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Japanese Sketches

By

A. Herbage Edwards

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TO MY TEACHERS

THE PEOPLE OF JAPAN
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THE FAITH OF JAPAN
"In my Father's house are many mansions."

*John xiv.*

>Tenshi ni kuchi nashi hito o motte iwashimu.

"Heaven has no mouth, it makes men speak for it."

*Japanese Proverb.*
DAIBUTSU
(GREAT BUDDHA)

The great God Buddha sits peaceful and still, a line of dark bronze against the blue sky, and the length of the garden is flooded with light. Two tall pink cherry-trees drop blushing snowflakes on to his broad shoulders, and the sound of running water is a liquid prayer. Under his heavy-lidded eyes he looks as one who saw not, or saw too well, and his slow smile is inscrutable and still. The mystery of it draws one nearer.

What is thy secret, Great Lord Buddha?

But the heavy-lidded eyes droop lower, and the slow smile is still. Only the cherry-trees send their pale pink petals floating downward into the bronzed lap. And the murmuring water runs more swiftly.

Immutable he sits, and still; enduring, unchanging, though the sea destroy his temples and the earthquakes rock about his feet. Buddha on his lotus-leaf is still.

And the generations of men rise up, and pass away, fretted with life's fitful fever, and searching for his secret. Buddha is still, his slow smile unchanging, his heavy eyelids drooped.

Is that thy secret, Great Lord Buddha? The
mystery we passion-swept, ever-changing mortals can never penetrate?

"God is the same, for ever." The same, and for ever.

And the murmuring water runs, the cherry-trees bloom and fade, the centuries pass away. Still the heavy-lidded eyes are drooped, the slow smile is inscrutable and still. Lord Buddha keeps his secret.

Or is it only we who cannot read.
II

THE SHRINES OF ISÉ

On every side the circle of the hills shuts out all sounds, and the vast forest stretches solemn, sombre.

The long two miles of white road from the village are forgotten, the crude sunshine of the public gardens fades away, the giant fir-trees stand as they stood two thousand years ago when the shrine of the great Sun-Goddess first was born.

The broad grey path of unhewn stone, unshadowed in the darkness of the trees, bends downward to the river's brink, where a grey still pool lies silent on the edge of the rushing stream. It is the Pool of Purification where all who go up to the temple stay and wash. Even the kurumaya who daily draws the pilgrim or the stranger to the shrine, stoops to plunge his hands and feet into the still grey waters. And as he does so a great shaft of sunshine hits the weltering circle of the hills beyond the stream, and they quiver, blue as a distant mirage in the blue sky; while the forest is the darker for that light.

The grey stone path is long and wide, the forest vast, unfathomable; primæval, untamed, and yet kept with a care that leaves no trace behind; the forest of a dream where Death is not, nor decay, nor any sign of man. From time to time the dark stern stems of the cryptomerias are broken with the glossy deep-
green leaves of a camphor-tree; and each time my kurumaya stays to pray, for camphor-trees are sacred, and their bark thrown into the sea has power to calm the waves.

And the forest stretches on and on.

In the distance the grey stone path broadens into a flight of shallow steps, and passes beneath an open gateway out of sight. A wooden wall, like the sloughed bark of forest trees, stretches right and left; and against it, rigid in his discipline, the white uniform of a modern soldier, bayonet fixed.

I stand on the threshold of the most sacred spot in all Japan.

Beyond the gateway is another gate, where a pure white curtain falls, fold on fold. It is the veil of the great Sun-Goddess. All through the ages since first the nation was, the shrine of the Sun-Goddess has stood behind that veil. Every twenty years night comes, her temple dies, and again is born, unchanged, unaltered to the last least detail. And her priests are the carpenters. So through all the ages, the body of the great Sun-Goddess glows, in youth eternal, and none save her far-off offspring, Tenshisama, the Son of Heaven, may pass behind the veil.

The Japanese soldier stays to guard, for did the stranger, sacrilegious in his foolish pride, so much as touch those long white folds, evil might befall him. Viscount Mori died beneath the sword of a samurai for lifting but the edge of the curtain with his stick.

My kurumaya is on his knees before these fluttering, mysterious folds, two claps, a bow, a little murmured prayer; another bow, two claps, and he rises.

Then he leads us along inside the wooden wall, and another grey-green wooden wall, built as it were of
flattened tree-trunks, rises on the other side, leads us a few yards, and then he stops. The outer wooden wall runs round a huge imperfect square, then comes a broad band of space where we are standing, and then the inner wall rails out the world. Inside and opposite the curtained gateway, but with the whole distance of the sacred square between, stands the shrine itself, a grey-brown wooden building, unpainted, unadorned; a grey-brown roof of thatch, with the cross-beams of its roof-tree rising up through the thatch in two rough wooden anchors bound with gold. A building that is simple, with a simplicity more strange to modern man than the strangest complexity, archaic, primæval, a ghost from man's dim past.

The silent sombre trees stand thickly round. Beyond the circle of blue hills shuts out all sounds. The folds of the white curtain fall straight and close.

My kurumaya prays again.

And there behind her veil the great Sun-Goddess dwells, untouched by time, of an age with the hills, more primitive than the forest trees—and sacred still.
III

THE TEMPLE OF NIKKŌ

In all the pomp of splendour and of power they buried Iyeyasu at Nikkō, and the greatest artists of Old Japan came and built in his memory a temple more beautiful than any in all the length and breadth of the land. For more than forty years they worked, and brains and money and labour were poured out like mountain water, until the temple stood complete, the mausoleum of Iyeyasu and the eternal monument of this artistic race.

With Buddhist rites was the great Shōgun buried, and for many hundred years daily remembered in a ritual as solemn as it is effective, but Buddha himself has not anywhere a temple so splendid.

They buried Iyeyasu at Nikkō, not in the town of his birth or of his death, not in the city over which he ruled, but four days' journey from Yedo in the midst of the mountains; and they did it that Japan's greatest ruler might lie amid the nation's best in nature as in art, that to the splendour of the temple the Land herself might add the glories of her mountains and her trees.

At Nikkō is the great Shōgun buried, and for twenty miles before his shrine a stately avenue of trees leads up to the temple, and up this avenue prince and
pilgrim yearly come; prince and pilgrim, priest and peasant they still come, up the great avenue of dark thick-set cryptomerias, the giant pine-trees of Japan.

At the temple's foot a mountain stream rushes in a deep green gorge, and two bridges cross the stream: one bright red, the bridge of the Son of Heaven, one painted green, for the rest of this world's humankind.

And the reason is that when the Buddhist saint Shōdō Shōnin pursued the vision that had been sent to him, he journeyed into the mountains many days until the grey torrent of Nikkō rushing tumultuously across his path barred the way; but the vision abode with him, and Shōdō Shōnin knew that he must cross the stream, yet was there neither bridge, nor boat, nor crossing-place. So the saint kneeled down and prayed. Then there appeared to him an angel, clothed in black robes and blue, wearing a string of skulls around his neck, and holding in his hand two serpents, these he threw across the stream, and they became a bridge firm and strong. So Shōdō Shōnin passed over the torrent in safety, but when he looked back, snakes, bridge, and angel had vanished and only the rushing river remained. Then for a memory the two bridges were built in the very place of the crossing.

Of all the marriages of Art and Nature the Sacred Red Bridge of Nikkō is the most beautiful. Scattered among hills and trees and river, beauty lay; but this people coming through the mountains saw the one bond that had power to bind the pale blue hills, the dark green gorge, the stone-grey stream together in an ordered whole of deep-thought artistic loveliness, planned, perfect, yet supremely natural.

Then the avenue goes on, up the foot of the hill, till it widens and broadens into a great gravel circle
before the entrance-gate of the temple. Here the great trees of the mountains spread out and up on either hand, with the temple in their midst surrounded but not overwhelmed by the grace of the wood. Under the granite tori, the first gateway is guarded by two figures, the mythical lions gilded and lacquered; while above, the mysterious baku, with his four ears and his nine tails, who has power to eat all bad dreams that pass before sleeping eyes, crouches alert.

A flight of granite steps leads to the first courtyard, set at right angles to the gateway, and paved with rounded grey pebbles from the stream. Here are all the minor buildings of the temple, the stable for the sacred white horse, the library for the two thousand sutra of the Buddhist scriptures, the tank-house for the purification, the store-houses for the temple furniture; and stable and library, tank-house and store-houses are jewelled gems of carving and design, so rich, so splendid in the ordered magnificence of their colouring that western senses stand amazed. A blood-red lacquered fence aglow with coloured carvings divides the temple from the sombre majesty of the giant cryptomerias.

Then the pebbled space contracts into a flight of granite stairs, and mounts between stone walls that end in painted friezes of carved wood to a second courtyard. This is almost square, and standing on the wide grey sweep of rounded pebbles are three bronze lanterns from the three tributary kingdoms of Old Japan—from Korea, Luchu, and Holland; and there in serried rows and ranged against the blood-red lacquered fence aglow with gilded carvings, stand multitudes of bronze lanterns, which the dead daimyō of Old Japan sent as offerings to the temple.
Beyond the lacquered fence the dark still stems of the pine-trees range out of sight.

Then the pebbled space contracts again, and a flight of granite steps leads between granite walls set with coloured friezes of carved wood to the third courtyard; and the colourless pause of the second court, with its bronze lanterns on grey stones, gains a new meaning as one mounts, for in the third courtyard, between the blood-red friezes with their riotous coloured carvings, is the pure perfection of the Yōmei-mon, a double gateway, of white lacquer, cream-white and supported by four pillars of carved wood. And when they put the fourth pillar in its place they planted it upside down fearing if the beauty of the temple were all-perfect, evil might befall the house of Tokugawa through the jealousy of high heaven.

And the stranger as he draws near pauses in sheer amazement; the wild untamable beauty of the mighty temple set in its giant framework of dark green trees is strange beyond believing.

On either hand stretches the tropical splendour of the blood-red lacquered fence, set with coloured carvings as with shining jewels. Behind is the pale glory of the Yōmei-mon. All around the darkness of the forest lies like a still quiet tomb. And in front, rising in lines of sheer perfection, is the white beauty of the Chinese gate, cream-white, adorned with glittering yellow brass, brass in rounded sunken medallions on the lintel and the gate-posts, brass in quaint designs and shining points of yellow light, which break about the whiteness as sunshine through a mist.

The carvings and the pattern, the picture-panels, the decorated eaves, the chiselled heads and sculptured birds and beasts, the growing, glowing flowers, the
hanging lotus-bells that tinkle at the corners of the tent-curved roof, and all perfect, are more than a man’s mind can perceive though he look for many years. Brains and money and labour were poured out here like mountain water, and like the rushing stream of Nikkō the drops go unperceived in the beauty of the whole.

In the short space of forty years were the temple and its fences, the gateways and the carvings, completed and set up; but forty short years from first to last, and the carving of one gateway is more than a lifetime’s work.

Then the splendour culminates. Beyond the Chinese gateway is the actual shrine itself, its cream-white gateway studded too with brass, while superb in the utter beauty of their carving, two writhing dragons stretch on either hand between the door-post and the pillar. Inside is the temple of the memorial tablets, where with daily rites the Buddhist priests prayed for the soul of Iyeyasu. To-day the Buddhist emblems are all gone, the shrine is bare. A shintō rope of rice-straw stretches from post to post, the mirror of the Sun-Goddess shines above the altar for her son, the “Son of Heaven” Tenshi, the Mikado, has come back to his own.

All the magnificence of the temple now is in its walls, walls of panel carvings where the springing phœnix and the crouching lion rise like pale shadows from the pale unstained wood, so little are they raised above the surface. And yet the artist’s hand that carved them was without a rival in the world. They are real and living, delicate and true, and so entirely beautiful that the heart cries out with joy as at a long-lost good. Here is no colour, the sweep of pale yellow matting, the panelled walls of pale dust-coloured wood, are more light than
colour. Here the rich joy of sense is laid aside: the temple stands a beauty immaterial.

Through three hundred years they prayed for Iyeyasu daily with long rites, but his tomb is not here. It lies beyond the temple and above it. One climbs to it by a long, steep stair of grey-green granite, set in the sombre hill. A stairway built of granite in long slabs, so broad and thick that the balustrade with its coping, base, and sculptured columns is all cut from one solid block, with each block fourteen feet long. And the stairway took thirteen years to quarry and set up.

The hillside is steep, the stairs are many, and the tall dark pines, the flame-red maples gather, gather till the temple's roof, the sound of praying bell or chanted hymn is lost. The little space which Art stole from Nature is completely hidden, even the forest has forgotten.

And the grey stair climbs, climbs among the dark-green trees, then stops.

On the top of the hill is a rounded curve of stately pines. Alone, solitary between sky and trees, stands the tomb of Iyeyasu, a domed pillar-box of bronze glinting golden through the trees. A low stone wall surrounds the tomb, a bronze door solid but uncarved is its gateway, and that is all. Here among the quiet trees, in the stillness of the forest, above the splendour of the temple, lie the ashes of the great Iyeyasu.

