of others. And on the other hand, wherever there is no restraint on competition, men who hesitate to compete because of mere kindliness of heart, must fail. The law of the struggle is that the strong and active shall win, the weak and the foolish and the indifferent lose. But our old morality condemned such competition."

"That is true."

"Then, Sir, no matter how good the old morality, we cannot make any great industrial progress, nor even preserve our national independence, by following it.

We must forsake our past. We must substitute law for morality."

"But it is not a good substitute."

"It has been a good substitute in the West, if we can judge by the material greatness and power of England. We must learn in Japan to be moral by reason, instead of being moral by emotion. A knowledge of the moral reason of law is itself a moral knowledge."

"For you, and those who study cosmic law, perhaps. But what of the common people?"

"They will try to follow the old religion; they will continue to trust in their gods. But life will, perhaps, become more difficult for them. They were happy in the ancient days."

The foregoing essay was written two years ago. Later political events and the signing of new treaties obliged me to remodel it last year; and now, while the proofs are passing through my hands, the events of the war with China compel some further remarks. What none could have predicted in 1893 the whole world recognizes in 1895 with astonishment and with admiration. Japan has won in her jiujutsu. Her autonomy is practically restored, her place among civilized nations seems to be assured: she has passed forever out of Western tutelage. What neither her arts nor her virtues could ever have gained for her, she has obtained by the very first display of her new scientific powers of aggression and destruction.

Not a little has been hastily said about long secret preparation for the war made by Japan, and about the flimsiness of her pretexts for entering upon it. I believe that the purposes of her military preparations were never other than those indicated in the preceding chapter. It was to recover her independence that Japan steadily cultivated her military strength for twenty-five years. But successive pulses of popular reaction against foreign influence during that period—each stronger than the preceding—warned the Government of the nation's growing consciousness of power

and of its ever-increasing irritation against the treaties. The reaction of 1893-94 took so menacing a form through the House of Representatives that the dissolution of the Diet became an immediate necessity. But even repeated parliamentary dissolutions could only have postponed the issue. It has since been averted partly by the new treaties, and partly by the sudden loosening of the Empire's military force against China. Should it not be obvious that only the merciless industrial and political pressure exercised by a combined Occident against Japan really compelled this war,—as a manifestation of force in the direction of least resistance? Happily that manifestation has been effectual. Japan has proved herself able to hold her own against the world. She has no wish to break her industrial relations with the Occident unless further imposed upon; but with the military revival of her Empire it is almost certain that the day of Occidental influence upon her—whether direct or indirect—is definitely over. Further anti-foreign reaction may be expected in the natural order of things,—not necessarily either violent or unreasonable, but embodying the fullest reassertion of national individuality. Some change even in the form of government is not impossible, considering the questionable results of experimentation with Constitutional Government made by a people accustomed for untold centuries to autocratic rule. But the fallacy of Sir Harry Parkes's prediction that Japan would become "a South American republic" warns against ventures to anticipate the future of this wonderful and enigmatic race.

It is true that the war is not yet over;—but the ultimate triumph of Japan seems beyond doubt,—even allowing for the formidable chances of a revolution in China. The world is already asking with some anxiety what will come next? Perhaps the compulsion of the most peaceable and most conservative of all nations, under both Japanese and Occidental pressure, to really master our arts of war in self-defense. After that perhaps a great military awakening of China, who would be quite likely, under the same circumstances as made New Japan, to turn her arms South and West. For possible ultimate consequences, consult Dr. Pearson's recent book, National

Character.

It is to be remembered that the art of jiujutsu was invented in China. And the West has yet to reckon with China,—China, the ancient teacher of Japan,—China, over whose changeless millions successive storms of conquest have passed only as a wind over reeds. Under compulsion, indeed, she may be forced, like Japan, to defend her integrity by jiujutsu. But the end of that prodigious jiujutsu might have results the most serious for the entire world. It might be reserved for China to avenge all those aggressions, extortions, exterminations, of which the colonizing West has been guilty in dealing with feebler races.

Already thinkers, summarizing the experience of the two great colonizing nations,—thinkers not to be ignored, both French and English,—have predicted that the earth will never be fully dominated by the races of the West, and that the future belongs to the Orient. Such, too, are the convictions of many who have learned by long sojourn in the East to see beneath the surface of that strange humanity so utterly removed from us in thought,—to comprehend the depth and force of its tides of life,—to understand its immeasurable capacities of assimilation,—to discern its powers of self-adaptation to almost any environment between the arctic and antarctic circles. And in the judgment of such observers nothing less than the extermination of a race comprising more than one third of the world's population could now assure us even of the future of our own civilization.

Perhaps, as has been recently averred by Dr. Pearson, the long history of Western expansion and aggression is even now approaching its close. Perhaps our civilization has girdled the earth only to force the study of our arts of destruction and our arts of industrial competition upon races much more inclined to use them against us than for us. Even to do this we had to place most of the world under tribute,—so colossal were the powers needed. Perhaps we could not have attempted less, because the tremendous social machinery we have created, threatens, like the Demon of the old

legend, to devour us in the same hour that we can find no more tasks for it.

A wondrous creation, indeed, this civilization of ours,—ever growing higher out of an abyss of ever-deepening pain; but it seems also to many not less monstrous than wonderful. That it may crumble suddenly in a social earthquake has long been the evil dream of those who dwell in its summits. That as a social structure it cannot endure, by reason of its moral foundation, is the teaching of Oriental wisdom.

Certainly the results of its labors cannot pass away till man shall have fully played out the drama of his existence upon this planet. It has resurrected the past;—it has revived the languages of the dead;—it has wrested countless priceless secrets from Nature;—it has analyzed suns and vanquished space and time;—it has compelled the invisible to become visible;—it has torn away all veils save the veil of the Infinite;—it has founded ten thousand systems of knowledge;—it has expanded the modern brain beyond the cubic capacity of the mediæval skull;—it has evolved the most noble, even if it has also evolved the most detestable, forms of individuality;—it has developed the most exquisite sympathies and the loftiest emotions known to man, even though it has developed likewise forms of selfishness and of suffering impossible in other eras. Intellectually it has grown beyond the altitude of the stars. That it must, in any event, bear to the future a relation incomparably vaster than that of Greek civilization to the past, is impossible to disbelieve.

But more and more each year it exemplifies the law that the greater the complexity of an organism, the greater also its susceptibility to fatal hurt Always, as its energies increase, is there evolved within it a deeper, a keener, a more exquisitely ramified sensibility to every shock or wound,—to every exterior force of change. Already the mere results of a drought or a famine in the remotest parts of the earth, the destruction of the smallest centre of supply, the exhaustion of a mine, the least temporary stoppage of any commercial vein or artery, the slightest pressure upon

any industrial nerve, may produce disintegrations that carry shocks of pain into every portion of the enormous structure. And the wondrous capacity of that structure to oppose exterior forces by corresponding changes within itself would appear to be now endangered by internal changes of a totally different character. Certainly our civilization is developing the individual more and more. But is it not now developing him much as artificial heat and colored light and chemical nutrition might develop a plant under glass? Is it not rapidly evolving millions into purely special fitness for conditions impossible to maintain,—of luxury without limit for the few, of merciless servitude to steel and steam for the many? To such doubts the reply has been given that social transformations will supply the means of providing against perils, and of recuperating all losses. That, for a time at least, social reforms will work miracles is much more than a hope. But the ultimate problem of our future seems to be one that no conceivable social change can happily solve,—not even supposing possible the establishment of an absolutely perfect communism,—because the fate of the higher races seems to depend upon their true value in the future economy of Nature. To the query, "Are we not the Superior Race?"—we may emphatically answer "Yes;" but this affirmative will not satisfactorily answer a still more important question, "Are we the fittest to survive?"

Wherein consists the fitness for survival? In the capacity of self-adaptation to any and every environment;—in the instantaneous ability to face the unforeseen;—in the inherent power to meet and to master all opposing natural influences. And surely not in the mere capacity to adapt ourselves to factitious environments of our own invention, or to abnormal influences of our own manufacture,—but only in the simple power to live. Now in this simple power of living, our so-called higher races are immensely inferior to the races of the Far East. Though the physical energies and the intellectual resources of the Occidental exceed those of the Oriental, they can be maintained only at an expense totally incommensurate with the racial advantage. For the Oriental has proved his ability to study and to master the results of our science

upon a diet of rice, and on as simple a diet can learn to manufacture and to utilize our most complicated inventions. But the Occidental cannot even live except at a cost sufficient for the maintenance of twenty Oriental lives. In our very superiority lies the secret of our fatal weakness. Our physical machinery requires a fuel too costly to pay for the running of it in a perfectly conceivable future period of race-competition and pressure of population.

Before, and very probably since, the apparition of Man, various races of huge and wonderful creatures, now extinct, lived on this planet. They were not all exterminated by the attacks of natural enemies: many seem to have perished simply by reason of the enormous costliness of their structures at a time when the earth was forced to become less prodigal of her gifts. Even so it may be that the Western Races will perish—because of the cost of their existence. Having accomplished their uttermost, they may vanish from the face of the world,—supplanted by peoples better fitted for survival.

Just as we have exterminated feebler races by merely overliving them,—by monopolizing and absorbing, almost without conscious effort, everything necessary to their happiness,—so may we ourselves be exterminated at last by races capable of underliving us, of monopolizing all our necessities; races more patient, more self-denying, more fertile, and much less expensive for Nature to support. These would doubtless inherit our wisdom, adopt our more useful inventions, continue the best of our industries,—perhaps even perpetuate what is most worthy to endure in our sciences and our arts. But they would scarcely regret our disappearance any more than we ourselves regret the extinction of the dinotherium or the ichthyosaurus.

VIII

THE RED BRIDAL

Falling in love at first sight is less common in Japan than in the West; partly because

of the peculiar constitution of Eastern society, and partly because much sorrow is prevented by early marriages which parents arrange. Love suicides, on the other hand, are not infrequent; but they have the particularity of being nearly always double. Moreover, they must be considered, in the majority of instances, the results of improper relationships. Still, there are honest and brave exceptions; and these occur usually in country districts. The love in such a tragedy may have evolved suddenly out of the most innocent and natural boy-and-girl friendship, and may have a history dating back to the childhood of the victims. But even then there remains a very curious difference between a Western double suicide for love and a Japanese jōshi. The Oriental suicide is not the result of a blind, quick frenzy of pain. It is not only cool and methodical: it is sacramental. It involves a marriage of which the certificate is death. The twain pledge themselves to each other in the presence of the gods, write their farewell letters, and die. No pledge can be more profoundly sacred than this. And therefore, if it should happen that, by sudden outside interference and by medical skill, one of the pair is snatched from death, that one is bound by the most solemn obligation of love and honor to cast away life at the first possible opportunity. Of course, if both are saved, all may go well. But it were better to commit any crime of violence punishable with half a hundred years of state prison than to become known as a man who, after pledging his faith to die with a girl, had left her to travel to the Meido alone. The woman who should fail in her vow might be partially forgiven; but the man who survived a jōshi through interference, and allowed himself to live on because his purpose was once frustrated, would be regarded all his mortal days as a perjurer, a murderer, a bestial coward, a disgrace to human nature. I knew of one such case—but I would now rather try to tell the story of an humble love affair which happened at a village in one of the eastern provinces.

I

The village stands on the bank of a broad but very shallow river, the stony bed of which is completely covered with water only during the rainy season. The river

traverses an immense level of rice-fields, open to the horizon north and south, but on the west walled in by a range of blue peaks, and on the east by a chain of low wooded hills. The village itself is separated from these hills only by half a mile of rice-fields; and its principal cemetery, the adjunct of a Buddhist temple dedicated to Kwannon-of-the-Eleven-Faces, is situated upon a neighboring summit. As a distributing centre, the village is not unimportant. Besides several hundred thatched dwellings of the ordinary rustic style, it contains one whole street of thriving two-story shops and inns with handsome tiled roofs. It possesses also a very picturesque ujigami, or Shintō parish temple, dedicated to the Sun-Goddess, and a pretty shrine, in a grove of mulberry-trees, dedicated to the Deity of Silkworms.

There was born in this village, in the seventh year of Meiji, in the house of one Uchida, a dyer, a boy called Tarō. His birthday happened to be an aku-nichi, or unlucky day,—the seventh of the eighth month, by the ancient Calendar of Moons. Therefore his parents, being old-fashioned folk, feared and sorrowed. But sympathizing neighbors tried to persuade them that everything was as it should be, because the calendar had been changed by the Emperor's order, and according to the new calendar the day was a kitsu-nichi, or lucky day. These representations somewhat lessened the anxiety of the parents; but when they took the child to the ujigami, they made the gods a gift of a very large paper lantern, and besought earnestly that all harm should be kept away from their boy. The kannushi, or priest, repeated the archaic formulas required, and waved the sacred gohei above the little shaven head, and prepared a small amulet to be suspended about the infant's neck; after which the parents visited the temple of Kwannon on the hill, and there also made offerings, and prayed to all the Buddhas to protect their first-born.

II

When Tarō was six years old, his parents decided to send him to the new elementary school which had been built at a short distance from the village. Tarō's grandfather

bought him some writing-brushes, paper, a book, and a slate, and early one morning led him by the hand to the school. Tarō felt very happy, because the slate and the other things delighted him like so many new toys, and because everybody had told him that the school was a pleasant place, where he would have plenty of time to play. Moreover, his mother had promised to give him many cakes when he should come home.

As soon as they reached the school,—a big two-story building with glass windows,—a servant showed them into a large bare apartment, where a serious-looking man was seated at a desk. Tarō's grandfather bowed low to the serious-looking man, and addressed him as Sensei, and humbly requested him to teach the little fellow kindly. The Sensei rose up, and bowed in return, and spoke courteously to the old man. He also put his hand on Tarō's head, and said nice things. But Taro became all at once afraid. When his grandfather had bid him good-by, he grew still more afraid, and would have liked to run away home; but the master took him into a large, high, white room, full of girls and boys sitting on benches, and showed him a bench, and told him to sit down. All the boys and girls turned their heads to look at Tarō, and whispered to each other, and laughed. Tarō thought they were laughing at him, and began to feel very miserable. A big bell rang; and the master, who had taken his place on a high platform at the other end of the room, ordered silence in a tremendous way that terrified Tarō. All became quiet, and the master began to speak. Tarō thought he spoke most dreadfully. He did not say that school was a pleasant place: he told the pupils very plainly that it was not a place for play, but for hard work. He told them that study was painful, but that they must study in spite of the pain and the difficulty. He told them about the rules which they must obey, and about the punishments for disobedience or carelessness. When they all became frightened and still, he changed his voice altogether, and began to talk to them like a kind father,—promising to love them just like his own little ones. Then he told them how the school had been built by the august command of His

Imperial Majesty, that the boys and girls of the country might become wise men and good women, and how dearly they should love their noble Emperor, and be happy even to give their lives for his sake. Also he told them how they should love their parents, and how hard their parents had to work for the means of sending them to school, and how wicked and ungrateful it would be to idle during study-hours. Then he began to call them each by name, asking questions about what he had said.

Tarō had heard only a part of the master's discourse. His small mind was almost entirely occupied by the fact that all the boys and girls had looked at him and laughed when he had first entered the room. And the mystery of it all was so painful to him that he could think of little else, and was therefore quite unprepared when the master called his name.

"Uchida Tarō, what do you like best in the world?"

Tarō started, stood up, and answered frankly,—

"Cake."

All the boys and girls again looked at him and laughed; and the master asked reproachfully, "Uchida Tarō, do you like cake more than you like your parents? Uchida Tarō, do you like cake better than your duty to His Majesty our Emperor?"

Then Tarō knew that he had made some great mistake; and his face became very hot, and all the children laughed, and he began to cry. This only made them laugh still more; and they kept on laughing until the master again enforced silence, and put a similar question to the next pupil. Tarō kept his sleeve to his eyes, and sobbed.

The bell rang. The master told the children they would receive their first writing-lesson during the next class-hour from another teacher, but that they could first go out and play for a while. He then left the room; and the boys and girls all ran out into the school-yard to play, taking no notice whatever of Tarō. The child felt more astonished at being thus ignored than he had felt before on finding himself an object of general attention. Nobody except the master had yet spoken one word to

him; and now even the master seemed to have forgotten his existence. He sat down again on his little bench, and cried and cried; trying all the while not to make a noise, for fear the children would come back to laugh at him.

Suddenly a hand was laid upon his shoulder: a sweet voice was speaking to him; and turning his head, he found himself looking into the most caressing pair of eyes he had ever seen,—the eyes of a little girl about a year older than he.

"What is it?" she asked him tenderly.

Tarō sobbed and snuffled helplessly for a moment, before he could answer: "I am very unhappy here. I want to go home."

"Why?" questioned the girl, slipping an arm about his neck.

"They all hate me; they will not speak to me or play with me."

"Oh no!" said the girl. "Nobody dislikes you at all. It is only because you are a stranger. When I first went to school, last year, it was just the same with me. You must not fret."

"But all the others are playing; and I must sit in here," protested Tarō.

"Oh no, you must not. You must come and play with me. I will be your playfellow. Come!"

Taro at once began to cry out loud. Self-pity and gratitude and the delight of newfound sympathy filled his little heart so full that he really could not help it. It was so nice to be petted for crying.

But the girl only laughed, and led him out of the room quickly, because the little mother soul in her divined the whole situation. "Of course you may cry, if you wish," she said; "but you must play, too!" And oh, what a delightful play they played together!

But when school was over, and Tarō's grandfather came to take him home, Tarō began to cry again, because it was necessary that he should bid his little playmate

good-by.

The grandfather laughed, and exclaimed, "Why, it is little Yoshi,—Miyahara O-Yoshi! Yoshi can come along with us, and stop at the house a while. It is on her way home."

At Tarō's house the playmates ate the promised cake together; and O-Yoshi mischievously asked, mimicking the master's severity, "Uchida Tarō, do you like cake better than me?"

III

O-Yoshi's father owned some neighboring rice-lands, and also kept a shop in the village. Her mother, a samurai, adopted into the Miyahara family at the time of the breaking up of the military caste, had borne several children, of whom O-Yoshi, the last, was the only survivor. While still a baby, O-Yoshi lost her mother. Miyahara was past middle age; but he took another wife, the daughter of one of his own farmers,—a young girl named Ito O-Tama. Though swarthy as new copper, O-Tama was a remarkably handsome peasant girl, tall, strong, and active; but the choice caused surprise, because O-Tama could neither read nor write. The surprise changed to amusement when it was discovered that almost from the time of entering the house she had assumed and maintained absolute control. But the neighbors stopped laughing at Miyahara's docility when they learned more about O-Tama. She knew her husband's interests better than he, took charge of everything, and managed his affairs with such tact that in less than two years she had doubled his income. Evidently, Miyahara had got a wife who was going to make him rich. As a step-mother she bore herself rather kindly, even after the birth of her first boy. O-Yoshi was well cared for, and regularly sent to school.

While the children were still going to school, a long-expected and wonderful event took place. Strange tall men with red hair and beards—foreigners from the West—came down into the valley with a great multitude of Japanese laborers, and

constructed a railroad. It was carried along the base of the low hill range, beyond the rice-fields and mulberry groves in the rear of the village; and almost at the angle where it crossed the old road leading to the temple of Kwannon, a small station-house was built; and the name of the village was painted in Chinese characters upon a white signboard erected on a platform. Later, a line of telegraph-poles was planted, parallel with the railroad. And still later, trains came, and shrieked, and stopped, and passed,—nearly shaking the Buddhas in the old cemetery off their lotus-flowers of stone.

The children wondered at the strange, level, ash-strewn way, with its double lines of iron shining away north and south into mystery; and they were awe-struck by the trains that came roaring and screaming and smoking, like storm-breathing dragons, making the ground quake as they passed by. But this awe was succeeded by curious interest,—an interest intensified by the explanations of one of their school-teachers, who showed them, by drawings on the blackboard, how a locomotive engine was made; and who taught them, also, the still more marvelous operation of the telegraph, and told them how the new western capital and the sacred city of Kyoto were to be united by rail and wire, so that the journey between them might be accomplished in less than two days, and messages sent from the one to the other in a few seconds.

Taro and O-Yoshi became very dear friends. They studied together, played together, and visited each other's homes. But at the age of eleven O-Yoshi was taken from school to assist her step-mother in the household; and thereafter Tarō saw her but seldom. He finished his own studies at fourteen, and began to learn his father's trade. Sorrows came. After having given him a little brother, his mother died; and in the same year, the kind old grandfather who had first taken him to school followed her; and after these things the world seemed to him much less bright than before. Nothing further changed his life till he reached his seventeenth year. Occasionally he would visit the home of the Miyahara, to talk with O-Yoshi. She had grown up

into a slender, pretty woman; but for him she was still only the merry playfellow of happier days.

IV

One soft spring day, Tarō found himself feeling very lonesome, and the thought came to him that it would be pleasant to see O-Yoshi. Probably there existed in his memory some constant relation between the sense of lonesomeness in general and the experience of his first schoolday in particular. At all events, something within him—perhaps that a dead mother's love had made, or perhaps something belonging to other dead people—wanted a little tenderness, and he felt sure of receiving the tenderness from O-Yoshi. So he took his way to the little shop. As he approached it, he heard her laugh, and it sounded wonderfully sweet. Then he saw her serving an old peasant, who seemed to be quite pleased, and was chatting garrulously. Tarō had to wait, and felt vexed that he could not at once get O-Yoshi's talk all for himself; but it made him a little happier even to be near her. He looked and looked at her, and suddenly began to wonder why he had never before thought how pretty she was. Yes, she was really pretty,—more pretty than any other girl in the village. He kept on looking and wondering, and always she seemed to be growing prettier. It was very strange; he could not understand it. But O-Yoshi, for the first time, seemed to feel shy under that earnest gaze, and blushed to her little ears. Then Tarō felt quite sure that she was more beautiful than anybody else in the whole world, and sweeter, and better, and that he wanted to tell her so; and all at once he found himself angry with the old peasant for talking so much to O-Yoshi, just as if she were a common person. In a few minutes the universe had been quite changed for Taro, and he did not know it. He only knew that since he last saw her O-Yoshi had become divine; and as soon as the chance came, he told her all his foolish heart, and she told him hers. And they wondered because their thoughts were so much the same; and that was the beginning of great trouble.

V

The old peasant whom Tarō had once seen talking to O-Yoshi had not visited the shop merely as a customer. In addition to his real calling he was a professional nakōdo, or match-maker, and was at that very time acting in the service of a wealthy rice dealer named Okazaki Yaïchirō. Okazaki had seen O-Yoshi, had taken a fancy to her, and had commissioned the nakōdo to find out everything possible about her, and about the circumstances of her family.

Very much detested by the peasants, and even by his more immediate neighbors in the village, was Okazaki Yaïchirō. He was an elderly man, gross, hard-featured, with a loud, insolent manner. He was said to be malignant. He was known to have speculated successfully in rice during a period of famine, which the peasant considers a crime, and never forgives. He was not a native of the ken, nor in any way related to its people, but had come to the village eighteen years before, with his wife and one child, from some western district. His wife had been dead two years, and his only son, whom he was said to have treated cruelly, had suddenly left him, and gone away, nobody knew whither. Other unpleasant stories were told about him. One was that, in his native western province, a furious mob had sacked his house and his godowns, and obliged him to fly for his life. Another was that, on his wedding night, he had been compelled to give a banquet to the god Jizō.