All the days of his rule he dwelt among men, but his soul climbed the steep stair of Life, casting off its splendours and its glories, climbed above them, climbed back into the eternal simplicity of Nature, and there he laid him down to rest.
It was the *fête* of Kannon of Asak’sa, whose votaries are many. They thronged the narrow paved pathway set between the two long rows of red brick stalls, and overflowed into the temple grounds behind, where the juggler and the wax-works, the two-headed porpoise, and the headless man, and all the long scale of attractions in between shouted and drummed. All the fun of the fair was here, with the advantage of a *petit bout de messe*, to save the soul, over the way.

Kannon of Asak’sa is a popular lady, and her doors stand wide open. You may go in with your boots on. It is true that the goddess herself, on her gilded altar, is railed off from public touch by a wire netting—like the animals in the menagerie outside. But that is all the privacy she enjoys, and the rest of her temple is as public as a railway station, and just about as sacred. The people pour in up the steps on all sides, the scraping of their gheta on the dirty wooden floor adding its quota of noise to the chink of money and the buzz of voices, the ringing of bells, and the hurry and bustle of a surging railway crowd. There is the same wide-open, doorless feel, the same discomforting, amphibious sensation of neither open air nor closed house. A large bookstall in the corner, selling the latest illus-
trated numbers of the goddess, and the whole stock of Kannon literature adds to the illusion. Between two pillars a temple clerk issues tickets at a substantial booking-office. A shaven official appears and rings a bell at intervals, reciting a prayer in the voice of a railway porter proclaiming stations. There is the same reasonless flux and reflux of the crowd, the same rush and bustle, with its inseparable accompaniment of underlying roar that rises and falls, sometimes absorbing all the other sounds into itself, sometimes leaving them distinct and clear, but never for a moment ceasing.

A huge lacquered case like a square coffin, its lid replaced by thick metal bars, stands between the bookstall and the booking-office, right against the wire netting. Into this each comer throws his coin before reciting his prayer, and the chinking of the money as it falls is as unceasing as the roar of the crowd.

Away in a corner behind the booking-office a worn-out black statue sits huddled in rags. Around it, bands of invalids await their turn to rub the featureless figure with their hands, and transfer the charm by rubbing themselves in the corresponding spot. As a method of propagating disease, this treatment for curing it can have few equals. But the coffers of the temple profit greatly.

Business, indeed, is brisk to-day. The shaven-headed booking-clerk is issuing tickets at a bank-holiday rate, and the bookstall is besieged. Up from all sides comes the tumult of the fair. Kannon must be a paying investment.

As I stand on the steps with the din of the temple behind me, a man in the crowd below buys a cage of little birds at a stall, and, opening the door, throws
them up into the air. The startled flutter of their wings as they soar up over the heads of the crowd into the blue carries me back to Ober-Ammernau, to the memory of the overturned tables of the money-changers, and the overthrown cages of those who sold doves.

"My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Is human nature the same all the world over? Are priests? Or is the fate of all religions alike?

O Kannon of Asak’sa! Kannon, Lady of Mercy! how long must thou wait for thy deliverer? O Lord Buddha, how long?
V

RINZAKI'S ALTAR

On the edge of the dark hills is the temple of Rinzaki, and the green sea of the rice-fields washes up to its open doors. Overhead the grey sky of a sunless summer's evening dims all the colours in the land, and leaves them shadows. It is fresh and still, and the wide, green bay sweeps in smooth curves to the foot of the dark hills. On the pathway the hosts of little green frogs hop like hailstones, and the startled splash as they fall back into the rice-fields is sharp and clear.

Rinzaki stands alone, its shōji walls pushed back, and the slender, square pillars at each corner are dark against the greyness. The open matted spaces of the temple are deserted, and the stillness is pure and clear as freshly running water. In the sunless evening light the sombre colours of the temple are but light and shadow, a sweep of pale matting under a dark roof framed in grey. And the stillness grows purer, clearer, and more still.

Beyond the open spaces of the matting, between altar wall and altar wall, the garden of the temple hangs, a living picture on the wall. Two kneeling-cushions on the matting mark the purpose of the garden, and I stay to look.

A faintly running stream, stone-grey, a shaven slope
of green, and on it three clipped azalea-bushes pink with blossom. So still, so clear, I stretch my hand to feel.

It is a garden—a garden painted by an artist who worked in earth and flowers. And the dim greyness of the temple, the pale spaces of the matting, frame the garden as a shell its pearl. I could but look. The pale pink of the azalea-bushes, the soft curve of the slope, the stone-grey of the running stream, were painted with the loving care, the certain touch of a master’s hand. There was no fault. Between altar wall and altar wall the living picture hung—perfect.

Like David’s harping to Saul distraught, the stillness of the garden, the dim greyness of the temple, washed pure the heart. The sin-freed soul floated out unfettered, and thought was not.

Alone the garden lay, an earthly Nirvana in the stillness.

Rinzaki’s true altar stood here.
VI

TWO CREEDS

Above the white cloud of the plum-blossoms, through the dark wood of the cryptomerias, on the top of the hill lies the temple of Ikkegami. The broad spaces of its courtyards and its gardens are sunny and still, and the blue sky above is a bed of celestial forget-me-nots. Down each side the big, dark trunks of the giant fir-trees stand straight and tall—two rows of sombre pillars, shutting in a sunny aisle.

In front, at the end of the wandering white path of rounded stones sunk into the bare earth, is the Hondô or main building with the tent curves of its roof, and the polished floor of its veranda shining like a sword in the sun. Behind is the big wooden gateway, and the hundred stone steps which lead from the hilltop to the village beneath. And scattered down the wide earth courtyard, and half hidden under the dark arches of the trees, are the innumerable little buildings which form the complete whole of a Buddhist temple; the belfry, with its bronze bell hung from the big wooden beam of the ceiling to within three feet of the ground, and the polished wooden spar with which it is beaten; the quaint revolving library—like a dwarf windmill without sails—where the hundred volumes of the Buddhist Scripture can be dimly seen through the
thick wooden lattice; the wide granite tank under its tiled roof, all hung with lengths of brown temple towels, where the faithful pour water over their hands from bamboo dippers as a symbol of purification; the side chapels with their drums and offerings. All are quiet to-day and deserted, only by the side of the tank, in front of a worn-out stone statue, a peasant mother is standing, her baby tucked in the back of her kimono—fast asleep. She claps her hands three times to call the attention of the gods, and then she prays, and the baby's shaven head nods heavily over her shoulder. Then she takes the bamboo dipper and pours water over the head of the stone statue, carefully, that not a dry spot may remain, and prays again.

Between the dark pillars of the tree-trunks and the stamped earth of the courtyard, a line of narrow, pointed laths runs like a wooden fencing round the temple precincts. I wonder what they are and leave the stepping-stones of the pathway to see.

Tombstones? Yes. Set close together, and sometimes three or four deep, the long line of thin pointed laths closes in the temple and its courtyard with a fence of graves. Not a rich man's graveyard this, but the last home of the peasants from the rice-fields and the fishermen from the sea. I look at the rows of Chinese characters running lengthwise down the narrow tombstones, and stop in wonder, for on one the Roman letters with their familiar outlines stand out plainly.

"To the Men of the Warship Onega."

That is all.

To the men of the Warship Onega! It was true then the story. The story of the loss of the Onega in the bay below, and the sale of the sunken wreck
TWO CREEDS

with all its contents to fishermen along the coast. The story of the finding of the corpses of the drowned sailors, all entangled among the wreckage, and of how the Japanese fishermen collected them reverently, saying, with the faith of the ancient Greeks, that their souls would wander restless and distressed unless they were laid in their graves and the funeral prayers sung over them. So they sent a petition to the great Ijin San in Tokyo praying him to come to the temple of Ikkégami, that his dead brothers might have some one of their own race, if not of their own family, to perform the last solemn rites. And the Ambassador came to Ikkégami, and the long line of weather-beaten Japanese fishermen bore the western sailors up the hill to the temple, and buried them in the courtyard, under the silent trees, with all the rites of the Buddhist church. And they set up the wooden lath as over the grave of a brother, among the long lines of the tombstones of their fathers; but they wrote on it in the tongue of the stranger so that God and their countrymen might know their own again.

And all this they did out of their own hearts, and with the money of their own earning.

So the men of Onega lie buried with Buddhist rites in a Buddhist churchyard, and the wooden lath above their graves is but another rail in the holy fence of the Japanese dead which encloses the temple.

The long arches of the sombre trees are dark and still. The blue sky above is without fleck or stain, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding is spread as a hand above the tree-tops.

The men of the Onega sleep well.
THE LEGEND OF THE NOSELESS JIZŌ

It was a great many years ago, but the stone Jizō stands there yet, just on the edge of the woods beyond the rice-fields. The blue cotton bib around his neck is new, the odd little piles of stones that balance on his shoulders, cuddle in his arms, or lie around his feet are larger, for kindly hearts have passed by since then, to pick up a stone and carry it to Jizō, who helps the souls of the little dead children crying naked on the banks of the Sai-no-Kawara, because the old hag Shozuka-no-Baba has taken their clothes away, and will not let them pass over into the happy land beyond, but keeps them piling stones on the banks of the Buddhist Styx, and crying bitterly.

And Jizō sits there by the roadside still, the same benevolent smile on his shaven face, still holding the pilgrim's staff with its metal rings in one hand, and the jewel which brings all wisdom in the other. Only he has no nose. He lost it thirty years ago, the day little Dicky James came running up the road, his new hatchet clutched in his hand.

Now Dicky was the son of a missionary, and he had been brought up on good books and Sunday schools, and the night before he had been taken to hear the wonderful experiences of a "brother" from China, who
had filled his little head full of "glorious martyrdom," "sinful heathen," "the overthrowing of idols," and "the abomination of desolation," which Dicky didn't understand but thought meant the long stretch of muddy rice-fields down beyond Negishi. And that put Jizō into his head. And besides, there was the new hatchet.

All the morning he had played Red Indians, until, in an access of realism, he had almost brained the baby. The threatened loss of his hatchet and the great idea that was working in his head made him quiet and subdued all through dinner.

He was sorry about baby, "poor little martyr," as his mother called her; and the idea grew and grew. Why shouldn't he be a martyr too, and return to his family covered with glory? Then the thought of Jizō jumped into his head. He would go out, like the "brother" from China, into the "abomination of desolation," and "overturn the idol" of the "sinful heathen." Or, at least, if he couldn't overturn it, the new hatchet would cut off its head, and Dicky's fingers itched to try. He had no idea martyrdom was so interesting.

So, dinner over, Dicky seized his hatchet, and started off, away from the settlement, across the canal, up by the racecourse, and down the hill towards Negishi. Here he took to the shore, to avoid complications in the village; for Dicky was used to showing his Christian superiority by cuffing the heads of the heathen, and the boys of Negishi were his particular enemies. So the tide being out he kept to the shore until he was past the village, and the long stretch of rice-fields, nothing but solid ponds of black mud, each surrounded by a little, low, mud bank, came into sight.
"The abomination of desolation," said Dicky.

And it did look like it. He went on along the narrow path towards the hills, with the wide stretch of muddy ponds on each side of him. They dwindled away gradually as Dicky went up the valley, dwindled away until they only looked like a kind of mud river running between the green hills. And there beyond the last one, on the edge of the hill, was Jizō. Jizō, with his broad smile and his funny little bib.

Dicky looked about him nervously; the great moment had come. No, there was no one in the rice-fields, and no one coming after him from the village; and Jizō's smile was tempting. Up went the little hatchet and smash down with all Dicky's strength. But Jizō's head did not roll in the dust, as it ought to have done, so Dicky tried again. He was getting excited now. It was so beautiful to feel his dear hatchet coming down smash, smash, smash, and to know he was doing the "good work" at the same time.

Smash, smash! This time something had smashed, and Jizō's stone nose lay at his feet. Dicky stooped to pick it up, exultant, and in the momentary pause heard angry voices among the fields, and feet coming swiftly up the road behind him. Then Dicky forgot all about "martyrdom" and ran as fast as he could go, across the bank of the rice-field in front of him, up the hill beyond, his hatchet clutched in one hand, and Jizō's stone nose in the other.

It was the rice-field that saved him, because the men had to go round, but their shouts brought out the village, and the sight of Jizō, noseless, sent all the angry "heathen" up the hill in chase. I do not think
they would have hurt him if they had caught him, for the Japanese are not fanatical, and they are very kind to children.

It was just this feeling that made them so angry now. To think that any one could injure Jizō; Jizō the friend of those in trouble, the comforter of women in travail, and the keeper of the baby souls crying naked on the dark banks of the Sai-no-Kawara. I do not think they would have hurt Dicky, but the whole village came out to see, and the men and boys ran up the hills around shouting:

"Nan des ka? Nan des ka? What is it? What is it?"

And Dicky in his terror ran until his little legs gave way under him, and panting he threw himself on the ground under the trees.

The shouts had died away a long while, and it was growing dark in the wood before Dicky stirred. It was darker still when at last he crept cautiously down the hill and over the rice-fields towards the stone statue of Jizō. He was very tired now, and very hungry, but the memory of the angry voices calling after him in the hills made him afraid to go back through the village, and by this time the tide was up. So Dicky sat down by the side of Jizō in the growing darkness and waited. And all his nurse’s stories of Jizō and the little children came into his mind. He looked up at Jizō, smiling still his large benevolent smile, and crept nearer.