It is still customary in some provinces, on the occasion of the marriage of a very unpopular farmer, to make the bridegroom feast Jizō. A band of sturdy young men force their way into the house, carrying with them a stone image of the divinity, borrowed from the highway or from some neighboring cemetery. A large crowd follows them. They deposit the image in the guest-room, and they demand that ample offerings of food and of saké be made to it at once. This means, of course, a big feast for themselves, and it is more than dangerous to refuse. All the uninvited guests must be served till they can neither eat nor drink any more. The obligation to

give such a feast is not only a public rebuke: it is also a lasting public disgrace.

In his old age, Okazaki wished to treat himself to the luxury of a young and pretty wife; but in spite of his wealth he found this wish less easy to gratify than he had expected. Various families had checkmated his proposals at once by stipulating impossible conditions. The Headman of the village had answered, less politely, that he would sooner give his daughter to an oni (demon). And the rice dealer would probably have found himself obliged to seek for a wife in some other district, if he had not happened, after these failures, to notice O-Yoshi. The girl much more than pleased him; and he thought he might be able to obtain her by making certain offers to her people, whom he supposed to be poor. Accordingly, he tried, through the nakōdo, to open negotiations with the Miyahara family.

O-Yoshi's peasant step-mother, though entirely uneducated, was very much the reverse of a simple woman. She had never loved her step-daughter, but was much too intelligent to be cruel to her without reason. Moreover, O-Yoshi was far from being in her way. O-Yoshi was a faithful worker, obedient, sweet-tempered, and very useful in the house. But the same cool shrewdness that discerned O-Yoshi's merits also estimated the girl's value in the marriage market. Okazaki never suspected that he was going to deal with his natural superior in cunning. O-Tama knew a great deal of his history. She knew the extent of his wealth. She was aware of his unsuccessful attempts to obtain a wife from various families, both within and without the village. She suspected that O-Yoshi's beauty might have aroused a real passion, and she knew that an old man's passion might be taken advantage of in a large number of cases. O-Yoshi was not wonderfully beautiful, but she was a really pretty and graceful girl, with very winning ways; and to get another like her, Okazaki would have to travel far. Should he refuse to pay well for the privilege of obtaining such a wife, O-Tama knew of younger men who would not hesitate to be generous. He might have O-Yoshi, but never upon easy terms. After the repulse of his first advances, his conduct would betray him. Should he prove to be really

enamored, he could be forced to do more than any other resident of the district could possibly afford. It was therefore highly important to discover the real strength of his inclination, and to keep the whole matter, in the mean time, from the knowledge of O-Yoshi. As the reputation of the nakōdo depended on professional silence, there was no likelihood of his betraying the secret.

The policy of the Miyahara family was settled in a consultation between O-Yoshi's father and her step-mother. Old Miyahara would have scarcely presumed, in any event, to oppose his wife's plans; but she took the precaution of persuading him, first of all, that such a marriage ought to be in many ways to his daughter's interest. She discussed with him the possible financial advantages of the union. She represented that there were, indeed, unpleasant risks, but that these could be provided against by making Okazaki agree to certain preliminary settlements. Then she taught her husband his rôle. Pending negotiations, the visits of Tarō were to be encouraged. The liking of the pair for each other was a mere cobweb of sentiment that could be brushed out of existence at the required moment; and meantime it was to be made use of. That Okazaki should hear of a likely young rival might hasten desirable conclusions.

It was for these reasons that, when Tarō's father first proposed for O-Yoshi in his son's name, the suit was neither accepted nor discouraged. The only immediate objection offered was that O-Yoshi was one year older than Taro, and that such a marriage would be contrary to custom,—which was quite true. Still, the objection was a weak one, and had been selected because of its apparent unimportance.

Okazaki's first overtures were at the same time received in suck a manner as to convey the impression that their sincerity was suspected. The Miyahara refused to understand the nakōdo at all. They remained astonishingly obtuse even to the plainest assurances, until Okazaki found it politic to shape what he thought a tempting offer. Old Miyahara then declared that he would leave the matter in his

wife's hands, and abide by her decision.

O-Tama decided by instantly rejecting the proposal, with every appearance of scornful astonishment. She said unpleasant things. There was once a man who wanted to get a beautiful wife very cheap. At last he found a beautiful woman who said she ate only two grains of rice every day. So he married her; and every day she put into her mouth only two grains of rice; and he was happy. But one night, on returning from a journey, he watched her secretly through a hole in the roof, and saw her eating monstrously,—devouring mountains of rice and fish, and putting all the food into a hole in the top of her head under her hair. Then he knew that he had married the Yama-Omba.

O-Tama waited a month for the results of her rebuff,—waited very confidently, knowing how the imagined value of something wished for can be increased by the increase of the difficulty of getting it. And, as she expected, the nakōdo at last reappeared. This time Okazaki approached the matter less condescendingly than before; adding to his first offer, and even volunteering seductive promises. Then she knew she was going to have him in her power. Her plan of campaign was not complicated, but it was founded upon a deep instinctive knowledge of the uglier side of human nature; and she felt sure of success. Promises were for fools; legal contracts involving conditions were traps for the simple. Okazaki should yield up no small portion of his property before obtaining O-Yoshi.

VI

Taro's father earnestly desired his son's marriage with O-Yoshi, and had tried to bring it about in the usual way. He was surprised at not being able to get any definite answer from the Miyahara. He was a plain, simple man; but he had the intuition of sympathetic natures, and the unusually gracious manner of O-Tama, whom he had always disliked, made him suspect that he had nothing to hope. He thought it best to tell his suspicions to Tarō, with the result that the lad fretted himself into a fever.

But O-Yoshi's step-mother had no intention of reducing Taro to despair at so early a stage of her plot. She sent kindly worded messages to the house during his illness, and a letter from O-Yoshi, which had the desired effect of reviving all his hopes. After his sickness, he was graciously received by the Miyahara, and allowed to talk to O-Yoshi in the shop. Nothing, however, was said about his father's visit.

The lovers had also frequent chances to meet at the ujigami court, whither O-Yoshi often went with her step-mother's last baby. Even among the crowd of nurse-girls, children, and young mothers, they could exchange a few words without fear of gossip. Their hopes received no further serious check for a month, when O-Taina pleasantly proposed to Tarō's father an impossible pecuniary arrangement. She had lifted a corner of her mask, because Okazaki was struggling wildly in the net she had spread for him, and by the violence of the struggles she knew the end was not far off. O-Yoshi was still ignorant of what was going on; but she had reason to fear that she would never be given to Tarō. She was becoming thinner and paler.

Tarō one morning took his child-brother with him to the temple court, in the hope of an opportunity to chat with O-Yoshi. They met; and he told her that he was feeling afraid. He had found that the little wooden amulet which his mother had put about his neck when he was a child had been broken within the silken cover.

"That is not bad luck," said O-Yoshi. "It is only a sign that the august gods have been guarding you. There has been sickness in the village; and you caught the fever, but you got well. The holy charm shielded you: that is why it was broken. Tell the kannushi to-day: he will give you another."

Because they were very unhappy, and had never done harm to anybody, they began to reason about the justice of the universe.

Tarō said: "Perhaps in the former life we hated each other. Perhaps I was unkind to you, or you to me. And this is our punishment. The priests say so."

O-Yoshi made answer with something of her old playfulness: "I was a man then, and

you were a woman. I loved you very, very much; but you were very unkind to me. I remember it all quite well."

"You are not a Bosatsu," returned Taro, smiling despite his sorrow; "so you cannot remember anything. It is only in the first of the ten states of Bosatsu that we begin to remember."

"How do you know I am not a Bosatsu?"

"You are a woman. A woman cannot be a Bosatsu."

"But is not Kwan-ze-on Bosatsu a woman?"

"Well, that is true. But a Bosatsu cannot love anything except the kyō."

"Did not Shaka have a wife and a son? Did he not love them?"

"Yes; but you know he had to leave them."

"That was very bad, even if Shaka did it. But I don't believe all those stories. And would you leave me, if you could get me?"

So they theorized and argued, and even laughed betimes: it was so pleasant to be together. But suddenly the girl became serious again, and said:—

"Listen! Last night I saw a dream. I saw a strange river, and the sea. I was standing, I thought, beside the river, very near to where it flowed into the sea. And I was afraid, very much afraid, and did not know why. Then I looked, and saw there was no water in the river, no water in the sea, but only the bones of the Buddhas. But they were all moving, just like water.

"Then again I thought I was at home, and that you had given me a beautiful gift-silk for a kimono, and that the kimono had been made. And I put it on. And then I wondered, because at first it had seemed of many colors, but now it was all white; and I had foolishly folded it upon me as the robes of the dead are folded, to the left. Then I went to the homes of all my kinsfolk to say good-by; and I told them I was going to the Meido. And they all asked me why; and I could not answer."

"That is good," responded Tarō; "it is very lucky to dream of the dead. Perhaps it is a sign we shall soon be husband and wife." This time the girl did not reply; neither did she smile.

Tarō was silent a minute; then he added: "If you think it was not a good dream, Yoshi, whisper it all to the nanten plant in the garden: then it will not come true."

But on the evening of the same day Taro's father was notified that Miyahara O-Yoshi was to become the wife of Okazaki Yaïchirō.

VII

O-Tama was really a very clever woman. She had never made any serious mistakes. She was one of those excellently organized beings who succeed in life by the perfect ease with which they exploit inferior natures. The full experience of her peasant ancestry in patience, in cunning, in crafty perception, in rapid foresight, in hard economy, was concentrated into a perfect machinery within her unlettered brain. That machinery worked faultlessly in the environment which had called it into existence, and upon the particular human material with which it was adapted to deal,—the nature of the peasant. But there was another nature which O-Tama understood less well, because there was nothing in her ancestral experience to elucidate it. She was a strong disbeliever in all the old ideas about character distinctions between samurai and heimin. She considered there had never been any differences between the military and the agricultural classes, except such differences of rank as laws and customs had established; and these had been bad. Laws and customs, she thought, had resulted in making all people of the former samurai class more or less helpless and foolish; and secretly she despised all shizoku. By their incapacity for hard work and their absolute ignorance of business methods, she had seen them reduced from wealth to misery. She had seen the pension bonds given them by the new government pass from their hands into the clutches of cunning speculators of the most vulgar class. She despised weakness; she despised

incapacity; and she deemed the commonest vegetable seller a much superior being to the ex-Karō obliged in his old age to beg assistance from those who had formerly cast off their footgear and bowed their heads to the mud whenever he passed by. She did not consider it an advantage for O-Yoshi to have had a samurai mother: she attributed the girl's delicacy to that cause, and thought her descent a misfortune. She had clearly read in O-Yoshi's character all that could be read by one not of a superior caste; among other facts, that nothing would be gained by needless harshness to the child, and the implied quality was not one that she disliked. But there were other qualities in O-Yoshi that she had never clearly perceived,—a profound though well-controlled sensitiveness to moral wrong, an unconquerable self-respect, and a latent reserve of will power that could triumph over any physical pain. And thus it happened that the behavior of O-Yoshi, when told she would have to become the wife of Okazaki, duped her step-mother, who was prepared to encounter a revolt. She was mistaken.

At first the girl turned white as death. But in another moment she blushed, smiled, bowed down, and agreeably astonished the Miyahara by announcing, in the formal language of filial piety, her readiness to obey the will of her parents in all things. There was no further appearance even of secret dissatisfaction in her manner; and O-Tama was so pleased that she took her into confidence, and told her something of the comedy of the negotiations, and the full extent of the sacrifices which Okazaki had been compelled to make. Furthermore, in addition to such trite consolations as are always offered to a young girl betrothed without her own consent to an old man, O-Tama gave her some really priceless advice how to manage Okazaki. Tarō's name was not even once mentioned. For the advice O-Yoshi dutifully thanked her step-mother, with graceful prostrations. It was certainly admirable advice. Almost any intelligent peasant girl, fully instructed by such a teacher as O-Tama, might have been able to support existence with Okazaki. But O-Yoshi was only half a peasant girl. Her first sudden pallor and her subsequent crimson flush, after the

announcement of the fate reserved for her, were caused by two emotional sensations of which O-Tama was far from suspecting the nature. Both represented much more complex and rapid thinking than O-Tama had ever done in all her calculating experience.

The first was a shock of horror accompanying the full recognition of the absolute moral insensibility of her step-mother, the utter hopelessness of any protest, the virtual sale of her person to that hideous old man for the sole motive of unnecessary gain, the cruelty and the shame of the transaction. But almost as quickly there rushed to her consciousness an equally complete sense of the need of courage and strength to face the worst, and of subtlety to cope with strong cunning. It was then she smiled. And as she smiled, her young will became steel, of the sort that severs iron without turning edge. She knew at once exactly what to do,—her samurai blood told her that; and she plotted only to gain the time and the chance. And she felt already so sure of triumph that she had to make a strong effort not to laugh aloud. The light in her eyes completely deceived O-Tama, who detected only a manifestation of satisfied feeling, and imagined the feeling due to a sudden perception of advantages to be gained by a rich marriage.

It was the fifteenth day of the ninth month; and the wedding was to be celebrated upon the sixth of the tenth month. But three days later, O-Tama, rising at dawn, found that her step-daughter had disappeared during the night. Tarō Uchida had not been seen by his father since the afternoon of the previous day. But letters from both were received a few hours afterwards.

VIII

The early morning train from Kyōto was in; the little station was full of hurry and noise,—clattering of geta, humming of converse, and fragmentary cries of village boys selling cakes and luncheons: "Kwashi yoros—!" "Sushi yoros—!" "Bentō yoros—!" Five minutes, and the geta clatter, and the banging of carriage doors, and

the shrilling of the boys stopped, as a whistle blew and the train jolted and moved. It rumbled out, puffed away slowly northward, and the little station emptied itself. The policeman on duty at the wicket banged it to, and began to walk up and down the sanded platform, surveying the silent rice-fields.

Autumn had come,—the Period of Great Light. The sun glow had suddenly become whiter, and shadows sharper, and all outlines clear as edges of splintered glass. The mosses, long parched out of visibility by the summer heat, had revived in wonderful patches and bands of bright soft green over all shaded bare spaces of the black volcanic soil; from every group of pine-trees vibrated the shrill wheeze of the tsuku-tsuku-bōshi; and above all the little ditches and canals was a silent flickering of tiny lightnings,—zigzag soundless flashings of emerald and rose and azure-of-steel,—the shooting of dragon-flies.

Now, it may have been due to the extraordinary clearness of the morning air that the policeman was able to perceive, far up the track, looking north, something which caused him to start, to shade his eyes with his hand, and then to look at the clock. But, as a rule, the black eye of a Japanese policeman, like the eye of a poised kite, seldom fails to perceive the least unusual happening within the whole limit of its vision. I remember that once, in far-away Oki, wishing, without being myself observed, to watch a mask-dance in the street before my inn, I poked a small hole through a paper window of the second story, and peered at the performance. Down the street stalked a policeman, in snowy uniform and havelock; for it was midsummer. He did not appear even to see the dancers or the crowd through which he walked without so much as turning his head to either side. Then he suddenly halted, and fixed his gaze exactly on the hole in my shōji; for at that hole he had seen an eye which he had instantly decided, by reason of its shape, to be a foreign eye. Then he entered the inn, and asked questions about my passport, which had already been examined.

What the policeman at the village station observed, and afterwards reported, was that, more than half a mile north of the station, two persons had reached the railroad track by crossing the rice-fields, apparently after leaving a farmhouse considerably to the northwest of the village. One of them, a woman, he judged by the color of her robe and girdle to be very young. The early express train from Tōkyō was then due in a few minutes, and its advancing smoke could be perceived from the station platform. The two persons began to run quickly along the track upon which the train was coming. They ran on out of sight round a curve.

Those two persons were Tarō and O-Yoshi. They ran quickly, partly to escape the observation of that very policeman, and partly so as to meet the Tōkyō express as far from the station as possible. After passing the curve, however, they stopped running, and walked, for they could see the smoke coming. As soon as they could see the train itself, they stepped off the track, so as not to alarm the engineer, and waited, hand in hand. Another minute, and the low roar rushed to their ears, and they knew it was time. They stepped back to the track again, turned, wound their arms about each other, and lay down cheek to cheek, very softly and quickly, straight across the inside rail, already ringing like an anvil to the vibration of the hurrying pressure.

The boy smiled. The girl, tightening her arms about his neck, spoke in his ear:—

"For the time of two lives, and of three, I am your wife; you are my husband, Tarō Sama."

Tarō said nothing, because almost at the same instant, notwithstanding frantic attempts to halt a fast train without airbrakes in a distance of little more than a hundred yards, the wheels passed through both,—cutting evenly, like enormous shears.

IX

The village people now put bamboo cups full of flowers upon the single gravestone of the united pair, and burn incense-sticks, and repeat prayers. This is not orthodox

at all, because Buddhism forbids jōshi, and the cemetery is a Buddhist one; but there is religion in it,—a religion worthy of profound respect.

You ask why and how the people pray to those dead. Well, all do not pray to them, but lovers do, especially unhappy ones. Other folk only decorate the tomb and repeat pious texts. But lovers pray there for supernatural sympathy and help. I was myself obliged to ask why, and I was answered simply, "Because those dead suffered so much."

So that the idea which prompts such prayers would seem to be at once more ancient and more modern than Buddhism,—the Idea of the eternal Religion of Suffering.

IX

A WISH FULFILLED

Then, when thou leavest the body, and comest into the free ether, thou shalt be a God undying, everlasting;—neither shall death have any more dominion over thee.—The Golden Verses.

I

The streets were full of white uniforms, and the calling of bugles, and the rumbling of artillery. The armies of Japan, for the third time in history, had subdued Korea; and the Imperial declaration of war against China had been published by the city journals, printed on crimson paper. All the military powers of the Empire were in motion. The first line of reserves had been summoned, and troops were pouring into Kumamoto. Thousands were billeted upon the citizens; for barracks and inns and temples could not shelter the passing host. And still there was no room, though special trains were carrying regiments north, as fast as possible, to the transports waiting at Shimonoseki.

Nevertheless, considering the immensity of the movement, the city was astonishingly quiet. The troops were silent and gentle as Japanese boys in school hours; there was no swaggering, no reckless gayety. Buddhist priests were

addressing squadrons in the courts of the temples; and a great ceremony had already been performed in the parade-ground by the Abbot of the Shin-shū sect, who had come from Kyōto for the occasion. Thousands had been placed by him under the protection of Amida; the laying of a naked razor-blade on each young head, symbolizing voluntary renunciation of life's vanities, was the soldier's consecration. Everywhere, at the shrines of the older faith, prayers were being offered up by priests and people to the shades of heroes who fought and died for their Emperor in ancient days, and to the gods of armies. At the Shintō temple of Fujisaki sacred charms were being distributed to the men. But the most imposing rites were those at Honmyōji, the far-famed monastery of the Nichiren sect, where for three hundred years have reposed the ashes of Kato Kiyomasa, conqueror of Korea, enemy of the Jesuits, protector of the Buddhists;—Honmyōji, where the pilgrim chant of the sacred invocation, Namu-myō-hō-renge-kyō, sounds like the roar of surf;—Honmyōji, where you may buy wonderful little mamori in the shape of tiny Buddhist shrines, each holding a minuscule image of the deified warrior. In the great central temple, and in all the lesser temples that line the long approach, special services were sung, and special prayers were addressed to the spirit of the hero for ghostly aid. The armor, and helmet, and sword of Kiyomasa, preserved in the main shrine for three centuries, were no longer to be seen. Some declared that they had been sent to Korea, to stimulate the heroism of the army. But others told a story of echoing hoofs in the temple court by night, and the passing of a mighty Shadow, risen from the dust of his sleep, to lead the armies of the Son of Heaven once more to conquest. Doubtless even among the soldiers, brave, simple lads from the country, many believed,—just as the men of Athens believed in the presence of Theseus at Marathon. All the more, perhaps, because to no small number of the new recruits Kumamoto itself appeared a place of marvels hallowed by traditions of the great captain, and its castle a world's wonder, built by Kiyomasa after the plan of a stronghold stormed in Chösen.

Amid all these preparations, the people remained singularly quiet. From mere outward signs no stranger could have divined the general feeling.[1] The public calm was characteristically Japanese; the race, like the individual, becoming to all appearance the more self-contained the more profoundly its emotions are called into play. The Emperor had sent presents to his troops in Korea, and words of paternal affection; and citizens, following the august example, were shipping away by every steamer supplies of rice-wine, provisions, fruits, dainties, tobacco, and gifts of all kinds. Those who could afford nothing costlier were sending straw sandals. The entire nation was subscribing to the war fund; and Kumamoto, though by no means wealthy, was doing all that both poor and rich could help her do to prove her loyalty. The check of the merchant mingled obscurely with the paper dollar of the artisan, the laborer's dime, the coppers of the kurumaya, in the great fraternity of unbidden self-denial. Even children gave; and their pathetic little contributions were not refused, lest the universal impulse of patriotism should be in any manner discouraged. But there were special subscriptions also being collected in every street for the support of the families of the troops of the reserves,—married men, engaged mostly in humble callings, who had been obliged of a sudden to leave their wives and little ones without the means to live. That means the citizens voluntarily and solemnly pledged themselves to supply. One could not doubt that the soldiers, with all this unselfish love behind them, would perform even more than simple duty demanded.

And they did.

[1] This was written in Kumamoto during the fall of 1894. The enthusiasm of the nation was concentrated and silent; but under that exterior calm smouldered all the fierceness of the old feudal days. The Government was obliged to decline the freely proffered services of myriads of volunteers,—- chiefly swordsmen. Had a call for such volunteers been made I am sure 100,000 men would have answered it within a week. But the war spirit manifested itself in other ways not less painful than

extraordinary. Many killed themselves on being refused the chance of military service; and I may cite at random a few strange facts from the local press. The gendarme at Söul, ordered to escort Minister Otori back to Japan, killed himself for chagrin at not having been allowed to proceed instead to the field of battle. An officer named Ishiyama, prevented by illness from joining his regiment on the day of its departure for Korea, rose from his sick-bed, and, after saluting a portrait of the Emperor, killed himself with his sword. A soldier named Ikeda, at Ōsaka, having been told that because of some breach of discipline he might not be permitted to go to the front, shot himself. Captain Kani, of the "Mixed Brigade," was prostrated by sickness during the attack made by his regiment on a fort near Chinchow, and carried insensible to the hospital. Recovering a week later, he went (November 28) to the spot where he had fallen, and killed himself,—leaving this letter, translated by the Japan Daily Mail: "It was here that illness compelled me to halt and to let my men storm the fort without me. Never can I wipe out such a disgrace in life. To clear my honor I die thus,—leaving this letter to speak for me."

A lieutenant in Tōkyō, finding none to take care of his little motherless girl after his departure, killed her, and joined his regiment before the facts were known. He afterwards sought death on the field and found it, that he might join his child on her journey to the Meido. This reminds one of the terrible spirit of feudal times. The samurai, before going into a hopeless contest, sometimes killed his wife and children the better to forget those three things no warrior should remember on the battle-field,—namely, home, the dear ones, and his own body. After that act of ferocious heroism the samurai was ready for the shini-mono-gurui,—the hour of the "death-fury,"—giving and taking no quarter.