It was quite dark that evening when they found Dicky, his head peacefully laid to sleep on Jizō’s feet, utterly worn out with the pangs and the excitement of his martyrdom, his little hatchet fallen on the ground,
but one grubby fist fast clutching something that even in his sleep he held tight.

But Dicky’s taste for martyrdom had gone, and once, to his father’s horror, he was heard to declare that he “wished he was a heathen because he would like to say his prayers to Jizō.”

In the deepest depths of his pocket, next to his clasp-knife and his favourite ally taw, there lived for many years a small stone object that he sometimes took out and looked at when he was quite alone. And Dicky had serious doubts at times about the goodness of the martyrs, and the sinfulness of the heathen, while his ideas on idols underwent a radical change.

It is thirty years ago now. But the legend of the noseless Jizō and his fight with the Onigo (the devil in the shape of a child) is still told in the villages around Negishi.

The other day Richard heard it himself.
A matchless blue sky overarches the world, pale, clear, intense, and the twisted green boughs of the Japanese pine throw their gaunt, black arms up into the blue, in the vain endeavour of a hundred years to reach it. The hush of cloistered calm in which the trees grew up is still here, although the Tokyo citizen walks and rides where once none but Buddhist priests might linger. The Red Gateway, with the tent curves of its roof petrified into grey tiles, still claims for all within Buddha as its master.

And the hush of cloistered calm grows stiller.

Through a wide space open to the sky, a space paved with rounded pebbles, water-washed for many years ere they floored the courtyard of the House of God, believing and unbelieving feet have beaten smooth a wide, brown pathway. All around, and arranged in serried rows, stand a myriad grey-stone lanterns, the pious gifts of dead daimyō. Between these tall stone emblems of the five elements the pathway runs; cupola, crescent, pyramid, sphere, cube—ether, air, fire, water, earth—and the crude shapes of the primitive elements, touched and altered by generations of artists, are turned to curves of quaintest beauty. Diagonally across the space goes the black pathway,
the standing rows of tall lanterns thickly set on either side, until beneath another gate it makes a pause. A gate of red lacquer this, with carvings of gilded wood on ceiling and wall. Carvings full of that oriental luxuriance of colour and line which half shocks our sober northern senses; so shocks them sometimes that we call it scornfully “barbaric,” until we grow wiser with much looking and learn to see the truth and beauty of this exuberant splendour.

Beyond the gateway, the black path leads out under the blue sky, a pebbled square on either hand, set round with stately rows of bronze lanterns, the pious gifts of yet greater daimyō. Another gate stands waiting at the end of the pebbled square, a gateway with rounded wooden columns of red lacquer, like its fellow, and carvings of gold. But the beams of its ceiling have been smoothed away, and in the centre a much twisted and curled dragon, which, like Joseph’s coat, is of many colours, writhes across the ceiling. A carved and gilded gallery stretches away on either side past the gateway. Another yet more beautiful, with its slender square pillars of red lacquer bound at base and crown with beaten brass, leads a rainbow shadow through the sunny court to the cool dark door of the temple itself. In the shade of the gilded galleries, suspended from the red-lacquered cross-beams, hangs a row of still bronze lanterns. Dimly in their exquisite shapes can one trace the symbolised elements.

Behind a wooden barrier five steps lead straight to the temple’s front, closed now with dark blinds of split bamboo bound together with a silken thread. The tiled eaves of the curving roof overhang the steps, and between door and lacquered pillar writhes in many wriggles of green and golden carving two royal
dragons, the Ascending and the Descending—the going-up and the coming-down.

Leaning on the barrier, the glory of those golden dragons, of those red columns, of the carved beams and inlaid porch rushed riotously into the soul. And now one understood the preparation of those successive gateways, set each between a sunny space of pebbled court; for the first had shown but red and gold, up in the ceiling of the second lingered lines of azure blue, the third added green to the other three, the gallery gave glances of mauve and violet, while here, under the eaves of the temple roof, the rainbow itself is glorious in carved wood.

A culminating point of colour and splendour, what can the temple hold within?

Cool spaces of matted floor set round with black boxes on black stools, each box holding its portion of Buddhist Scripture; sombre pennants of dark blue and green brocade upon the walls; a sober light clear but colourless; and which is more beautiful, the rainbow porch of many colours riotous in carving and scrolls, or the sober quiet of the temple, a beauty of spaces and restraint?

The colourless matted room is wide and low. In front between the sombre pennants is the inner sanctuary. Gods on either side on lacquered tables set against the walls; at the end, beyond more lacquered tables, two brocaded masses rise like square coffins on a raised daïs; between stand figures of the gods, white-faced Benten and Kannon, Lady of Mercy. The red tables bear many-coloured sweets and biscuits heaped high on metal plates, in metal cups; offerings to the spirits of the dead Shōgun whose tablets lie enshrined behind those masses of brocade. A bronze bowl on
the floor filled with grey ash sends forth filmy clouds of incense. There is no sound.

Behind the temple, through two open spaces of pebbled squares, each reached by a score of granite steps, is the tomb; a smooth, round mass of stone encircled with a breast-high parapet of bronze; all around a sweep of grey pebbles.

That is all.

And yet standing here I wonder whether the dead Shōgun have not rightly chosen? Whether their resting-place is not more truly beautiful than the beauty of sombre ornament in the temple, than the riotous carving of the gateways.

The porch was Beauty’s body, arrayed, adorned; here lies Beauty’s soul, naked and eternal.
Buddhism is not one but many; the same faith and the same nation which produces the squalor, dirt and commercial profanity of Asak'sa can create the peace and purity of Rinzaki, while Shiba's riot of impossible colouring is born of the same religion and the same people as the stern beauty of the Hongwanji; for the temples of the Shin sect are severe as a Protestant cathedral, as a Presbyterian church, only they are built by a race of artists.

Kannon of Asak'sa is popular, but the beautiful Hongwanji at Kyoto, finished a few years ago, at a cost of eight million yen, was built mainly by the peasants, who contributed not only in money but in kind, sending their most beautiful trees to be cut into beams, offering themselves to hew and to build, giving always of their best. And each beam was raised to its place by long hawsers made of women's hair, the soft black hair of youth or womanhood, with here and there the shrivelled grey hairs of age. And the hawsers are suspended in the temple for men and missionaries to ponder on.

Buddhism is not dead but living. The old, the weary, and the poorest poor creep into the Hongwanji in Japan, and the pale matting of these temples is
covered with the square-holed copper coins worth a quarter of a farthing, which they roll over the matting towards the altar from the corners where they kneel and pray.

Nagoya’s *Hongwanji* is the glory of the town. It stands in the thick of the city, in a great wide courtyard of stamped earth set round with trees. Its sculptured gates of bronze are always open, and once inside them the busy town with its factories and its workshops, its quarter of a million of inhabitants, is gone, for the wide courtyard sets a lavish space of stillness between the city and the shrine. A space so wide and ample that the temple’s curves stand out clear and sharp as a solitary tower on an empty plain.

Built all of wood, unpainted, unstained; and so faded by the sunshine, so worn with age, and weather beaten with the wind and rain, that in the glow of the summer’s sun the temple stands against the brilliant light faded and grey, a beauty of pathos, not of joy.

Under the eaves the saints and sacred animals are carved in tender lines of love. Age has touched and left them colourless, and the infinite pity of the Buddha which enwraps creation, enfolding man and his brother the beast, looks from their eyes.

Inside there is peace and sober quiet. A wide low space suggestively divided into three with slender square pillars of wood, and behind, along the whole width of the temple a blaze of gold, sombre and rich. No riot of impossible colouring here, no profusion of design and decoration; sober, almost stern in its beauty, the centre and the two side altars shine in the dim light.

A bronze figure of Buddha, dead black against the gold, stands on his lotus-leaf with uplifted hands.
It is Buddha as the God of Mercy, the living, loving god, Amida Butsu—Eternal Buddha.

Dull gold and black, alive in the altar, shadowly repeated in the pale yellow matting and in the grey age-stained wood, are all the decoration of the temple, save perfect purity and peace, and an atmosphere of quiet, enduring charity. For the Shin sect teaches that the law cannot be altered, that the eternal chain of cause and effect goes always and for ever on, that the wages and more than the wages of sin is death, that an act and its consequences roll ever onward through the world, and neither man nor time can stay them; it teaches that a man’s sorrows are made by his sins, but that Buddha is merciful and just, that he who is love gives love; love knows no sin, nor sin’s child, sorrow; without sin and sorrow is the world at rest.

Outside, the city labours, toils. Within, the workers kneel on the pure pale matting, and praying, roll their square-holed coins towards the image of Eternal Buddha, whose hand is raised to bless.
SAINT NICHIREN

Up a hundred steep stone steps lies the temple of the Lord Buddha, for Nichiren, his servant, whose head the executioner’s sword refused to cut off, died here.

Now Nichiren was a man of faith. And his faith was the faith of the average man—he knew he was right. But Nichiren did more, for he had the courage of his opinions; and he said, “I alone am right; the rest are all wrong, unfaithful servants of the Lord—kill them.”

And the people believed Nichiren, for is not such faith in one’s own opinion a sign of divine inspiration? And did not the Lord Buddha send lightning from Heaven to turn the edge of the executioner’s sword and save his pious servant?

So they followed after Nichiren and despised the rest of the church, and built temples of the true faith throughout the length and breadth of the land. And the priests of Nichiren walked in the steps of their master, and are—for the tolerant Japanese—almost bigoted and fanatical.

Now the Nichiren priests delight in noise. Perhaps they think—like many a politician—that it takes the place of argument. And so their temples for ever re-echo with the banging of big drums, the clapping of wooden clappers, the booming of big bells, and the
eternal chanting of the Namu-myōho-rengekyō, the formula of the faith of Nichiren.

In the little side temple to the left, wreathed with paper flowers and cheap ornaments—for Nichiren has even strength to blur the national sense of art—they are busy now.

A priest in the middle crouches on the ground; on either side, before a big drum like a yellow barrel lying horizontally on the ground, sit two believers. Behind are grouped three more, all provided with clappers or bells. The drumming is incessant, the clapping nearly so, while all, priests and people, keep up one never-ending drone of

"Namu-myōho-rengekyō, Namu-myōho-rengekyō, Namu-myōho-rengekyō."

I can only see the backs of the group, and the arms of the two drummers as they raise them up above their heads to beat the big barrels in front of them. Suddenly, from round the corner of the drum, an old face peers—priest by its costume and its cunning. An unshaven, unkempt face that blinks—dirty, ignorant, bigoted. It crouches there on the matting, the old cunning eyes opening and shutting with each repetition of the never-ending formula,

"Namu-myōho-rengekyō, Namu-myōho-rengekyō, Namu-myōho-rengekyō," until sense and meaning are lost in a wave of wild, brute fanaticism.

The drums bang louder, the clappers clap shriller, the bells boom quicker and quicker, and I stand there convinced.


I too am of the faith of Nichiren, for I know that I am right. All these are wrong, unfaithful servants of the Lord—kill them.
BETWEEN EARTH AND HEAVEN

Five hundred feet of wall, and the temple’s courtyard hangs a balcony above the world.

The thousand steps by which I climbed are hidden, and the cha-ya, in the width of the brown road that touches cliff and sea, is so beneath my feet that its roof seems resting on the ground. My kurumaya, in his white hat, is a growing mushroom on a dark blue stalk. The man is but a human atom crushed between two immensities.

From cliff to distant sky the wide sea spreads out, a vast still plain of shimmering blue. This ball of earth is rolled out flat before my eyes, and its mysterious ends are a far-off rim, dark blue and clear. Overhead the burnished sky shuts down a domed cover on the flattened earth. The very sea seems hot. My kurumaya, sitting on the slender shafts of his jinriksha, fans himself with his hat, and I am startled to see how perfectly the three-inch figure works.

The world lies all spread out below me, here is nothing but the temple and the sun.

Across the burning courtyard where the sun smites the rounded pebbles with hard shafts of light, and through the open doorway in the temple’s wall, I go, and then the silent shadows of the trees fall all
around. The sky above their tops is bluer, the very sunlight brighter for the shade.

The temple's shrine is built upon a polished raft of wood, moored three feet above the ground. Its walls are dark with matted blind. Only the square door-posts stand clear against the light, and through them I see the bareness of the shrine—a sweep of pale matting on the floor, and then dim space. Alone, the burnished mirror of the great Sun-Goddess hangs above the altar.

On the threshold of his temple stands the high priest, attended by two acolytes. He wears a head-dress of black lacquer like a perforated meat-cover, but the face beneath is old and very calm. He bows as I mount the shallow polished steps which lead up from the ground, takes from the black-robed acolyte a slender silver vase, and a shallow terra-cotta bowl. Standing shoeless on the threshold of the naked shrine he slowly pours the sacred saké from the silver vase into the terra-cotta bowl, and gives me to drink. The bowl is black with age, the saké thick, like distilled honey; and I notice, as I drink, the carved figures running round the rim, and the faint scent of plum-blossom.

Without a word the white-robed priest takes back the cup, and offers me a thin rice-wafer which I break and eat. I wonder what the rite may mean that I, a stranger, may partake, and look up to see the calm old eyes looking down at me, at my outlandish clothes and foreign face; but he does not speak. Then with a gesture which is almost a blessing, the white-robed priest is gone, and the acolytes follow after.