II

Manyemon said there was a soldier at the entrance who wanted to see me.

"Oh, Manyemon, I hope they are not going to billet soldiers upon us!—the house is

too small! Please ask him what he wishes."

"I did," answered Manyemon; "he says he knows you."

I went to the door and looked at a fine young fellow in uniform, who smiled and took off his cap as I came forward. I could not recognize him. The smile was familiar, notwithstanding. Where could I have seen it before?

"Teacher, have you really forgotten me?"

For another moment I stared at him, wondering: then he laughed gently, and uttered his name,—

"Kosuga Asakichi."

How my heart leaped to him as I held out both hands! "Come in, come in!" I cried.

"But how big and handsome you have grown! No wonder I did not know you."

He blushed like a girl, as he slipped off his shoes and unbuckled his sword. I remembered that he used to blush the same way in class, both when he made a mistake, and when he was praised. Evidently his heart was still as fresh as then, when he was a shy boy of sixteen in the school at Matsue. He had got permission to come to bid me good-by: the regiment was to leave in the morning for Korea.

We dined together, and talked of old times,—of Izumo, of Kitzuki, of many pleasant things. I tried in vain at first to make him drink a little wine; not knowing that he had promised his mother never to drink wine while he was in the army. Then I substituted coffee for the wine, and coaxed him to tell me all about himself. He had returned to his native place, after graduating, to help his people, wealthy farmers; and he had found that his agricultural studies at school were of great service to him. A year later, all the youths of the village who had reached the age of nineteen, himself among the number, were summoned to the Buddhist temple for examination as to bodily and educational fitness for military service. He had passed as ichiban (first-class) by the verdicts of the examining surgeon and of the recruiting-major

(shōsa), and had been drawn at the ensuing conscription. After thirteen months' service he had been promoted to the rank of sergeant. He liked the array. At first he had been stationed at Nagoya, then at Tōkyō; but finding that his regiment was not to be sent to Korea, he had petitioned with success for transfer to the Kumamoto division. "And now I am so glad," he exclaimed, his face radiant with a soldier's joy: "we go to-morrow!" Then he blushed again, as if ashamed of having uttered his frank delight. I thought of Carlyle's deep saying, that never pleasures, but only suffering and death are the lures that draw true hearts. I thought also—what I could not say to any Japanese—that the joy in the lad's eyes was like nothing I had ever seen before, except the caress in the eyes of a lover on the morning of his bridal.

"Do you remember," I asked, "when you declared in the schoolroom that you wished to die for His Majesty the Emperor?"

"Yes," he answered, laughing. "And the chance has come,—not for me only, but for several of my class."

"Where are they?" I asked. "With you?"

"No; they were all in the Hiroshima division, and they are already in Korea. Imaoka (you remember him, teacher: he was very tall), and Nagasaki, and Ishihara,—they were all in the fight at Söng-Hwan. And our drill-master, the lieutenant,—you remember him?"

"Lieutenant Fujii, yes. He had retired from the army."

"But he belonged to the reserves. He has also gone to Korea. He has had another son born since you left Izumo."

"He had two little girls and one boy," I said, "when I was in Matsue."

"Yes: now he has two boys."

"Then his family must feel very anxious about him?"

"He is not anxious," replied the lad. "To die in battle is very honorable; and the

Government will care for the families of those who are killed. So our officers have no fear. Only—it is very sad to die if one has no son."

"I cannot see why."

"Is it not so in the West?"

"On the contrary, we think it is very sad for the man to die who has children."

"But why?"

"Every good father must be anxious about the future of his children. If he be taken suddenly away from them, they may have to suffer many sorrows."

"It is not so in the families of our officers. The relations care well for the child, and the Government gives a pension. So the father need not be afraid. But to die is sorrowful for one who has no child."

"Do you mean sorrowful for the wife and the rest of the family?"

"No; I mean for the man himself, the husband."

"And how? Of what use can a son be to a dead man?"

"The son inherits. The son maintains the family name. The son makes the offerings."

"The offerings to the dead?"

"Yes. Do you now understand?"

"I understand the fact, not the feeling. Do military men still hold these beliefs?"

"Certainly. Are there no such beliefs in the West?"

"Not now. The ancient Greeks and Romans had such beliefs. They thought that the ancestral spirits dwelt in the home, received the offerings, watched over the family. Why they thought so, we partly know; but we cannot know exactly how they felt, because we cannot understand feelings which we have never experienced, or which we have not inherited. For the same reason, I cannot know the real feeling of a Japanese in relation to the dead."

"Then you think that death is the end of everything?"

"That is not the explanation of my difficulty. Some feelings are inherited,—perhaps also some ideas. Your feelings and your thoughts about the dead, and the duty of the living to the dead, are totally different from those of an Occidental. To us the idea of death is that of a total separation, not only from the living, but from the world. Does not Buddhism also tell of a long dark journey that the dead must make?"

"The journey to the Meido,—yes. All must make that journey. But we do not think of death as a total separation. We think of the dead as still with us. We speak to them each day."

"I know that. What I do not know are the ideas behind the facts. If the dead go to the Meido, why should offerings be made to ancestors in the household shrines, and prayers be said to them as if they were really present? Do not the common people thus confuse Buddhist teachings and Shintō belief?"

"Perhaps many do. But even by those who are Buddhists only, the offerings and the prayers to the dead are made in different places at the same time,—in the parish temples, and also before the family butsudan."

"But how can souls be thought of as being in the Meido, and also in various other places at the same time? Even if the people believe the soul to be multiple, that would not explain away the contradiction. For the dead, according to Buddhist teaching, are judged."

"We think of the soul both as one and as many. We think of it as of one person, but not as of a substance. We think of it as something that may be in many places at once, like a moving of air."

"Or of electricity?" I suggested.

"Yes."

Evidently, to my young friend's mind the ideas of the Meido and of the

home-worship of the dead had never seemed irreconcilable; and perhaps to any student of Buddhist philosophy the two faiths would not appear to involve any serious contradictions. The Sutra of the Lotus of the Good Law teaches that the Buddha state "is endless and without limit,—immense as the element of ether." Of a Buddha who had long entered into Nirvana it declares, "Even after his complete extinction, he wanders through this whole world in all ten points of space." And the same Sutra, after recounting the simultaneous apparition of all the Buddhas who had ever been, makes the teacher proclaim, "All these you see are my proper bodies, by kotis of thousands, like the sands of the Ganges: they have appeared that the law may be fulfilled." But it seemed to me obvious that, in the artless imagination of the common people, no real accord could ever have been established between the primitive conceptions of Shintō and the much more definite Buddhist doctrine of a judgment of souls.

"Can you really think of death," I asked, "as life, as light?"

"Oh yes," was the smiling answer. "We think that after death we shall still be with our families. We shall see our parents, our friends. We shall remain in this world,—the light as now."

(There suddenly recurred to me, with new meaning, some words of a student's composition regarding the future of a just man: His soul shall hover eternally in the universe.)

"And therefore," continued Asakichi, "one who has a son can die with a cheerful mind."

"Because the son will make those offerings of food and drink without which the spirit would suffer?" I queried.

"It is not only that. There are duties much more important than the making of offerings. It is because every man needs some one to love him after he is dead. Now you will understand."

"Only your words," I replied, "only the facts of the belief. The feeling I do not understand. I cannot think that the love of the living could make me happy after death. I cannot even imagine myself conscious of any love after death. And you, you are going far away to battle,—do you think it unfortunate that you have no son?"

"I? Oh no! I myself am a son,—a younger son. My parents are still alive and strong, and my brother is caring for them. If I am killed, there will be many at home to love me,—brothers, sisters, and little ones. It is different with us soldiers: we are nearly all very young."

"For how many years," I asked, "are the offerings made to the dead?"

"For one hundred years."

"Only for a hundred years?"

"Yes. Even in the Buddhist temples the prayers and the offerings are made only for a hundred years."

"Then do the dead cease to care for remembrance in a hundred years? Or do they fade out at last? Is there a dying of souls?"

"No, but after one hundred years they are no longer with us. Some say they are born again; others say they become kami, and do reverence to them as kami, and on certain days make offerings to them in the toko."

(Such were, I knew, the commonly accepted explanations, but I had heard of beliefs strangely at variance with these. There are traditions that, in families of exceeding virtue, the souls of ancestors took material form, and remained sometimes visible through hundreds of years. A sengaji pilgrim[1] of old days has left an account of two whom he said he had seen in some remote part of the interior. They were small, dim shapes, "dark like old bronze." They could not speak, but made little moaning sounds, and they did not eat, but only inhaled the warm vapor of the food daily set before them. Every year, their descendants said, they became smaller and vaguer.)

"Do you think it is very strange that we should love the dead?" Asakichi asked.

"No," I replied, "I think it is beautiful. But to me, as a Western stranger, the custom seems not of to-day, but of a more ancient world. The thoughts of the old Greeks about the dead must have been much like those of the modern Japanese. The feelings of an Athenian soldier in the age of Pericles were perhaps the same as yours in this era of Meiji. And you have read at school how the Greeks sacrificed to the dead, and how they paid honor to the spirits of brave men and patriots?"

"Yes. Some of their customs were very like our own. Those of us who fall in battle against China will also be honored. They will be revered as kami. Even our Emperor will honor them."

"But," I said, "to die so far away from the graves of one's fathers, in a foreign land, would seem, even to Western people, a very sad thing."

"Oh no. There will be monuments set up to honor our dead in their own native villages and towns, and the bodies of our soldiers will be burned, and the ashes sent home to Japan. At least that will be done whenever possible. It might be difficult after a great battle."

(A sudden memory of Homer surged back to me, with, a vision of that antique plain where "the pyres of the dead burnt continually in multitude.")

"And the spirits of the soldiers slain in this war," I asked,—"will they not always be prayed to help the country in time of national danger?"

"Oh yes, always. We shall be loved and worshiped by all the people."

He said "we" quite naturally, like one already destined. After a little pause he resinned:—

"The last year that I was at school we had a military excursion. We marched to a shrine in the district of In, where the spirits of heroes are worshiped. It is a beautiful and lonesome place, among hills; and the temple is shadowed by very high trees. It

is always dim and cool and silent there. We drew up before the shrine in military order; nobody spoke. Then the bugle sounded through the holy grove, like a call to battle; and we all presented arms; and the tears came to my eyes,—I do not know why. I looked at my comrades, and I saw they felt as I did. Perhaps, because you are a foreigner, you will not understand. But there is a little poem, that every Japanese knows, which expresses the feeling very well. It was written long ago by the great priest Saigyo Hōshi, who had been a warrior before becoming a priest, and whose real name was Sato Norikyo:—

"'Nani go to no Owashimasu ka wa Shirane domo Arigata sa ni zo Namida kobururu.'"[2]

It was not the first time that I had heard such a confession. Many of my students had not hesitated to speak of sentiments evoked by the sacred traditions and the dim solemnity of the ancient shrines. Really the experience of Asakichi was no more individual than might be a single ripple in a fathomless sea. He had only uttered the ancestral feeling of a race,—the vague but immeasurable emotion of Shintō.

We talked on till the soft summer darkness fell. Stars and the electric lights of the citadel twinkled out together; bugles sang; and from Kiyomasa's fortress rolled into the night a sound deep as a thunder-peal, the chant of ten thousand men:—

Nishi mo higashi mo Mina teki zo, Minami mo kita mo Mina teki zo: Yose-kura teki wa Shiranuhi no Tsukushi no hate no Satsuma gata.[3]

"You have learned that song, have you not?" I asked.

"Oh yes," said Asakichi. "Every soldier knows it."