The temple's shrine stands bare and bare, only the burnished mirror of the great Sun-Goddess glitters.
THE FAITH OF JAPAN

Was it a Passover that we have eaten together? Or a Eucharist? Or merely the symbol of our human brotherhood?

We are all children of the Sun; and Faith is One.
Yet it needed a Shintō priest in far Japan to show me a religion above nation, beyond race, above sect. But his shrine is bare. The Mirror of Truth hangs solitary above his altar, and his temple's doors are open to the Sun.
INARI, THE FOX-GOD

The green tongue of the rice-fields thrusts itself deep into the blue sea, and its tip is lacquered red.

Haneda-no-Inari is a temple whose gateways have swallowed up its shrine, and on the low, flat, headland its many thousand tori in rows of scarlet dolmens walk inland from the sea. The green point lies a henna-stained finger in the lap of the ocean.

Beyond the red tip, a ridge of pearl-grey sky rests on the water, while overhead the clouds, like piled-up snowflakes, melt into the blue.

It is the end of September, and wide through the land the rustle of ripening rice-ears comes and goes. Haneda-no-Inari, the Rice-God, is calling the peasants to his shrine. And they come; broad-shouldered, bullet-headed men, in short, blue tunics and dark blue hose, with brown weather-beaten faces, seamed and lined; and always their hard hands, half shut, half open, as though still holding hoe or plough. Old most of them, and with that half-deaf look which years of fieldwork brings. Intelligences half shut too, shutting fast on the primary ideas of life, on the traditions of their fathers; for a thought, like the hoe or plough, is too precious a thing to be lightly laid aside; it is bequeathed from
generation to generation as are the rice-fields beneath their feet.

Inari calls, and the peasants come. Not only for the sake of the Rice-God, though the rustle of the ripening rice-ears is a music in the land, but because the image of the fox has dwelt so long in the Rice-God's temple that to the peasant Inari is both Fox- and Rice-God. And the fear of the Kitsuné is a power in Japan. The Kitsuné, who can take a woman's shape and bewitch you; the Kitsuné, who can beguile a man that he follow to the fox's very hole and stay there living on snails and worms. The Kitsuné, who, entering a man's body under his finger-nails, will possess it, so that he howls like a fox, slowly changes into one, and dies. And so they come to the temple, up from the rice-fields, up under the scarlet tunnels of the tori, for the passing through each tunnel means a wish fulfilled.

The gateways indeed have swallowed up this shrine. There is no temple, only a low matted booth; at the back two white china images of the Fox-God, his tail curled high above his head, and a priest on the matting, as a shopman at his stall, selling charms, multitudes of miniature china foxes, words on rice-paper, and mounds of earth, a whole shopful of charms and amulets.

Opposite is a row of rabbit burrows, each roofed with a shelving stone; just a hole in the ground, but full of meaning to the peasant, for it is the home of the Kitsuné, and he crouches on the ground in front of it, his head between his knees, or thrust far into the big burrow in the eagerness of his prayer. And his face works; the priest behind him watches. Kitsuné is a reality to him, a force strong
as Nature's laws, but capricious; so he prays. Then half in fear, half in reverence, he thrusts one arm as far as it will go into the hole, and scraping softly brings back a handful of brown earth. His face lights up, and the priest behind leans forward.

Still on his knees the peasant wraps the magic earth in layers of clean rice-paper and puts it carefully away in the breast of his patched tunic. Then he gets up. He has his charm, a remedy against sickness and disaster, a charm for his rice-fields and himself. The priest behind reaches out his hand. He makes a keen shop-keeper, and his celestial wares are never stolen. The temple terms are "cash down, and prayers not taken in exchange."

Through the long scarlet tunnels of the tori, back to the ripening rice-fields the peasants go. The green point lies a henna-stained finger in the lap of the ocean. Haneda-no-Inari, the temple of the superstitious, glows a living tip of red.

For its sins are as scarlet.
It all happened in a suburban temple in the town of Tokyo, at the time of the blossoming cherry-trees; and the prosaic din of a modern city full of trains and tramcars hemmed us round. We had been conscious of it dimly throughout the long ceremonial within the temple, where Shintō priests in brocaded robes chanted in twos and threes, in solo and in chorus; where the old High Priest had blessed with long strange rites the four elements, earth, which is the mother of all things, fire, water, air; had blessed the rice by which the people live, salt, and saké; but now that we were all assembled in the outer courtyard the noise of a busy city came distinctly to the ear. Tokyo was working hard this April afternoon, and the cries of the newspaper boys pierced up shrilly from the street below.

In the courtyard the ancient vestments of the priests showed strangely beside the modern frocks of American visitors, the tweed suits of a party of Cook's tourists, even beside the kimono of the Japanese crowd, so markedly Tokyo and Meiji (age of enlightenment), in their felt hats, cloth caps, and "bowlers."

The courtyard was big, the native crowd railed in at one end left a large space bare, and here in the centre of the stamped brown earth a great pile of
burning charcoal was heaped. Twenty feet long, and nearly as many broad, it glowed a solid mass of quivering heat, while priests at each corner stood fanning the sullen red to an ever fiercer flame. It was not hot enough yet, and in the sunshine of that April afternoon we waited.

At the further end of the courtyard a broad band of salt lay on the brown earth like a white step to the altar. The great fans of the fanning priests sent puffs of heat across the court that made the distinguished guests shrink back. And yet the glowing charcoal pyre was not hot enough.

Behind us, in a corner of the courtyard, stood a bamboo ladder, whose every rung was made of the razor-blade of a Japanese sword, set edge upwards. As we all stood waiting, watching the solid altar of red flame grow redder, a young man came out of the temple and crossed the court. He was dressed in the short white tunic of religious festivals, and his legs and feet were bare. He bowed to the party of distinguished guests, to the priests, to the old High Priest, and from his manner I judged him not a priest, but a temple attendant.

Among the crowd there was a murmur, a sway of intense excitement, and then a dead stillness. In the stillness the young man put his bare foot upon the lowest rung of the ladder, and an involuntary shudder went through us all. A large-checked tourist, pushing every one aside, rushed up to the ladder, and felt a sword-rung with his hand. Then he came back, and across his open palm a ruled red line of blood rose up swiftly.

There was a whispering among the priests, a commotion in the crowd, but the polite expressions of
regret from the old High Priest were courtly with honorifics. The large-checked tourist tied his hand up clumsily in his own pocket-handkerchief, and looked annoyed. The fanning priests, with rhythmic movements of their hands and bodies, chased the living heat across the court, and did not pause.

Again there was a murmur in the crowd, a stretching of necks to see, and a dead silence.

The white-tuniced attendant, who had stood quite still beside the ladder, placed his bare foot upon the lowest rung, and I saw the large-checked tourist wince as though his injured hand were there instead. Lightly as a sailor climbs, the young man ran up the ladder rung by rung, and neither hands nor feet grew red. On the top he stayed, looking down, and a shudder like a cry of pain went through the courtyard. Then he turned, hanging for one brief moment by his knees on the topmost rung—turned, and came down again.

In the April sunshine the sword-blades, from top to bottom of the ladder, glittered spotless.

Firmly on his bare, brown feet the young man walked across the court, bowed to the party of distinguished visitors, to the priests, to the old High Priest, and disappeared within the temple.

The crowd behind the railings exclaimed in admiration, but the distinguished visitors were above surprise. The party of Cook's tourists who had just "done" India were full of explanations. It was "mere jugglery," they said, though each man differed in his theory. One was eloquent on hypnotic suggestion, and though the damaged tourist, his hand still bound up, "couldn't go so far as that, sir," was not to be persuaded. The injured tourist had apparently only been hypnotised a little more effectually than the rest of us. The
American guests favoured "acrobatic training from infancy," which "made the bones just like jelly." Somebody said he had heard it was "done with oil," but was quite vague as to the how, and all the more insistent in consequence. And so we explained and argued while the level rays of sunshine fell on the spotless sword-rungs of the ladder, and on the vestments of the Shintō priests. They had watched and were impassive. The climbing of the ladder was not a sacred ceremony, not a rite, rather an amusement allowed the multitude, as the Catholic Church offered *jongleries* in the Middle Ages.

But as the sun fell lower and lower in the April sky, a hush came among the little group of priests, and growing, travelled slowly over the courtyard. Even the damaged tourist stopped his explanations. The great red altar of heat that lay a fallen pillar of fire across the courtyard was glowing now white-hot with life. The fanning priests at each corner had moved further back to escape the scorch of the flames, but still they fanned. In waves and gusts the heat was borne across the court, to flicker, as it were, upon the air, steady itself and then drive solidly forward. The Cook's tourists who had seized upon the front row of seats, twisted uneasily on their chairs, unwilling to give up their "best places," unable to endure the burning. But the fierce scorch of the heat came steadily onwards, and before it the tourists ran, dragging their chairs after them.

Still the fanning priests fanned on, chasing the quivering flames on the red altar of heat, till it pulsed with a white-hot breath like a thing alive.

In the pale April sky the swift sun was dropping golden through the last arcs of heaven to a grey band
of clouds upon the horizon. In half an hour it would be night.

There was a stir in the crowd beyond the barriers; the fanning priests beat out their rhythm slowly, and with the shadows the gathering sense of awe deepened. Only the altar of heat burned brighter, gathering to itself all the colour from the world.

Apart from the crowd the High Priest stood, the gold on his vestment gleaming, and he watched the sun. The peace upon his face was like an unsaid prayer. Did his soul go out to Amaterasu, the great Sun-Goddess?

Swiftly the sun dropped through the bank of clouds leaving them golden, showed a red circle on the horizon, and passed beneath. The faintest flicker of emotion stirred for a moment the grave reverence of the old man's face. Then he turned. The rhythmic beating of the fanning priests died into silence. The red altar stood a burning fiery furnace in the courtyard, where already twilight was. He spoke no word, but the religious calm of a perfect trust was in all his being. It touched the straining multitude behind the barriers, even the tourists in their chairs. Breathless we stayed gripped by the powers of an awed suspense, of a great belief, as he came on. There was no hurry, no tremor in his movements, on through the hot scorched air he came, on, over the threshold of strewn salt, and on, over the altar of heat. With naked feet he trod from end to end the white-hot pathway, and the burning charcoal snapped beneath his tread. With naked feet he walked, unscathed, over that fiery furnace; and the breath of a passionate prayer passed like a sob through the courtyard.

Then one by one the priests in their embroidered
vestments stepped from the threshold of salt on to the fire. From end to end of the altar they too trod that white-hot pathway slowly, unhurt, and the living charcoal glowed like a thousand suns in the twilight.

Slowly behind their distant barriers the crowd stirred irresolute. An old man whose face showed rapt in the circle of firelight approached the priests. Hesitating he was led up to the altar, over the white salt step, and faltering, he too trod the white-hot pathway. Then a coolie came through the shadows, he too stepped up to the altar, passed over the threshold of salt on to the living charcoal.

In twos and threes the crowd was coming now. Some of them hesitated on the white salt step, some hurried along the fiery pathway. A few, a very few, walked away as though their feet were singed. But all came, even the children. The big children who went resolutely alone, the little children whom the priests led.

And the twilight in the courtyard deepened into night. The broad altar of heat glowed ruddy, a deep sun-red as its life pulsed slower. The tourists were all quiet on their chairs, not one of them would venture, though the little children went before. The Faith was not in them, nor the power of that great Belief. But those behind the barriers, this Tokyo crowd in *kimono* and "bowler," they believed. With the sounds of a modern city humming in their ears, fresh from the western education of their Board Schools, they, as their forefathers for two thousand years, passed over the fire. This burning symbol of a spiritual purification had meaning for them. They had faith and were not afraid.

Unto such is the Dominion of the Earth; unto such is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Forgotten Gods

Neglected by the river side the Buddhas sit, in one long silent row. The rain is beating on their unprotected heads, and down their granite faces little rills of water trickle. The river at their feet runs swift and strong, grey among the boulders, as it rushes down to Nikkō. And they sit forsaken.

The moss is thick upon their shoulders, the granite faces are all scarred and battered, blotched with pallid growths, spotted with dusty accumulations. But the Buddhas smile. Beneath their heavy-lidded eyes they smile, a slow, still, changeless smile.

On the green bank above the tumultuous river there is no shrine, no priest; the forgotten gods sit still, in one long silent row, and the rain beats down relentless. Over their battered heads it runs, and down their moss-grown shoulders; the soiled stone laps are full of it, and it stands in ever widening pools about the lotus-leaves of each pedestal. For in Nikkō the rain, tropical in vehemence, is persistent, as in the Outer Hebrides. It lies to-day in slanting lines, thick as willow-switches, across the dull grey sky.

I could not well be wetter, so I stop to look, and the whole long silent row of Gods Forgotten smiles gently back at me.
Remindful of the legend which calls them numberless, I try to count. Once, twice, several times; but the legend is right. Each time my total varies. Perhaps the rain confuses me; the willow-switches lie so thick across the sky. So I give it up and look at the long desolate row of the numberless Buddhas. I wonder if they envy the Buddha who fell from his pedestal into the stream and was carried down to Imaichi, where the villagers, finding him uninjured, reverently set him up with his face towards Nikkō. Now the country-side adores him, and he wears a large pink bib.