It was the Kumamoto Rōjō, the Song of the Siege. We listened, and could even catch some words in that mighty volume of sound:—

Tenchi mo kuzuru Bakari nari, Tenchi wa kuzure Yama kawa wa Saicuru tameshi no Araba tote, Ugokanu mono wa Kimi ga mi yo.[4]

For a little while Asakichi sat listening, swaying his shoulders in time to the strong rhythm of the chant; then, as one suddenly waking, he laughed, and said:—

"Teacher, I must go! I do not know how to thank you enough, nor to tell you how happy this day has been for me. But first,"—taking from his breast a little envelope,—"please accept this. You asked me for a photograph long ago: I brought it for a souvenir."

He rose, and buckled on his sword. I pressed his hand at the entrance.

"And what may I send you from Korea, teacher?" he asked.

"Only a letter," I said,—"after the next great victory."

"Surely, if I can hold a pen," he responded.

Then straightening up till he looked like a statue of bronze, he gave me the formal military salute, and strode away in the dark.

I returned to the desolate guest-room and dreamed. I heard the thunder of the soldiers' song. I listened to the roar of the trains, bearing away so many young hearts, so much priceless loyalty, so much splendid faith and love and valor, to the fever of Chinese rice-fields, to gathering cyclones of death.

[1] A sengaji pilgrim is one who makes the pilgrimage to the thousand famous temples of the Nichiren sect; a journey requiring many years to perform.

[2] "What thing (cause) there may he, I cannot tell. But [whenever I come in presence of the shrine] grateful tears overflow."

[3] This would be a free translation in nearly the same measure:—

Oh! the land to south and north All is full of foes! Westward, eastward, looking forth, All is full of foes! None can well the number tell Of the hosts that pour From the strand of Satsuma, From Tsukushi's shore.

[4] What if Earth should sundered he? What if Heaven fall? What if mountain mix with sea? Brave hearts each and all, Know one thing shall still endure, Ruin cannot

whelm, Everlasting, holy, pure,— This Imperial Realm.

III

The evening of the same day that we saw the name "Kosuga Asakichi" in the long list published by the local newspaper, Manyemon decorated and illuminated the alcove of the guest-room as for a sacred festival; filling the vases with flowers, lighting several small lamps, and kindling incense-rods in a little cup of bronze. When all was finished, he called me. Approaching the recess, I saw the lad's photograph within, set upright on a tiny dai; and before it was spread a miniature feast of rice and fruits and cakes,—the old man's offering.

"Perhaps," ventured Manyemon, "it would please his spirit if the master should be honorably willing to talk to him. He would understand the master's English."

I did talk to him; and the portrait seemed to smile through the wreaths of the incense. But that which I said was for him only, and the Gods.

X

IN YOKOHAMA

A good sight indeed has met us to-day,—a good daybreak,—a beautiful rising;—for we have seen the Perfectly Enlightened, who has crossed the stream.—Hemavatasutta.

I

The Jizō-Dō was not easy to find, being hidden away in a court behind a street of small shops; and the entrance to the court itself—a very narrow opening between two houses—being veiled at every puff of wind by the fluttering sign-drapery of a dealer in second-hand clothing.

Because of the heat, the shōji of the little temple had been removed, leaving the sanctuary open to view on three sides. I saw the usual Buddhist furniture—service-bell, reading-desk, and scarlet lacquered mokugyō, disposed

upon the yellow matting. The altar supported a stone Jizō, wearing a bib for the sake of child ghosts; and above the statue, upon a long shelf, were smaller ages gilded and painted,—another Jizō, aureoled from head to feet, a radiant Amida, a sweet-faced Kwannon, and a grewsome figure of the Judge of Souls. Still higher were suspended a confused multitude of votive offerings, including two framed prints taken from American illustrated papers: a view of the Philadelphia Exhibition, and a portrait of Adelaide Neilson in the character of Juliet. In lieu of the usual flower vases before the horizon there were jars of glass bearing the inscription,—"Reine Claude au jus; conservation garantie. Toussaint Cosnard: Bordeaux." And the box filled with incense-rods bore the legend: "Rich in flavor—Pinhead Cigarettes." To the innocent folk who gave them, and who could never hope in this world to make costlier gifts, these ex-voto seemed beautiful because strange; and in spite of incongruities it seemed to me that the little temple did really look pretty.

A screen, with weird figures of Arhats creating dragons, masked the further chamber; and the song of an unseen uguisu sweetened the hush of the place. A red cat came from behind the screen to look at us, and retired again, as if to convey a message. Presently appeared an aged nun, who welcomed us and bade us enter; her smoothly shaven head shining like a moon at every reverence. We doffed our footgear, and followed her behind the screen, into a little room that opened upon a garden; and we saw the old priest seated upon a cushion, and writing at a very low table. He laid aside his brush to greet us; and we also took our places on cushions before him. Very pleasant his face was to look upon: all wrinkles written there by the ebb of life spake of that which was good.

The nun brought us tea, and sweetmeats stamped with the Wheel of the Law; the red cat curled itself up beside me; and the priest talked to us. His voice was deep and gentle; there were bronze tones in it, like the rich murmurings which follow each peal of a temple bell. We coaxed him to tell us about himself. He was eighty-eight

years of age, and his eyes and ears were still as those of a young man; but he could not walk because of chronic rheumatism. For twenty years he had been occupied in writing a religious history of Japan, to be completed in three hundred volumes; and he had already completed two hundred and thirty. The rest he hoped to write during the coming year. I saw on a small book-shelf behind him the imposing array of neatly bound MSS.

"But the plan upon which he works," said my student interpreter, "is quite wrong. His history will never be published; it is full of impossible stories—miracles and fairy-tales."

(I thought I should like to read the stories.)

"For one who has reached such an age," I said, "you seem very strong."

"The signs are that' I shall live some years longer," replied the old man, "though I wish to live only long enough to finish my history. Then, as I am helpless and cannot move about, I want to die so as to get a new body. I suppose I must have committed some fault in a former life, to be crippled as I am. But I am glad to feel that I am nearing the Shore."

"He means the shore of the Sea of Death and Birth," says my interpreter. "The ship whereby we cross, you know, is the Ship of the Good Law; and the farthest shore is Nehan,—Nirvana."

"Are all our bodily weaknesses and misfortunes," I asked, "the results of errors committed in other births?"

"That which we are," the old man answered, "is the consequence of that which we have been. We say in Japan the consequence of mangō and ingō,—the two classes of actions."

"Evil and good?" I queried.

"Greater and lesser. There are no perfect actions. Every act contains both merit and

demerit, just as even the best painting has defects and excellences. But when the sum of good in any action exceeds the sum of evil, just as in a good painting the merits outweigh the faults, then the result is progress. And gradually by such progress will all evil be eliminated."

"But how," I asked, "can the result of actions affect the physical conditions? The child follows the way of his fathers, inherits their strength or their weakness; yet not from them does he receive his soul."

"The chain of causes and effects is not easy to explain in a few words. To understand all you should study the Dai-jō or Greater Vehicle; also the Shō-jō, or Lesser Vehicle. There you will learn that the world itself exists only because of acts. Even as one learning to write, at first writes only with great difficulty, but afterward, becoming skillful, writes without knowledge of any effort, so the tendency of acts continually repeated is to form habit. And such tendencies persist far beyond this life."

"Can any man obtain the power to remember his former births?"

"That is very rare," the old man answered, shaking his head. "To have such memory one should first become a Bosatsu [Bodhissattva]."

"Is it not possible to become a Bosatsu?"

"Not in this age. This is the Period of Corruption. First there was the Period of True Doctrine, when life was long; and after it came the Period of Images, during which men departed from the highest truth; and now the world is degenerate. It is not now possible by good deeds to become a Buddha, because the world is too corrupt and life is too short. But devout persons may attain the Gokuraku [Paradise] by virtue of merit, and by constantly repeating the Nembutsu; and in the Gokuraku, they may be able to practice the true doctrine. For the days are longer there, and life also is very long."

"I have read in our translations of the Sutras," I said, "that by virtue of good deeds

men may be reborn in happier and yet happier conditions successively, each time obtaining more perfect faculties, each time surrounded by higher joys. Riches are spoken of, and strength and beauty, and graceful women, and all that people desire in this temporary world. Wherefore I cannot help thinking that the way of progress must continually grow more difficult the further one proceeds. For if these texts be true, the more one succeeds in detaching one's self from the things of the senses, the more powerful become the temptations to return to them. So that the reward of virtue would seem itself to be made an obstacle in the path."

"Not so!" replied the old man. "They, who by self-mastery reach such conditions of temporary happiness, have gained spiritual force also, and some knowledge of truth. Their strength to conquer themselves increases more and more with every triumph, until they reach at last that world of Apparitional Birth, in which the lower forms of temptation have no existence."

The red cat stirred uneasily at a sound of geta, then went to the entrance, followed by the nun. There were some visitors waiting; and the priest begged us to excuse him a little while, that he might attend to their spiritual wants. We made place quickly for them, and they came in,—poor pleasant folk, who saluted us kindly: a mother bereaved, desiring to have prayers said for the happiness of her little dead boy; a young wife to obtain the pity of the Buddha for her ailing husband; a father and daughter to seek divine help for somebody that had gone very far away. The priest spoke caressingly to all, giving to the mother some little prints of Jizō, giving a paper of blest rice to the wife, and on behalf of the father and daughter, preparing some holy texts. Involuntarily there came to me the idea of all the countless innocent prayers thus being daily made in countless temples; the idea of all the fears and hopes and heartaches of simple love; the idea of all the humble sorrows unheard by any save the gods. The student began to examine the old man's books, and I began to think of the unthinkable.

Life—life as unity, uncreated, without beginning,—of which we know the luminous shadows only;—life forever striving against death, and always conquered yet always surviving—what is it?—why is it? A myriad times the universe is dissipated,—a myriad times again evolved; and the same life vanishes with every vanishing, only to reappear in another cycling. The Cosmos becomes a nebula, the nebula a Cosmos: eternally the swarms of suns and worlds are born; eternally they die. But after each tremendous integration the flaming spheres cool down and ripen into life; and the life ripens into Thought. The ghost in each one of us must have passed through the burning of a million suns,—must survive the awful vanishing of countless future universes. May not Memory somehow and somewhere also survive? Are we sure that in ways and forms unknowable it does not? as infinite vision,—remembrance of the Future in the Past? Perhaps in the Night-without-end, as in deeps of Nirvana, dreams of all that has ever been, of all that can ever be, are being perpetually dreamed.

The parishioners uttered their thanks, made their little offerings to Jizō, and retired, saluting us as they went. We resumed our former places beside the little writing-table, and the old man said:—

"It is the priest, perhaps, who among all men best knows what sorrow is in the world. I have heard that in the countries of the West there is also much suffering, although the Western nations are so rich."

"Yes," I made answer; "and I think that in Western countries there is more unhappiness than in Japan. For the rich there are larger pleasures, but for the poor greater pains. Our life is much more difficult to live; and, perhaps for that reason, our thoughts are more troubled by the mystery of the world."

The priest seemed interested, but said nothing. With the interpreter's help, I continued:—

"There are three great questions by which the minds of many men in the Western

countries are perpetually tormented. These questions we call 'the Whence, the Whither, and the Why,' meaning, Whence Life? Whither does it go? Why does it exist and suffer? Our highest Western Science declares them riddles impossible to solve, yet confesses at the same time that the heart of man can find no peace till they are solved. All religions have attempted explanations; and all their explanations are different. I have searched Buddhist books for answers to these questions, and I found answers which seemed to me better than any others. Still, they did not satisfy me, being incomplete. From your own lips I hope to obtain some answers to the first and the third questions at least. I do not ask for proof or for arguments of any kind: I ask only to know doctrine. Was the beginning of all things in universal Mind?"

To this question I really expected no definite answer, having, in the Sutra called Sabbâsava, read about "those things which ought not to be considered," and about the Six Absurd Notions, and the words of the rebuke to such as debate within themselves: "This is a being: whence did it come? whither will it go?" But the answer came, measured and musical, like a chant:—

"All things considered as individual have come into being, through forms innumerable of development and reproduction, out of the universal Mind. Potentially within that mind they had existed from eternity. But between that we call Mind and that we call Substance there is no difference of essence. What we name Substance is only the sum of our own sensations and perceptions; and these themselves are but phenomena of Mind. Of Substance-in-itself we have not any knowledge. We know nothing beyond the phases of our mind, and these phases are wrought in it by outer influence or power, to which we give the name Substance. But Substance and Mind in themselves are only two phases of one infinite Entity."

"There are Western teachers also," I said, "who teach a like doctrine; and the most profound researches of our modern science seem to demonstrate that what we term Matter has no absolute existence. But concerning that infinite Entity of which you

speak, is there any Buddhist teaching as to when and how It first produced those two forms which in name we still distinguish as Mind and Substance?"

"Buddhism," the old priest answered, "does not teach, as other religions do, that things have been produced by creation. The one and only Reality is the universal Mind, called in Japanese Shinnyo,[1]—the Reality-in-its-very-self, infinite and eternal. Now this infinite Mind within Itself beheld Its own sentiency. And, even as one who in hallucination assumes apparitions to be actualities, so the universal Entity took for external existences that which It beheld only within Itself. We call this illusion Mu-myo,[2] signifying 'without radiance,' or 'void of illumination.'"

"The word has been translated by some Western scholars," I observed, "as Ignorance.'"

"So I have been told. But the idea conveyed by the word we use is not the idea expressed by the term 'ignorance.' It is rather the idea of enlightenment misdirected, or of illusion."

"And what has been taught," I asked, concerning the time of that illusion?"

"The time of the primal illusion is said to be Mu-shi, 'beyond beginning,' in the incalculable past. From Shinnyo emanated the first distinction of the Self and the Not-Self, whence have arisen all individual existences, whether of Spirit or of Substance, and all those passions and desires, likewise, which influence the conditions of being through countless births. Thus the universe is the emanation of the infinite Entity; yet it cannot be said that we are the creations of that Entity. The original Self of each of us is the universal Mind; and within each of us the universal Self exists, together with the effects of the primal illusion. And this state of the original Self enwrapped in the results of illusion, we call Nyōrai-zō,[3] or the Womb of the Buddha. The end for which we should all strive is simply our return to the infinite Original Self, which is the essence of Buddha."

"There is another subject of doubt," I said, "about which I much desire to know the

teaching of Buddhism. Our Western science declares that the visible universe has been evolved and dissolved successively innumerable times during the infinite past, and must also vanish and reappear through countless cycles in the infinite future. In our translations of the ancient Indian philosophy, and of the sacred texts of the Buddhists, the same thing is declared. But is it not also taught that there shall come at last for all things a time of ultimate vanishing and of perpetual rest?"

He answered: "The Shō-jō indeed teaches that the universe has appeared and disappeared over and over again, times beyond reckoning in the past, and that it must continue to be alternately dissolved and reformed through unimaginable eternities to come. But we are also taught that all things shall enter finally and forever, into the state of Nehan."[4]

An irreverent yet irrepressible fancy suddenly arose within me. I could not help thinking of Absolute Rest as expressed by the scientific formula of two hundred and seventy-four degrees (centigrade) below zero, or 461°.2 Fahrenheit. But I only said:—

"For the Western mind it is difficult to think of absolute rest as a condition of bliss. Does the Buddhist idea of Nehan include the idea of infinite stillness, of universal immobility?"

"No," replied the priest. "Nehan is the condition of Absolute Self-sufficiency, the state of all-knowing, all-perceiving. We do not suppose it a state of total inaction, but the supreme condition of freedom from all restraint. It is true that we cannot imagine a bodiless condition of perception or knowledge; because all our ideas and sensations belong to the condition of the body. But we believe that Nehan is the state of infinite vision and infinite wisdom and infinite spiritual peace."

The red cat leaped upon the priest's knees, and there curled itself into a posture of lazy comfort. The old man caressed it; and my companion observed, with a little laugh:—

"See how fat it is! Perhaps it may have performed some good deeds in a previous life."

"Do the conditions of animals," I asked, "also depend upon merit and demerit in previous existences?"

The priest answered me seriously:—

"All conditions of being depend upon conditions preëxisting, and Life is One. To be born into the world of men is fortunate; there we have some enlightenment, and chances of gaining merit. But the state of an animal is a state of obscurity of mind, deserving our pity and benevolence. No animal can be considered truly fortunate; yet even in the life of animals there are countless differences of condition."

A little silence followed,—softly broken by the purring of the cat. I looked at the picture of Adelaide Neilson, just visible above the top of the screen; and I thought of Juliet, and wondered what the priest would say about Shakespeare's wondrous story of passion and sorrow, were I able to relate it worthily in Japanese. Then suddenly, like an answer to that wonder, came a memory of the two hundred and fifteenth verse of the Dhammapada: "From love comes grief; from grief comes fear: one who is free from love knows neither grief nor fear."

"Does Buddhism," I asked, "teach that all sexual love ought to be suppressed? Is such love of necessity a hindrance to enlightenment? I know that Buddhist priests, excepting those of the Shin-shū, are forbidden to marry; but I do not know what is the teaching concerning celibacy and marriage among the laity."

"Marriage may be either a hindrance or a help on the Path," the old man said, "according to conditions. All depends upon conditions. If the love of wife and child should cause a man to become too much attached to the temporary advantages of this unhappy world, then such love would be a hindrance. But, on the contrary, if the love of wife and child should enable a man to live more purely and more unselfishly than he could do in a state of celibacy, then marriage would be a very great help to

him in the Perfect Way. Many are the dangers of marriage for the wise; but for those of little understanding the dangers of celibacy are greater. And even the illusion of passion may sometimes lead noble natures to the higher knowledge. There is a story of this. Dai-Mokukenren,[5] whom the people call Mokuren, was a disciple of Shaka.[6] He was a very comely man; and a girl became enamored of him. As he belonged already to the Order, she despaired of being ever able to have him for her husband; and she grieved in secret. But at last she found courage to go to the Lord Buddha, and to speak all her heart to him. Even while she was speaking, he cast a deep sleep upon her; and she dreamed she was the happy wife of Mokuren. Years of contentment seemed to pass in her dream; and after them years of joy and sorrow mingled; and suddenly her husband was taken away from her by death. Then she knew such sorrow that she wondered how she could live; and she awoke in that pain, and saw the Buddha smile. And he said to her: 'Little Sister, thou hast seen. Choose now as thou wilt,—either to be the bride of Mokuren, or to seek the higher Way upon which he has entered.' Then she cut off her hair, and became a nun, and in after-time attained to the condition of one never to be reborn."

For a moment it seemed to me that the story did not show how love's illusion could lead to self-conquest; that the girl's conversion was only the direct result of painful knowledge forced upon her, not a consequence of her love. But presently I reflected that the vision accorded her could have produced no high result in a selfish or unworthy soul. I thought of disadvantages unspeakable which the possession of foreknowledge might involve in the present order of life; and felt it was a blessed thing for most of us that the future shaped itself behind a veil. Then I dreamed that the power to lift that veil might be evolved or won, just so soon as such a faculty should be of real benefit to men, but not before; and I asked:—

"Can the power to see the Future be obtained through enlightenment?"

The priest answered:—

"Yes. When we reach that state of enlightenment in which we obtain the Roku-Jindzū, or Six Mysterious Faculties, then we can see the Future as well as the Past. Such power comes at the same time as the power of remembering former births. But to attain to that condition of knowledge, in the present age of the world, is very difficult."

My companion made me a stealthy sign that it was time to say good-by. We had stayed rather long—even by the measure of Japanese etiquette, which is generous to a fault in these matters. I thanked the master of the temple for his kindness in replying to my fantastic questions, and ventured to add:—

"There are a hundred other things about which I should like to ask you, but to-day I have taken too much of your time. May I come again?"

"It will make me very happy," he said. "Be pleased to come again as soon as you desire. I hope you will not fail to ask about all things which are still obscure to you. It is by earnest inquiry that truth may be known and illusions dispelled. Nay, come often—that I may speak to you of the Shō-jō. And these I pray you to accept."

He gave me two little packages. One contained white sand—sand from the holy temple of Zenkōji, whither all good souls make pilgrimage after death. The other contained a very small white stone, said to be a shari, or relic of the body of a Buddha.

I hoped to visit the kind old man many times again. But a school contract took me out of the city and over the mountains; and I saw him no more.

[1] Sanscrit: Bhûta-Tathatâ.

[2] Sanscrit: Avidya.

[3] Sanscrit: Tathâgata-gharba. The term "Tathâgata" (Japanese Nyōrai) is the highest title of a Buddha. It signifies "One whose coming is like the coming of his predecessors."

[4] Nirvana.

[5] Sanscrit: Mahâmaudgalyâyana.

[6] The Japanese rendering of Sakyamuni.

II

Five years, all spent far away from treaty ports, slowly flitted by before I saw the Jizō-Dō again. Many changes had taken place both without and within me during that time. The beautiful illusion of Japan, the almost weird charm that comes with one's first entrance into her magical atmosphere, had, indeed, stayed with me very long, but had totally faded out at last. I had learned to see the Far East without its glamour. And I had mourned not a little for the sensations of the past.

But one day they all came back to me—just for a moment. I was in Yokohama, gazing once more from the Bluff at the divine spectre of Fuji haunting the April morning. In that enormous spring blaze of blue light, the feeling of my first Japanese day returned, the feeling of my first delighted wonder in the radiance of an unknown fairy-world full of beautiful riddles,—an Elf-land having a special sun and a tinted atmosphere of its own. Again I knew myself steeped in a dream of luminous peace; again all visible things assumed for me a delicious immateriality. Again the Orient heaven—flecked only with thinnest white ghosts of cloud, all shadowless as Souls entering into Nirvana—became for me the very sky of Buddha; and the colors of the morning seemed deepening into those of the traditional hour of His birth, when trees long dead burst into blossom, and winds were perfumed, and all creatures living found themselves possessed of loving hearts. The air seemed pregnant with even such a vague sweetness, as if the Teacher were about to come again; and all faces passing seemed to smile with premonition of the celestial advent.

Then the ghostliness went away, and things looked earthly; and I thought of all the illusions I had known, and of the illusions of the world as Life, and of the universe itself as illusion. Whereupon the name Mu-myo returned to memory; and I was

moved immediately to seek the ancient thinker of the Jizō-Dō.

The quarter had been much changed: old houses had vanished, and new ones dovetailed wondrously together. I discovered the court at last nevertheless, and saw the little temple just as I had remembered it. Before the entrance women were standing; and a young priest I had never seen before was playing with a baby; and the small brown hands of the infant were stroking his shaven face. It was a kindly face, and intelligent, with very long eyes.

"Five years ago," I said to him, in clumsy Japanese, "I visited this temple. In that time there was an aged bonsan here."

The young bonsan gave the baby into the arms of one who seemed to be its mother, and responded:—

"Yes. He died—that old priest; and I am now in his place. Honorably please to enter."

I entered. The little sanctuary no longer looked interesting: all its innocent prettiness was gone. Jizō still smiled over his bib; but the other divinities had disappeared, and likewise many votive offerings—including the picture of Adelaide Neilson. The priest tried to make me comfortable in the chamber where the old man used to write, and set a smoking-box before me. I looked for the books in the corner; they also had vanished. Everything seemed to have been changed.