Across the madly rushing river, churned grey between the boulders, the Buddhas smile. . . . It is a smile of understanding. Yes, the slow, still smile of One Who Understands, who understands All Things, and understanding, is content.

And who should understand, and understanding rest content, if not the Eternal Buddha? Is not the Godhead wise? Does it not see the meaning and the path of All Things? And seeing, were it not then content the Devil triumphs?

"God's in His Heaven,  
All's right with the world."

If God be in His Heaven, and God be God, then must the Godhead understanding smile.

Through the thick-falling rain the long still row of granite Buddhas smile back at me. I have thought so long upon that smile, which strikes on western senses oddly, almost irreverently. Do we ever conceive of a smiling God? In all the long picture galleries of Europe I have never seen a Christ who smiled. With
sword-pierced side and thorn-crowned head He hangs before us—suffering, always sad. The Man of Sorrows; yet He redeemed the world; He saved mankind. For pure joy a soul could smile at such a thought. Yet with us the Redeemer suffers; He never smiles.

The peasant Sōgorō, from his cross where he had watched the killing of his children, laughed gaily as he bade his dying wife farewell; for he had saved three hundred villages from unjust taxation. In his intensest suffering a Japanese is taught to smile. He comes to tell you that his child is dying, and he smiles. Perhaps his eyes are red, but he smiles, that the sight of his suffering may not pain another. It is the sublimest unselfishness and self-control. Sōgorō dying on the cross bade his crucified wife farewell, laughing gaily, and no Japanese would praise or wonder at the fact. Sōgorō died as a martyr. Yes, I have seen a smile on the faces of our martyrs, rarely, it is true. Sodoma's St. Sebastian smiles; it is a smile of the eyes. He sees a vision—the Lamb of God and all the choirs of the angels. But Christ never smiles. I cannot think of one picture, one conception of a smiling God. Sad, weighed down with the sins of mankind; pitiful, pleading; or stern, implacable, the Just Judge, the Ruler of the Universe, immovable Omnipotence, scales in hand. Can either Godhead smile?

Buddha suffered much and endured much, but still he smiles. He too is merciful and full of pity. He too suffers with each sin man sins. Here too the Just Judge judgeth the World. And the patient Buddha suffers till the wicked are redeemed. There is no end to his suffering till all are saved. Only when
the wicked cease from troubling, cease because they are the good, is mortal life completed, till then the complex worlds spin on and on. Yet Buddha smiles. For man’s birthright is not sin, not sorrow, but Joy. The Godhead smiles.

This long silent row of granite gods, fashioned by the hands and the hearts of this nation, smile. And all the bronze and granite statues, all the gilded images, all the Buddhas of this island smile too, for the people who made them and conceived them believe in Joy, in the innate as in the ultimate goodness of man; in the innate as in the ultimate Joy of the Godhead. Verily these are forgotten Gods in western lands.

Across the raging mountain river, through the fast-falling rain, on the desolate green bank the numberless Buddhas battered and forsaken smile, that slow still smile of One Who Understands, who understands All Things, and understanding is content.

Great Buddha, Dai Nippon, teach us.
"Where on the one hand is the province of Kai,
And on the other the province of Suruga,
Right in the midst between them
Stands out the high peak of Fuji.
The very clouds of Heaven dread to approach it;
Even the soaring birds reach not its summit in their flight.
Its burning fire is quenched by the snow;
The snow that falls is melted by the fire.
No words may tell of it, no name know I that fits it,
But a wondrous Deity it surely is.

* * * * *

Of Yamato, the Land of Sunrise,
It is the Peace-Giver, it is the God, it is the Treasure.
On the peak of Fuji, in the land of Suruga,
Never weary I of gazing."

Japanese poet, eighth century.
("Japanese Literature," by W. G. Aston.)
PROLOGUE

From Pole to Pole the waters of the wide Pacific surge, unending and alone. Over the shifting plain the silence of the ocean broods. Here is man nothing; for the endless spaces of the ocean, the self-sufficiency of the unresting sea remain for ever outside of man, coldly non-human. A river or a hill can be loved into companionship, but the sea stays always strange.

Without ends or boundaries, the shifting waters sweep from Pole to Pole, solitary, changeless. Only the curve of the earth itself, or the weakness of man’s eyesight draws imaginary boundaries on the horizon. And the waste of the waters lies empty and still.

Coldly blue is the sea below, and the sky shutting down is blue too and bare. Two empty infinities which meeting set bounds to each other.

And within there is nothing. Only space; blue, bare space.

“In the beginning,” says the Scripture, “the waters below were separated from the waters above,” and out of the void came this world of two dimensions, so cold, blue and beautiful. It is immensity—empty.

Then did the spirit of God move on the face of the waters, move slowly and pass.

Into the empty blue came a white, still splendour.
Softly it grew in the dome of the sky, unreal in its beauty. But two pale curves that stayed in the heavens, as the wandering snowflake seems to rest on its fall. Midway between blue and blue it stayed, this soft white splendour, stayed dreaming a pause.

For the spirit of God had passed; and the empty, blue vastness was filled with a sense of joy and elation. Earth's fairest presence had risen high to the heavens. And it lay, two curving lines of exquisite splendour, breathed light on the sky; and white as the wing of a gull in the gleam of the sunshine, all shining with whiteness.

And the infinite plane of the waters stretches on to the Poles. And the endless space of the sky wraps the water around.

But the empty, blue vastness is gone.

It is blue sea. It is sky. They are framing a world, for Lord Fuji has come.
II

THE ASCENT

Geologists state that Fuji San is a volcano, a young volcano, 12,365 feet high. Philologists add that San is derived from a Chinese term meaning mountain, and is not the familiar Japanese title which we render by Mr., Lord, or Master; while Fuji is, they declare, a word of Aino origin. And then they all fall silent.

These are the facts: the material, provable facts, such as western text-books publish. But to Japan, Fuji San is much more, and most of this is not text-book fact.

National tradition says that Fuji arose in a single night, and at the same time Lake Biwa, one hundred and forty miles away, was suddenly formed. There is a legend that, in those far-away days of mukashi, mukashi—once upon a time—the Elixir of Life was taken to the top of the mountain, where it still remains. And popular belief declares that all the cinders and ashes brought down by the pilgrims' feet are carried each night back to the summit of Fuji.

To the people, Fuji is sacred; holy to some as the abiding-place of the Goddess Ko-no-hana-saku-yahime, She who makes the Blossoms of the Trees to Bloom, but sacred to all for its majesty, its unutterable beauty. The peasants of the country-side call Fuji
Oyama, Honourable Mountain; and to the people Fuji San is Lord and Master. Deep in their hearts, and unassailable by western facts, the worship of his beauty and his power lies throbbing. During that brief six weeks of summer when Fuji's wind-swept sides alone are climbable, the pilgrims come in thousands, in ten thousands. They dress themselves in white from head to foot. They carry long staves of pure white wood in their hands, each stamped with the temple crest, and in bands and companies they climb the mountain. And always the leader at their head, his staff crowned with a tinkling mass of bells, like tiny cymbals, chants the hymn of Fuji. From base to summit, as the white-clad pilgrims climb, the tinkling cymbals clash, and the voice of the leader rises loud at each refrain:

"We are going, we are going to the top."

Above the clash of the bells the chorus echoes:

"To the top, to the top, to the top."

"We are going," chants the leader, and the tiny cymbals clash—"We are going, we are going to the top."

The western facts of modern text-books cannot touch the meaning of this mountain; the love of its long curving line which permeates the nation's art, the adoration of its beauty, and the reverence of its power.

Already in a time which to us upstart western nations is almost mukashi, mukashi, in the days before King Alfred burnt the cakes, a Japanese poet had caught and expressed the feeling of the nation for its mountain: for he wrote of Fujiyama as

"A treasure given to mortal man
The God Protector watching o'er Japan."
And to-day the God Protector watches still, and yearly the people come, in the white garb of pilgrims, chanting to his shrine.

For six short summer weeks they come. Then the winds rush down, the snow falls, the tempests rage, and Lord Fuji lives alone. No human being has yet stayed a winter on his summit, and even in the summer weeks the winds will blow the lava blocks from the walls of the rest-houses, and sometimes the pilgrim from the path. For Fuji stands alone, not one peak among a range, but utterly alone. Rising straight out of the sea on one side, and from the great Tokyo plain on the other, his twelve thousand three hundred and sixty-five feet, in two long curving lines of exquisite grace, rise up and up into the blue, and not one inch of one foot is hidden or lost; it is all there, visible as a tower built on a treeless plain. It dominates the landscape. It can be seen from thirteen provinces; and from a hundred miles at sea the pale white peak of Fuji floats above the blue.

It was a day in the beginning of August, in the very middle of those hot three weeks which are the great festival of Fuji San, in the simmering dawn of a summer's day that we left Tokyo for Subashiri. As the train approached Gotemba the whole crowded carriageful of Japanese looked eagerly for Fuji. The train was climbing slowly by a mountain stream, and we were all looking, looking, beyond the dark green pine-trees of the river's bank. Suddenly, for one dazzling moment, the deep blue cone of Fuji lay pillowed on a bank of clouds in the middle of the clear blue sky. Then, swiftly, the clouds rolled up and up. Fuji San was gone. The whole carriageful gave vent to those
long strangled h’s of admiration and delight, and with a murmured “Fuji San seeing have” sank back on their heels on the cushions.

Gotemba is the nearest railway station to Fujiyama, and the highest. It lies a thousand feet up. Being the most accessible, it is the most usual starting-point for the climb, but it is not the most picturesque. A wonderful line of trams now connects Gotemba with Subashiri, and even with Yoshida, a place half round the base of the mountain. We were to start from Subashiri and come down to Yoshida, and return by the lakes. So from the station we walked up the straggling, badly kept street of Gotemba, where every house is a hotel and every hotel hangs out many advertisements in the shape of cotton streamers twelve feet long and six inches wide, which are attached by rings to bamboo poles. So through groves of white and blue and brown banners all adorned with beautiful Chinese symbols we walked to the tramway.

A dive through a wooden archway between two tea-houses, where a ticket-hole and a wooden barrier composed the station, and we were there. The trams stood under the archway; the lines were lost in the black cindery mud—and they were both Japanese—the tram-lines, just rows of knitting-needles and laid very close together, the trams diminished by the national taste for the national needs to a little oblong box like a stunted bathing-machine. Our tram stood from ground to roof perhaps some five feet high. By taking off our hats we could just manage to sit down, and by judiciously fitting our knees into one another like elaborate dovetailing we got in width-ways, and we only got in at all by entering the door side-ways. Fat people do not travel in Japanese trams—
not unless they have a ladder and sit on the roof. The only way to insinuate luggage is to coax it through the window-frames, which, as there were only two to a side, were almost once and a half times the width of the door, not more. In the Fuji tramways pilgrims' hats are not admitted. This is no prohibition. It is an impossibility, for the diameter of the pilgrim hat, which is twice as large as the largest halo, is equal in size to the width of the entire tram. So the pilgrims hang their huge circles of straw hats, like scooped-out orange halves, outside; and our tram before it started became a new kind of armoured train.

In this dumpy bathing-box we had room for four a side. We took five and thought it empty; smiled at six; submitted to seven; where an eighth would have disposed himself I do not know, he would certainly have got in, but the puzzle would have been to have found a vacant cubic foot of space for his occupation. Trams are never full in Japan. There is always room for more, if the more arrive. In this case the more got in at a small junction outside the back lanes of Gotemba. They got in, three of them, and with huge bundles too. Then the conductor looked round inquiringly and smiled, whereupon two polite pilgrims of lighter build than the newcomers gave up their seats and wedged themselves into the window-frames, while the bundles were deposited on the continuous strata of passenger. What happened to the third I do not know. He got in.

Then we started, really started, for there was no other halting-place, no village or station between here and Subashiri. Nothing but a broad, bare sweep of upward-tending common, where multitudes of wild flowers grew out of the cindery soil.
As we went on, the faintly curving common, which always sloped round and up, grew wilder and wilder. There were fewer flowers on the black soil. Sometimes the cinders lay all bare in large dull patches against the coarse grass. We were on the broad swelling slope of Fuji, on the edge of the first ripple before it dies away into the smooth water of the plain below. And we were crawling slowly from the first to the second ripple as a fly crawls round the curve of an orange. Fuji himself was invisible. For all we could see he did not exist. Spread out before our eyes was only the endless swelling line of the green common, always curving round and up. From time to time our driver blew a melancholy thin note from a tiny copper horn shaped like a thickened comma and ornamented with a worked band of brass, a pathetic far-off note unknown to western scales.

Our tram-line was laid among the ample cinders of Fuji’s burnt-out fires, and sometimes the curves were very sharp. Then the conductor, balanced on the step and grasping the window-frame with both hands, jerked the tram towards him to keep it on the lines; and we rounded the curves in triumph. The compact mass of passenger which filled the tram interior looked on unperturbed, while those in the window-frames kindly adjusted their weight to assist the conductor. And the melancholy thin note of the copper horn travelled over the long slope of the upward-tending common as we crawled slowly on.

In the midst of a perfect stocking-heel of knitting-needles, which all looked as though they were about to begin violently knitting at once, the tram stopped, and the compact mass of passenger disintegrated itself slowly. Having been the first to enter we were the
last to detach ourselves from the general lump, and when we did recover a separate entity the knitting-needles lay gleaming in the cindery mud—and there was nothing else. We stumbled on over them for some time, until a ticket-hole in a sentry-box restored our belief that it was a stopping-place and not an accident. So we stood still and shouted for our tea-house boy by name. He came running, in long, tight-fitting, blue trousers like thick cotton hose and a blue tunic; and he was a girl, a pretty bright-coloured girl with daintily coiffured hair; and we all set off for the tea-house.

Subashiri is another straggling ill-kept street, all tea-houses and long cotton banners tied to bamboo poles, and our tea-house was the last of them all. It lay on the very edge of Fuji, and when we left it, after all our preparations had been completed, our lunch eaten, our guide engaged, we stepped straight on to the endless curve of upward-tending common.

I should have said our horses stepped, for the first stage of Fuji San is climbable on horses, pack-horses of a unique Japanese breed, which bite. They are harnessed with elaborate trappings in scarlet and gold, saddled with huge wooden saddles, rising like the prow of a ship behind, and sloping so steeply that the middle is one long knife-blade ridge, and only a tight hold of the stirrups prevents the rider from falling. All ride straddle-legged. I do not recommend Japanese pack-horses for pleasure, comfort, or security.

We plodded along over the bare common with its eternal long sweep upwards, like the swell of a great Atlantic roller, and the freshness and the coldness seemed to lift us out of Japan and carry us miles and
miles north, to the chill summer of a northern land. The path which cut winding across the long up-sweep of the green common was black as ink, and shining with the wet of mountain clouds. Fuji was invisible, but as the deep rumble of the thunder, deadened behind the thick white clouds which bounded path and common, rolled slowly out of hearing it was as if Great Fuji spoke. Behind the mist the presence of the "honourable mountain" could be surely felt. Already the world seemed sunk away and the pilgrimage begun.

Over the green common the pack-horses plodded. Our guide and the little girl groom, in her thick blue hose and dark blue tunic, were far behind talking in peace. The big drops of rain which the thunder brought had ceased to fall, and the freshness and the chill coming after the tropical heat of the plain stung strength to life again. Even the pack-horses grew less sulky, and urging made them shuffle into something near a trot. But this outbreak of energy, which lasted perhaps eighty yards, was more than enough for comfort, though it added to experience, for like the knights of old who "clove" their enemies in two, we too "clove," but in another direction. It was painful. So the horses sank back into their bad-tempered pace, and the wide common swept onwards and upwards.

After awhile the monotony of the black path crossing the green common was varied by stunted bushes which, gradually growing bigger and bigger, actually enclosed the cinder-track as English hedges an English lane. But the change was brief and the sloping green world with the long black line of path winding across it came back again.
The pack-horses plodded bad-temperedly on, and the structure of that saddle seemed to be petrifying in my frame. A blot in the path which had lain for so long on the edge of the common came gradually nearer until it widened into a deep oblong pit filled with the rakings of a thousand fires. Through this we ploughed our way, and the loose cinders came over the feet of the horses. With a good deal of exertion we climbed out again, then a few yards, a sharp turn, and we passed an empty row of sheds, for we had reached the *Mma gaeshi*—"Horse-turn-back" station. My horse evidently understood the Chinese characters of the tea-house sign, for no sooner did he see them than he promptly walked into one of the sheds, with me clinging affectionately to his neck to avoid the shock of the roof on my chest. But promptly as he walked in, the little girl groom and the boy guide were prompter; with a rush they were at his head, hauling him out again. He objected strongly, snarling like an ill-used dog, and so did I, but we were backed out of the shed at last.

We did not "horse-turn-back," we were going to take our steeds on one more station. The stations on Fuji, which are nothing but the native tea-house, rougher, ruder, and less scrupulously clean, are mostly built right across the actual path itself. You go in at one side and out at the other.

Up to the very threshold of the tea-house the sweep of the wet green common rolled, like a gigantic, motionless wave that never breaks. It was a bare wild world bounded only by the pale walls of the distant clouds. But on the other side the path plunged steeply into a thick interminable wood, where the great trees dripped slowly, with the heavy persistency
of Fate, and the dark trunks glistened uncertainly with wet. The little girl groom and the boy guide came and led the horses carefully, for the path was very steep, and the thick roots of the trees stretched like cords above the cinders.

This stage was short. At the next tea-house, which lay confined as a lake between the walls of the mountain, we said "good-bye" to the ill-tempered horses and to the little girl groom. The boy was to take us to the top and down to Yoshida. Then the wood, which the tea-house had interrupted no more than a buoy the ocean, stretched on. The great trees dripped coldly, with that chill feel of damp green things that makes the springtime of the north: coldly fresh as though the running sappy life were chill as mountain water, as though the growing trees were enwrapped in invisible ice and the very air made of impalpable snow.

In the midst of the wood stood a little desolate shrine, its floor was nothing but the black stamped earth, its roof of roughest thatch kept down with lavastones, and only the tiny altar had walls at all. Behind a sort of wooden bar the gods sat dim, and a mournful old priest was their only attendant.

Straight towards the altar led the mountain path. This was the gateway of Lord Fuji. Each path that climbs the "honourable mountain" leads through a temple to the temple on the top. At the first shrine the pilgrim buys his long white staff, stamped with the temple crest, which he carries with him upwards to the summit.

We bought our staves. And the old man, thrusting a thin bar of iron like a stick of sealing-wax into the charcoal fire, burnt the crest of Subashiri's shrine into the clean white wood, and with a courteous
gesture he said the prayer which we, unknowing, had left unsaid. Lord Fuji is neither fierce nor exclusive, all the world may come as pilgrims through his gateways. From the great Sun-Goddess the Mikado sprang, and the people of Japan are all kin to the Shinto gods, but the Shinto gods themselves welcomed the Lord Buddha when he came. Side by side with the older gods Buddha’s temples stand to-day, and Lord Buddha, too, once said, “All men are one”; and again, “All living things are brothers to mankind”; for Buddha, like the modern scientists, declared the world, all worlds, and all that in them is, one, in substance one.

Three steps from the temple and the trees of the wood shut over it as waters over a stone. It was lost. Lord Fuji is greater than his temples. With the help of our staves we climbed on up the steep cinder-path, till the great green trees, dripping slowly, dwindled, drew back, were ended.

On the very edge of the wood was a tea-house, the Ichigō, No. 1 station, a roughly built wooden-walled tea-house, on the edge of whose matting, with our feet on the path, we sat and drank tea, innumerable egg-bowls of hot green tea. While we were sitting here a whole party of pilgrims, in their white hose trousers, their white tunics tucked into their white obi, and their wash-basin-big straw hats, came down the path. They turned into the tea-house, and one old man, dropping on to the matting, rolled himself into a corner and was covered with futon. He had caught cold on the top, and was perfectly exhausted with pain and fatigue. But as he lay in the corner, clutching the futon to him as though to press a concrete warmth into his numbed bones, there was in his eyes a look
of dwelling content that not all the pain nor all the fatigue could overcome. He had climbed from the threshold to the sanctuary of Fuji; had knelt by the cloud-swept altar; felt the might of the God in the winds of his summit, in the still depths of his crater; caught up with Lord Fuji on high, he had looked down upon earth. What now was pain or fatigue?

The path from the tea-house struck out abruptly across the mountain, and we soon stood above the trees, stood on the bare cinder-slope that is Fuji. It was very much like walking up an ash-heap or a ballast-mound, and about as beautiful. Below us everything was hidden in a shifting mist; above, twenty feet of cinder-slope ended in a white wall. It was like climbing a black rope hung between two clouds.

After the ballast-heap came a lava-bed, where a molten river of lava had dried itself into high rocks and deep cracks, as the ice of a glacier. We crossed it obliquely, and in the twilight saw neither beginning nor end, neither from where it came nor to where it went; but its pinnacles and crevasses, its tumbled waves and jagged, piled-up ridges, lay lustreless and dark, as though of coal-black ice.

Once across this lava-glacier, and out of the dip formed by its bed, we stood on a sort of self-contained ash-heap, and looked down that long slope of Fuji which already lay below us.

Dimly through the faint floating veil of mist we could see all the green earth bare and smooth, with a darker line of hills as a child's bank of mud curving round the black surface of the lakes. We were so high up, the lakes so far away, and the whole air so
heavy with moisture that they looked in the misty light like polished slabs of black rock dropped into the green earth as one might sink stepping-stones into a lawn. As we watched the light seemed to thicken, the white mists spread through it as motes in a sunbeam, gathered themselves together. Swiftly they hid the black lakes; and boiling within the dark curve of the hills in billows of smoke, boiled over the mud-bank of hills, and blotting them out; submerged the green earth, and flowing rapidly upwards hid all the long slope of Fuji beneath a shoreless sea of fog.

Again we stood on a steep cinder-heap on the black rope which hung from void to void—alone.

And impenetrable Fuji remained. We simply climbed a cinder-path which ran from end to end of a never-ending, ever-retreating circle of cloud. And still within this grey-white circle we reached the *Ni-gō*, or No. 2 station. Here we were to stop the night, because No. 2 is larger and more comfortable than No. 4, and No. 8 was too far away.

No. 2 lay on the side of the path, its face looking over the precipice and its three sides well within a scooped-out hole in the cinder-heap. It was nothing but an ordinary Japanese room, only its walls were of solid wood, protected outside by cut blocks of lava, and inside with a lining of folded *futon* on shelves. Far away in the back of the room the charcoal fire was sunk in a sort of earth well, so that you could sit on the matting with your legs in the hole, absorb warmth, or do your cooking. Otherwise the tea-house was bare matted space on which each comer staked out a claim for himself with his luggage.

Having chosen a good site in a corner less draughty
than the rest of the enclosure, we proceeded to unpack and wash. Just outside the middle of the open wall of the house, and full on the pathway of Fuji, stood a large waterbutt. Having been directed by the family—an amiable man, an indifferent wife, and an inquisitive boy—to wash outside, I stepped on to the pathway. The tub was half full of water and looked very like the ordinary bath-tub of Japan. It was the first time I had seen a bath out of doors, though they figure so largely in travellers' tales; still there was nothing else, so boldly I plunged the top half of myself into the water.

A simultaneous scream from the man, the wife and the boy, brought me up dripping and bewildered. What had I done?

Not sinned against their moral code, surely. No—worse. Washed in the drinking-water!

Luckily there was more, enough for endless tea that night, and to-morrow fresh water could be fetched. But my wash came to an abrupt end. Of course what I ought to have done was to unearth a brass pan tucked away behind the tub, take down a bamboo dipper from a lava-block, dip out water from the tub into the pan and wash in that. Quite simple, naturally, when it was all explained and the pan and the dipper produced, but all problems always are simple after the explanation.

The amiable man remained amiable even after this catastrophe, and the indifferent wife had not been shaken from her indifference save for the space of one brief scream, while the small boy, at such an exhibition of curious manners on the part of the Ijin San, grew more inquisitive than ever, and we fried ham, ate tinned tongue, cut slices of bread, and drank foreign wine
under a close and exhaustive series of comments which were questions.

It grew dark rapidly as we ate. And as relays of pilgrims came in out of the night to fling themselves down on the matting, swallow cupfuls of hot tea and exchange long compliments with the man, the wife, and the guide, and disappear again into the night, we congratulated ourselves. No. 4 must have been very full. At eight o'clock, when the amado were drawn and the tea-house became a compact box, No. 2 had no guests but the Ijin San.

It was time to go to bed. The man put out the one smoking lamp by the fire-pit which had cast such lurid yellow lights on the white clothes of the pilgrims as they sat and drank, and such murky, gigantic shadows on the rest of the room; the boy went to bed in a corner, and we rolled ourselves up in our carefully Keatinged futon and tried to sleep.

It was cold. There were fleas. And Fuji sent us down a draught which simply whistled through the wooden walls, the folded futon and the lava-blocks. And the sense of the unusual, of the rest-house, the cinder-path and of Fuji, crept into our slumbers, holding back sleep.

When we awoke it was already five o'clock and the amado were open. The boy, careering over the matting, was detailing how the Ijin San slept.

We shook ourselves out of our futon and went outside to wash—not in the waterbutt.

Already, when we stepped upon the cinder-path, the unseen sun had touched the white clouds lying like islands in the blue beneath. And as we watched they coloured blushing, till in blood-red pools they studded
thick the air below. They lay away out over the land, moving slowly through the vapoury mist. It was as if the air was half precipitated, the atmosphere made visible. We looked down on to the world below and saw it as one sees white stones at the bottom of deep water.

The hidden sun was rising swiftly, and as he rose the blood-red pools faded out; the vapoury white air grew thinner, seemed slowly drying, until clear and invisible, we looked through it and saw the green earth stretching away and away to the level line of the horizon; while midway the little lakes lay sepia-black upon the green, curving so comfortably into the tiny crescent of the hills all dark with purple shadows. A fresh-washed world lying green and flat at the bottom of 7,000 feet of atmosphere.

It was cold, the water in the brass pan colder, and tingling with sudden chill we ran rapidly up the path past the scooped-out hollow where the rest-house hid—and stood transfixed.

Above us, touching us, and black against a sky all blue and liquid as the living sea, was Fuji San.