I asked:—

"When did he die?"

"Only last winter," replied the incumbent, "in the Period of Greatest Cold. As he could not move his feet, he suffered much from the cold. This is his ihai."

He went to an alcove containing shelves incumbered with a bewilderment of objects indescribable,—old wrecks, perhaps, of sacred things,—and opened the doors of a very small butsudan, placed between glass jars full of flowers. Inside I saw the

mortuary tablet,—fresh black lacquer and gold. He lighted a lamplet before it, set a rod of incense smouldering, and said:—

"Pardon my rude absence a little while; for there are parishioners waiting."

So left alone, I looked at the ihai and watched the steady flame of the tiny lamp and the blue, slow, upcurlings of incense,—wondering if the spirit of the old priest was there. After a moment I felt as if he really were, and spoke to him without words. Then I noticed that the flower vases on either side of the butsudan still bore the name of Toussaint Cosnard of Bordeaux, and that the incense-box maintained its familiar legend of richly flavored cigarettes. Looking about the room I also perceived the red cat, fast asleep in a sunny corner. I went to it, and stroked it; but it knew me not, and scarcely opened its drowsy eyes. It was sleeker than ever, and seemed happy. Near the entrance I heard a plaintive murmuring; then the voice of the priest, reiterating sympathetically some half-comprehended answer to his queries: "A woman of nineteen, yes. And a man of twenty-seven,—is it?" Then I rose to go.

"Pardon," said the priest, looking up from his writing, while the poor women saluted me, "yet one little moment more!"

"Nay," I answered; "I would not interrupt you. I came only to see the old man, and I have seen his ihai. This, my little offering, was for him. Please to accept it for yourself."

"Will you not wait a moment, that I may know your name?"

"Perhaps I shall come again," I said evasively. "Is the old nun also dead?"

"Oh no! she is still taking care of the temple. She has gone out, but will presently return. Will you not wait? Do you wish nothing?"

"Only a prayer," I answered. "My name makes no difference. A man of forty-four. Pray that he may obtain whatever is best for him."

The priest wrote something down. Certainly that which I had bidden him pray for was not the wish of my "heart of hearts." But I knew the Lord Buddha would never hearken to any foolish prayer for the return of lost illusions.

XI

YUKO: A REMINISCENCE

Meiji, xxiv, 5. May, 1891

Who shall find a valiant woman?—far and from the uttermost coasts is the price of her.—Vulgate.

"Tenshi-Sama go-shimpai." The Son of Heaven augustly sorrows.

Strange stillness in the city, a solemnity as of public mourning. Even itinerant venders utter their street cries in a lower tone than is their wont. The theatres, usually thronged from early morning until late into the night, are all closed. Closed also every pleasure-resort, every show—even the flower-displays. Closed likewise all the banquet-halls. Not even the tinkle of a samisen can be heard in the silent quarters of the geisha. There are no revelers in the great inns; the guests talk in subdued voices. Even the faces one sees upon the street have ceased to wear the habitual smile; and placards announce the indefinite postponement of banquets and entertainments.

Such public depression might follow the news of some great calamity or national peril,—a terrible earthquake, the destruction of the capital, a declaration of war. Yet there has been actually nothing of all this,—only the announcement that the Emperor sorrows; and in all the thousand cities of the land, the signs and tokens of public mourning are the same, expressing the deep sympathy of the nation with its sovereign.

And following at once upon this immense sympathy comes the universal spontaneous desire to repair the wrong, to make all possible compensation for the injury done. This manifests itself in countless ways mostly straight from the heart,

and touching in their simplicity. From almost everywhere and everybody, letters and telegrams of condolence, and curious gifts, are forwarded to the Imperial guest. Rich and poor strip themselves of their most valued heirlooms, their most precious household treasures, to offer them to the wounded Prince. Innumerable messages also are being prepared to send to the Czar,—and all this by private individuals, spontaneously. A nice old merchant calls upon me to request that I should compose for him a telegram in French, expressing the profound grief of all the citizens for the attack upon the Czarevitch,—a telegram to the Emperor of all the Russias. I do the best I can for him, but protest my total inexperience in the wording of telegrams to high and mighty personages. "Oh! that will not matter," he makes answer; "we shall send it to the Japanese Minister at St. Petersburg: he will correct any mistakes as to form." I ask him if he is aware of the cost of such a message. He has correctly estimated it as something over one hundred yen, a very large sum for a small Matsue merchant to disburse.

Some grim old samurai show their feelings about the occurrence in a less gentle manner. The high official intrusted with the safety of the Czarevitch at Otsu receives, by express, a fine sword and a stem letter bidding him prove his manhood and his regret like a sa murai, by performing harakiri immediately.

For this people, like its own Shintō gods, has various souls: it has its Nigi-mi-tama and its Ara-mi-tama, its Gentle and its Rough Spirit. The Gentle Spirit seeks only to make reparation; but the Rough Spirit demands expiation. And now through the darkening atmosphere of the popular life, everywhere is felt the strange thrilling of these opposing impulses, as of two electricities.

Far away in Kanagawa, in the dwelling of a wealthy family, there is a young girl, a serving-maid, named Yuko, a samurai name of other days, signifying "valiant."

Forty millions are sorrowing, but she more than all the rest. How and why no Western mind could fully know. Her being is ruled by emotions and by impulses of

which we can guess the nature only in the vaguest possible way. Something of the soul of a good Japanese girl we can know. Love is there—potentially, very deep and still. Innocence also, insusceptible of taint—that whose Buddhist symbol is the lotus-flower. Sensitiveness likewise, delicate as the earliest snow of plum-blossoms. Fine scorn of death is there—her samurai inheritance—hidden under a gentleness soft as music. Religion is there, very real and very simple,—a faith of the heart, holding the Buddhas and the Gods for friends, and unafraid to ask them for anything of which Japanese courtesy allows the asking. But these, and many other feelings, are supremely dominated by one emotion impossible to express in any Western tongue—something for which the word "loyalty" were an utterly dead rendering, something akin rather to that which we call mystical exaltation: a sense of uttermost reverence and devotion to the Tenshi-Sama. Now this is much more than any individual feeling. It is the moral power and will undying of a ghostly multitude whose procession stretches back out of her life into the absolute night of forgotten time. She herself is but a spirit-chamber, haunted by a past utterly unlike our own,—a past in which, through centuries uncounted, all lived and felt and thought as one, in ways which never were as our ways.

"Tenshi-Sama go-shimpai." A burning shock of desire to give was the instant response of the girl's heart—desire over powering, yet hopeless, since she owned nothing, unless the veriest trifle saved from her wages. But the longing remains, leaves her no rest. In the night she thinks; asks herself questions which the dead answer for her. "What can I give that the sorrow of the August may cease?" "Thyself," respond voices without sound. "But can I?" she queries wonderingly. "Thou hast no living parent," they reply; "neither does it belong to thee to make the offerings. Be thou our sacrifice. To give life for the August One is the highest duty, the highest joy." "And in what place?" she asks. "Saikyō," answer the silent voices; "in the gateway of those who by ancient custom should have died."

Dawn breaks; and Yuko rises to make obeisance to the sun. She fulfills her first

morning duties; she requests and obtains leave of absence. Then she puts on her prettiest robe, her brightest girdle, her whitest tabi, that she may look worthy to give her life for the Tenshi-Sama. And in another hour she is journeying to Kyōto. From the train window she watches the gliding of the landscapes. Very sweet the day is;—all distances, blue-toned with drowsy vapors of spring, are good to look upon. She sees the loveliness of the land as her fathers saw it, but as no Western eyes can see it, save in the weird, queer charm of the old Japanese picture-books. She feels the delight of life, but dreams not at all of the possible future preciousness of that life for herself. No sorrow follows the thought that after her passing the world will remain as beautiful as before. No Buddhist melancholy weighs upon her: she trusts herself utterly to the ancient gods. They smile upon her from the dusk of their holy groves, from their immemorial shrines upon the backward fleeing hills. And one, perhaps, is with her: he who makes the grave seem fairer than the palace to those who fear not; he whom the people call Shinigami, the lord of death-desire. For her the future holds no blackness. Always she will see the rising of the holy Sun above the peaks, the smile of the Lady-Moon upon the waters, the eternal magic of the Seasons. She will haunt the places of beauty, beyond the folding of the mists, in the sleep of the cedar-shadows, through circling of innumerable years. She will know a subtler life, in the faint winds that stir the snow of the flowers of the cherry, in the laughter of playing waters, in every happy whisper of the vast green silences. But first she will greet her kindred, somewhere in shadowy halls awaiting her coming to say to her: "Thou hast done well,—like a daughter of samurai. Enter, child! because of thee to-night we sup with the Gods!"

It is daylight when the girl reaches Kyōto. She finds a lodging, and seeks the house of a skillful female hairdresser.

"Please to make it very sharp," says Yuko, giving the kamiyui a very small razor (article indispensable of a lady's toilet); "and I shall wait here till it is ready." She unfolds a freshly bought newspaper and looks for the latest news from the capital;

while the shop-folk gaze curiously, wondering at the serious pretty manner which forbids familiarity. Her face is placid like a child's; but old ghosts stir restlessly in her heart, as she reads again of the Imperial sorrow. "I also wish it were the hour," is her answering thought. "But we must wait." At last she receives the tiny blade in faultless order, pays the trifle ashed, and returns to her inn.

There she writes two letters: a farewell to her brother, an irreproachable appeal to the high officials of the City of Emperors, praying that the Tenshi-Sama may be petitioned to cease from sorrowing, seeing that a young life, even though unworthy, has been given in voluntary expiation of the wrong.

When she goes out again it is that hour of heaviest darkness which precedes the dawn; and there is a silence as of cemeteries. Few and faint are the lamps; strangely loud the sound of her little geta. Only the stars look upon her.

Soon the deep gate of the Government edifice is before her. Into the hollow shadow she slips, whispers a prayer, and kneels. Then, according to ancient rule, she takes off her long under-girdle of strong soft silk, and with it binds her robes tightly about her, making the knot just above her knees. For no matter what might happen in the instant of blind agony, the daughter of a samurai must be found in death with limbs decently composed. And then, with steady precision, she makes in her throat a gash, out of which the blood leaps in a pulsing jet. A samurai girl does not blunder in these matters: she knows the place of the arteries and the veins.

At sunrise the police find her, quite cold, and the two letters, and a poor little purse containing five yen and a few sen (enough, she had hoped, for her burial); and they take her and all her small belongings away.

Then by lightning the story is told at once to a hundred cities.

The great newspapers of the capital receive it; and cynical journalists imagine vain things, and try to discover common motives for that sacrifice: a secret shame, a family sorrow, some disappointed love. But no; in all her simple life there had been

nothing hidden, nothing weak, nothing unworthy; the bud of the lotus unfolded were less virgin. So the cynics write about her only noble things, befitting the daughter of a samurai.

The Son of Heaven hears, and knows how his people love him, and augustly ceases to mourn.

The Ministers hear, and whisper to one another, within the shadow of the Throne: "All else will change; but the heart of the nation will not change."

Nevertheless, for high reasons of State, the State pretends not to know.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK "OUT OF THE EAST": REVERIES AND STUDIES IN NEW JAPAN ***

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

START: FULL LICENSE

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG™ LICENSE

PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg License available with this file or online at www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other

parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org. If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg website (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg electronic works provided that:

• You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, “Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.” • You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to

return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works. • You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work. • You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain “Defects,” such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH

OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you ‘AS-IS’, WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the

trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg

Project Gutenberg is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg’s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org.

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation’s EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent

permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 41 Watchung Plaza #516, Montclair NJ 07042, USA, +1 (862) 621-9288. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate.

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate.

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg electronic works

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: www.gutenberg.org.

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.