His clear-cut lines rose up quickly, and the mountain, whose slope our hands were holding, seemed to draw back its summit that our eyes might see it, so close it lay, so steep above. Round as a tower it rose in curves of grace, a black lighthouse springing towards the sky, delicate as Giotto's lily tower: slender in its grace and fragile. This was no rude Colossus, mighty with brute strength, but a god, great in grace, and strong, because divine.

Upwards the soaring lines rose up, coal-black, and the growing light caught faintly at a wine-red patch
where the sullen fires were sleeping, caught and turned it redder; redly it glowed, smouldering into life, the living life of Fujiyama.

Beneath the rounded dip of the summit were two tiny cracks, and the sky which lay so blue within the crescent curve seemed straining through. Here was neither tree nor rock, neither snow nor glacier, nothing to hide the form and substance of the mountain. Quite smoothly it rose, deep black, one great dead cinder.

It was perfectly fine when at last towards six o'clock we started to climb; and the pale blue sky lay flat behind Fuji, as the background in a picture.

Our path was narrow, just a foot-wide track beaten firm in the steep cinder-slope. And we climbed, till at No. 4 we stopped to rest.

The stations on Fuji are all much alike. A matted room lined with futon, and always a square well at the back with a charcoal fire and an ever-boiling kettle. As you go up the wooden walls are hidden outside beneath huge blocks of cut lava, hidden deeper and deeper, while the roofs are fastened down with lava-stones. Yet every winter Fuji blows down the built-up walls, tears off the roofs, and sends the big blocks hurtling down the slope. Even in summer the roof and walls lose portions of themselves, which, rolling, rolling, rolling, roll for ever downwards. Some of the stations are smaller, some larger, some cleaner, this is the only difference. In each you sit down on the matting to rest, and the crouching man over the fire brings you hot tea, and rice-paste cakes, while a far-away figure dimly seen through the smoke of the charcoal fire asks your guide where you come from, where you are going to, when you started, and what
time you will be back. And your guide replies, with endless details as to your behaviour if you are an *Ijin San*, and the amount you have already expended on tea and tips.

It was a glorious morning and one with the added charm of uncertainty.

Floating in the blue above and below us were clouds, large white clouds which would swoop down on the land, suddenly, and hide it as under a napkin. Then the black cone of Fuji, a cone with its top bitten out in two little bites, would pull down a thick flap out of the blue, and disappear. Mountain, sky and land shifted and shone, passed in an eddy of broken glimpses, stayed in a still-set picture, or were lost under covering clouds.

But always the steep little path led up through the loose cinder-slope, and always we climbed.

The steepest and most tiring part of the climb, except the natural staircase below the summit, is between the sixth and eighth station, where the path, leaving the cinder-slope, runs along a ridge of solid lava, rising like the long root of a tree high up out of the cinders, and loses itself among great black blocks. To cross this was something like jumping over sea rocks when the tide is out, only instead of lying flat these went steeply upward.

As we went toiling painfully along, feeling very like ants crawling up a tree-trunk, the clash of tiny cymbals, the faint echoes of talk and laughter came floating up. It was a whole party of pilgrims who came swinging up hand over hand, as it were, and as easily as if they were skating on good ice. We first saw them as we stood propped against the
lava-blocks, panting, and they were far below us, tiny as dwarfs, little spots of white on the dead-black slope, away down in the second storey as we were in the sixth. But as we laboriously climbed our inches they came on swiftly—on, up, on, past us; the little bells clashing and chiming gaily to the talk and laughter. Our guide told us they were kurumaya who had started from Gotemba that morning at two, and who would get back there again before dark, to work the next day as usual. Anything like the pace at which those men came up the steep slope of Fuji—for the most part straight over the long beds of loose cinders—I have never seen. It was like sailors running up a rope. They came up more swiftly than most people would care to go down, without an effort, with plenty of breath left to talk and laugh; and with that supreme ease which only comes when doing something well within the margin of one’s power.

We were very glad to rest at No. 8, though our friends the kurumaya had gone on cheerfully. It was such a nice large tea-house, beautifully clean, and the hot egg-bowls full of tea were peculiarly refreshing. Without the continuous tea I do not know how one would climb Fuji at all. The air at 13,000 feet freezes, but the sun of Japan pours down relentlessly, fierce as the tropics, while the hot dust drifts down one’s throat, into one’s very skin; and when the wind blows you need to cling to the shifting cinders with the very soles of your feet. Shelter on the bare slopes of Fuji there is none. Frequently the wind is so fierce even in the six brief weeks of summer that to stand upright is impossible, for Fuji’s summit is in the heart of the storm.

Between the eighth and the ninth station the path
was easy, but we climbed it wrapped in a sudden cloud. All the long sweep of earth below was gone. The green Tokyo plain, where the dark thunder-clouds lay brooding in the still blue air, and the great fingers of light which struck so fiercely on the little lakes beneath the mud bank of the hills, the dark cone, so near above us, all were gone, sponged out by a big cloud. And we were only climbing up a steep black rope that hung between two infinities, climbing out of space, into space.

From the ninth and last station you climb into Fuji's stronghold by a giant staircase of rough lava. It is necessary here to hoist yourself painfully up by the aid of guides or your own two hands. We climbed on slowly. The lava was quite hot, for the staircase lies cut within the slope, and gets and keeps the heat.

On the steepest step of the staircase we passed an old, old man, and an old, old woman, both in the white garb of pilgrims, and each with a guide on either side to help them on. The last pitiful effort of the old woman to drag herself up on to a lava-block had exhausted her completely; she lay huddled against the stones gasping, her eyes shut. The old man kneeling by her side was holding the wrinkled hand in both of his trying to encourage her. The cracked old voice, broken with quavering pants for breath, sounded strangely on the desolate black staircase as we came by.

"We are going," he chanted—"we are going to the top."

And the four guides in their fresh young voices sang: "To the top, to the top, to the top."

"We are going," repeated the old man, softly stroking the hand he held—"we are going to the top."
And again the four young voices rang out vigourously: "To the top, to the top, to the top."

It was the pilgrims' hymn, and the old woman heard it. Slowly she stirred, her mouth opened with a sigh of utter weariness, but still she too sang in the thinnest trickle of a voice, broken with quavering sobs:

"To the top, to the top, to the top."

It was the most pathetic music I have ever heard. Indeed the wave of faith was great which could carry such as these to the top of Fuji San.

Up the steep steps, cut so deep within the lava, we hurried panting, eager we, too, to reach the top. But the summit of Fujiyama is a sanctuary, and on its threshold stood two priests.

As we stumbled up over the last step, and on to the path which runs around the crater, they barred our way, standing motionless behind a white-wood wicket. In the breeze their black robes fluttered, their tonsured heads were bare.

Surprised we paused. All the climber's hurry fell away. This was not another peak to be raced up and raced down by the indifferent tourist, not another ascent to be added to the list of the mountaineer. Fuji San is sacred. Enter into his courts as into the temple of the Lord, humbly, reverently, or at least with a sincere respect.

The two priests leaned over the wicket as we came up and bowed; but they did not open it. One stretched out his hand for our staves to stamp them with the temple's crest. On the summit of Fuji San the crest is stamped in vermilion ink. In the temples at the foot it is burnt with a red-hot iron: vermilion is a royal colour.
The other priest, holding a bamboo dipper, came slowly towards us. Something he was saying as he moved, in the nasal sing-song of the priest. Then he motioned to us to put out our hands and slowly, carefully, he poured the ice-cold water over them. And they bade us enter. It was the rite of purification, the symbol of the contrite heart which all who cross great Fuji's threshold must surely bring.

Once inside the wicket the path, beaten wide here, ran between a breast-high wall of lava which, built like a rampart on the edge of Fuji, hid the sheer sides of the mountain and a row of low wooden huts, the rest-houses—ran between these and on, up to where the black edge of the crater, like the rim of a broken cup, cut the sky in sharp clear lines.

For the moment it was fine, and leaving our luggage in one of the huts we hurried on, past the rest-houses, on past the rampart wall, on along the little beaten track which still led steeply upwards. Then sharply it turned, and we stood wedged within a crack in the crater wall, with the sharp black rim rising high on either hand.

We were alone on Fuji's side, before his altar. And there was no sound.

In a stillness as of death the vast crater stretched 800 feet below, and the grey ash-dust gathering through two centuries lay thick and smooth as sand upon the shore. Steeply the cinder-walls rose up, rose round, and held the ash. Only in front of us, across half a mile of silent dust, a wide crack in the cup-like rim showed two tall poles and many floating banners, there where the temple's wicket crossed the pathway from Gotemba.

Grey ash and cinder, that was Fuji San. Once a mighty fire, a fire two and a half miles round, with
13,000 feet of cinders, and a bed of ash 2000 feet across. And now, dying or asleep, rigid as death, grown grey and cold, but yet mighty as the sea, powerful as the storm; Nature's eternal force made visible. And that still life which rolls around our human incompleteness, mysterious and unknown, drew near. Almost it seemed as though we touched the force without, the unresting naked flame of being which threads through the spheres. Almost we touched—but saw only the corpse of Life, for Nature keeps her secrets...

In a silence as of death, the vast still crater stretched for a circle of two miles, and the grey ash-dust gathering through two centuries lay thick and smooth—the pall of a mighty God.

Steeply the cindery walls rose up, rose round in jagged points like the rim of a broken cup, and into the crack there came two white-clad pilgrims. They knelt bareheaded on the edge of the crater, looking down, and the murmured sing-song of their prayers broke the silence. Old and grizzled, their bullet-heads were bent before the altar in a Faith reverent and sincere.

Truly the might of God had dwelt on Fuji; the breath of Eternal Life had rested here—rested and passed, or was passing; and the pilgrim in his faith holds sacred the print of that footstep. He prays to that part of the Godhead incarnate in Fuji—Fuji so perfect in his grace, so stirring in his strength.

In western lands the Roman Catholic peasant prays before his altar, but the symbol of his Godhead is often reduced to a composite Christ in pink and white plaster. If Truth must have a form—and mankind believes with difficulty in abstract nouns—it surely is a
purer, grander faith to feel God visible in Fuji's curves, dwelling in his sleeping fires, than to hem Him in a building made by man and seat Him on an ugly altar between groups of tawdry flowers.

The little narrow path which led down into the crack led also round the summit below the jagged edges of the crater's rim, and we followed it. Outside the crack it went steeply downwards before it turned, for above, the cindery slopes of Fuji were steaming white in the sunshine, and the ground was very hot. It is but a patch, still evidence that Fuji sleeps. He is not dead.

Then the wandering pathway, a black thread on the loose cinder-slope, led up again, round and down into a tiny fold among the cinders, and suddenly, quickly as a camera snaps, the white clouds, loosely piled upon the mountain, were riven asunder, and the whole world shimmering in a golden haze that touched but did not hide it, lay at our feet.

Straight down below, 13,000 feet away, it lay. All the long line of the river Fujikawa, gleaming blue-black as rough-cast iron, among the orange sand-flats of its mouth. And the soft curves of the Yokohama peninsula, a smaller but more graceful Italy, floating, floating, on the water, purple-blue on azure blue.

And all beyond was the blue intensity of the infinite sea.

So near it looked, so clear that the steely line of the Fujikawa seemed a sword-blade one could stoop and reach. And leaning we looked from Fuji's top as from a tower; but Fuji's self we could not see. His cinder-slopes had vanished.

Straight down below there was the world, and we above it hung suspended 13,000 feet above the earth.
Beyond, above, outside of it. Dear Earth, how still it lay, how beautiful!

And into my mind there floated the old, old words:

"And He divided the land from the waters, and the dry land He called Earth. . . . And God looked and saw that it was good."

Above the world, beyond it, we too could look and see, and we too "saw that it was good."

Then the little wandering track, beaten firm by the feet of the pilgrims, led on, up and down, among the cinders of Fuji's sides, and round to that great crack in the cup's rim where the pathway from Gotemba reached the summit.

Here were crowds of people, all the pilgrims on Fuji San, pouring through the white-wood wicket, or buying draughts of the sacred "Golden Water" which is born in the depths of the crater.

As we stood drinking our little bowlful of the ice-cold water, the low boom of a Japanese temple bell came swaying through the air, and each jagged peak round the crater's rim added its muffled echo to the bell's deep boom.

The level space which formed the floor to this big crack was full of pilgrims old and young, men, women and little children, and they were all pressing forward between the tall poles, where the long banners tied top and bottom were stirring in the wind, to the little temple lying under the very edge of Fuji, as a nest beneath the eaves. The temple seemed full already, but the crowd, courteous for all their zeal, pressed forward gently, content, if they could not enter, to stay outside.

Again the low liquid boom came swaying through the air, prolonged by the muffled echoes of the jagged
peaks. And we too walked towards the temple. But
the patient crowd without reached already to the path-
way, and must press back against the cinder sides as
the long procession of black-robbed priests, with copes
and stoles and vestments of rich brocade, swept into
the temple.
Then the liquid booming bell swayed out again—and
was still; and the muffled echoes of the peaks, subdued
and faint, lingered in the intense silence.
The priests had passed within.

The ash on the floor of the crater was soft and very
thick. It lay in thin round flakes that broke between
the fingers, and the feet sank into it, drawn under as
on sand that is half-quick. It was like walking on
piles of those sun-lit flecks that carpet a beech-wood;
but the light had gone out of these and left them
pale and grey.

All around the black walls of the crater rose up into
the sky, five hundred feet of sheer height. Shut into
the crater pit with the dead ash sucking our feet we
seemed to have come to the region where death lies
behind—and birth is yet to come. We stood in the
Place of Pause, in that Between which is Nothingness.

Smooth as the sand of the shore the ash stretched
along. Loose and thick the flakes were piled, and
the feet, drawn under, grew heavy.

What was beneath? Nothingness?

And a strange fear of falling through the loose ash
into that Nothingness grew with each empty moment.

Faintly, far away, the stir of Life’s Birth reached
into the void. It came from below, deep through the
ash where a little clear trickle of water sang in the
silence. Distinct, but so soft that the senses must
needs strain to hear. Through the ash, beneath the ash, the water trickled, faint as a new-born breath. And its name it was Golden.

The hut when we reached it was empty, and it lay facing the lava-wall, the last of the row, and all of them were open in front, like cages at the Zoo.

The square pit with its charcoal fire was in front here, and we had to pass behind it to reach the unoccupied space at the back. As we crawled over the matting darkened by our own shadows, for the only light came through the open front, we almost stumbled over some one rolled up in a bundle of futon. It was the old, old woman of the morning. She was asleep, in the deep, dull sleep of utter exhaustion, and her wrinkled chin, dropped down, trembled, as she slept.

It was very cold in the hut, and we too were glad of futon and egg-bowls of hot tea, glad to eat our tinned tongue and slices of dry bread, and gladder still just to stay wrapt in the futon, and sleepily rest.

The landlord, like an image, sat on his heels in the well and never stirred. From time to time he put fresh pieces of charcoal on the fire with a pair of brass chopsticks; then the smoke, sweeping in dense waves through the room, would make us all cough abruptly, till it melted slowly away and the room was still.

Beyond the lava-wall the grey-white clouds lay herded as a fold of sheep, and we watched them mounting up and up, rolling against the wall, rising above it, sending thin wreaths and wisps of mists across the pathway, which stayed like ribbons in the air, and then sinking, dropped down again. Often they came up, and always rolled back beaten. Fuji's summit is above the clouds, they could not scale it.
In twos and threes and little groups, the white-robed pilgrims stopped to sit on the edge of the matting and drink tea, and eat innumerable balls of rice rolled in a soft grated substance that looked to be, but was not, cheese—a thing unknown in this milkless land. So the pilgrims sat on the matting and ate their rice-balls, which the landlord, without moving his body a hair’s-breadth, produced and rolled, and sprinkled, and handed. And the acrid smoke from the charcoal fire drifted across the room, filling it.

Quite suddenly I awoke out of my sleep, to find some one on the floor beside me waking the old, old woman. It took her a long time to struggle out of that dense, deep sleep into a state of even drowsy consciousness. She sat up, bewilderered, and when they told her she must go, get up, climb all that weary way down again, the old face seemed to shrink together in hopeless despair. There was a long dreary pause. Then the old, old woman bowed, the smile of courtesy upon her worn old face.

"Yoroshū gozaimas" ("As it honourably pleases you"), she said. And rising, she tottered out.

This flesh was more than weak, but the spirit was the spirit of her race—it sacrificed all things.

We were to sleep in Yoshida that night, and for us too it was time to go. So leaving our money on the edge of the fire-pit we crawled out of the hut. The image sitting on its heels never stirred; with one swift glance beneath the eyelids, he had reckoned the money to the last sen, but whether more or less than he expected, he remained immovable, magnificently unconscious, occupied solely in bowing us out. Had
it been less than the proper charge we certainly should have heard of it through the guide, but as tea is never charged for, each visitor pays for it according to his rank, exigencies, generosity, and the status of the tea-house. In reality, of course, it is payment for attendance as well as tea.

The Japanese hold that no service performed can ever have a money equivalent. In their economy, money was never a real asset, as courage, knowledge or art, and they ignored it, when they did not despise it. So in the old days, those trades which had most to do with money, whose aim seemed to be the getting of money, were looked down on. Shopkeepers and merchants ranked below swordsmiths, peasants and artisans. Only the ignoble would choose such as a life's work, and if to-day this idea has hindered commerce, if it has produced the low standard of some business men, and consequently the foreigner's bad opinion of them, it has, on the other hand, lifted the nation out of the rut of sordid greed, made it seek after, and lay fast hold of, that which seems to it true—made of its people a race of men, of gentlemen, honourable, high-principled, and capable of indomitable devotion to their ideal.

We stepped off the summit of Fuji San into a wet white cloud, which was the sky of the earth below. For the first two stages the way down was the same as the way up, but at No. 8 the paths divided, the one to Yoshida leading away to the left.

After we had made a sort of semi-tour of the mountain we climbed over a lava-ridge and found ourselves in the centre of a black scoop in Fuji's side that, coming from above, stretched interminably downwards.
And the whole of the huge groove was a mass of the loosest, most shifting cinder. There was no path. One went down. At each step all the cinders on that part of Fuji slid bodily, tumbling over each other in their haste. You slid too, until the cinders, piling themselves up and up, reached the knee, and abruptly you stopped, only to pull out that leg and begin to slide again with the other. The rate at which one shot down was prodigious, and the method alarming. Each step seemed to start half the mountain rolling, rolling, for ever downwards, and there seemed no particular reason why the other half with you on it should not roll away too. Positively, as the torrent of cinders rolled and rolled and rolled, the conviction that Fuji-yama must look smaller next morning grew upon me. Until with a flash of understanding I remembered the legend of the dust brought down by the pilgrims' feet flying each night back to the mountain. And it seemed a very necessary explanation, and quite convincing too, when I looked at the tons and tons of cinders which my feet alone were sending down Fuji's side.

After awhile the slope grew even steeper, and the cinders from black became a deep dull red. And still one shot downwards. Small patches of powdery, grey snow sprinkled with tiny round spots were tucked away here between the red cinders, and the whole slope was covered with the straw sandals of former pilgrims. They were scattered over the red cinders like a new kind of vegetation harder than the rest, and there were thousands on thousands of them.

And still we shot downwards. At too steep an angle now to be brought up merely by the weight of the cinders, so that we were obliged to invent brakes
with our more or less free foot, our extended arms, or the angle of our bodies; and we were very glad indeed of our staves to put any sort of term to the long uncomfortable slide.

It was a long while before we passed out of the zone of the *waraji*, and saw real little green things growing between the cinders. They looked utterly miserable and degenerate, but they did make the ballast solider, and the sliding easier.

It was a gigantic slide, but we brought up at last on a ridge of grey rock, over which we had to climb carefully, for it was full of holes. On the other side of this ridge the degenerate green weeds had grown into degenerate green plants; and after a few more slides and climbs the plants became bushes, stunted and miserable, but bushes, and we came out on to a sort of natural grass platform, before the rest-house of No. 4, Yoshida side. It was dirty, the first dirty house I had ever seen in Japan. Below us, as though stopped short by a word of command, “Thus far and no further,” were the trees; the tops of the nearest were on a level with the platform, but not one grew upon it.

With the cinder-slope behind us we stepped off the grass platform straight into the forest. It was a beautiful forest. First firs, and then, as we went downwards, green trees, small oaks and cryptomerias of all kinds.

To feet weary of ballast-heaps, the forest footpath was a rest refreshing, and the delight of growing trees and green fresh leaves after *waraji* and cinders, an enchantment. But Fuji had not finished his surprises or his trials. Soon the pathway disappeared from under our feet, and only the roots of the trees remained. On these we had to walk, and they were slippery,
knotted, and far apart, and full of tangled holes that caught and tripped the feet.

A polite Japanese student came and walked with us a little way “to improve his English,” but his feet in their waraji stepped over the tree-roots faster than ours in our boots, and we were soon left alone again.

Gradually, as we went downwards, the forest altered from the austere wood of the mountain to the rich luxuriant wood of the plains, green with moss, covered with creepers, dripping with big juicy drops of water as though rich sap were oozing from every vein.

All through the wood there were tiny tea-houses, set under a tree and lost among the branches. We passed No. 1 at least seven times, each time certain that it really must be the real original No. 1, and that the “horse-turn-back” station, where we could get a basha to carry us to Yoshida, was necessarily “the next.” After the weary sliding down that abrupt slope, the muscles of one’s legs were all trembling with the strain, and the tree-roots, slippery and uncertain, became doubly difficult. We were still going down so steeply that the hollow of the pathway lay like a green chimney below us. Slowly up through this living funnel came the pilgrim’s chant.

“We are going,” and the little bells clashed out triumphant—“we are going to the top.”

Then the deep sing-song of the chorus, coming nearer with each syllable, grew louder:

“Top . . . the top . . . to the top.”

We waited while the chant coming up from the green depths below came nearer, came past us, went on. From the green heights above it sounded down.

“We are going,” and the tiny cymbals clashed—“we are going to the top.”
And faintly echoing from above came the answer:
"To the top . . . the top . . . top."

And still the first stations succeeded one another, and the tired feet and the aching muscles grew more weary. The wood was dense as ever, but less steep, and at last there came earth as well as tree-roots for a pathway.

We passed through another station, half tea-house, half temple, where a man sat behind a tray of thin irons stamped with the temple's crest, and where gods and tea-bowls filled the shelves. The path went through it and out again, under the trees, a path of good stamped earth. Then twisting suddenly it ended in four smooth green steps that led down into a natural amphitheatre, with tea-houses on each side. This was the Mma gaeshi—"horse-turn-back" station—Yoshida side. Away to the left were several square boxes on wheels, otherwise the stage was empty. It was, indeed, exactly like a "set" in an opera.

We hobbled, it was so difficult to walk on flat earth, to a tea-house and sat down demanding basha. Slowly a man entered right front, and crossing left centre tipped up a square box and waited. Then another man, entering left front, harnessed a horse to it. This took them half an hour, because they wanted four times too much for the drive to Yoshida, and at each refusal, at each expostulation, at each rebate, the one man dropped the square box down on the ground and the other gave up harnessing the horse. Meanwhile we drank tea and monotonously repeated our price. After half an hour the basha was finally harnessed, and crossing left front we got in.

This basha was simply a square box without a lid,
mounted on wheels. You sat on a piece of matting spread at the bottom, leant against the wooden back and clutched hard at the sides to keep yourself in. The driver sat on the shaft and used his feet as a brake. The reins consisted of one length of straw rope attached to the left side of the horse's head.

For the first half-hour the relief of stretching out one's miserable, trembling legs was pure bliss, after that, basha-driving was pleasant but jolty, and after that it became renewed torture to endure the jolting, and the aches in one's back and arms were vigorous and persistent. Road there was none, only two large ruts, in, over and among which we wandered.

The trees stopped as abruptly above the natural amphitheatre of Mma gaeshi as they had begun below the platform of No. 4. And for the whole two hours of our journey to Yoshida we travelled over an immense far-reaching common, one of the soft ripples at Fuji's base. There was not a house or a village to be seen, nothing but the wide stretch of green common.

It was half-past five when the basha started out among the ruts, and the clear, colourless light of a northern evening—we were 3000 feet up—which is not cold, yet is so colourless, enclosed the earth. The sky was as bare of clouds as the common of landmarks; the one lay palely blue above, the other stretched subduedly green below. Here and there the green was crossed by long flushes of colour, with the red of tiny tiger-lilies, and the pale yellow of the evening primrose. Behind, Lord Fuji rose majestic. At first a line of fleecy cloud had lain above the deep green of the forest, and Fuji's head was lost in mist, but at the sunset the clouds fell away lower and lower, until the whole long sweep of Fuji rose up triumphant into the blue.
It was but slowly that the *basha* jolted among the deep-cut ruts of the common, and but slowly that we travelled on, downwards.

Looking out across the wide flat land we saw that the whole world was slightly rounded, slightly tilted. It was like journeying over a large green apple. The globe in fact palpable, visibly rounded. Away on the left the sun was setting in straight streamers of pale red edged with shining gold. And the green common, with its pools of little red lilies, and its bands of pale yellow primroses, grew greyer and greyer.

Fuji San, perfect in long smooth curves, stood purple-blue behind. Clear-cut as a jewel in a setting he rose up, rose up, until the rounded strength of his summit lay bright sapphire on the azure sky.

Over the ruts the *basha* stumbled, endlessly jolting. The sun set slowly, and slowly the colours died. Grey lay the common in front of us, on each side. Lord Fuji was but a dark, still shadow. And over the ruts the *basha* stumbled in long, slow jolts.

We were very tired, our backs ached with the jolting, and our arms were numb with pain. All around us the grey spaces of the common stretched uninterrupted, without house or village. Where was Yoshida?

Still the *basha* lumbered and stumbled, and we looked for lights and houses.

Nothing. Only in front of us the grey level of the common grew tall and black. . . . In a few more jolts the deep black had engulfed us, grey common and all, and we were wandering among dark shadows that were trees.

In the very pitch of the blackness the cart suddenly
stopped. We were asked to get out. The basha went no further.

"But Yoshida?"

"Yoshida yoroshī!—all right," replied the man, unconcerned, as though every traveller to every town arrived in a dark wood without sight or sound of houses; and he drove off.

Our guide picked up the luggage, and we followed stumbling, straining our eyes to tell the deeper shadows that were trees from the paler dark that meant pathway.

Slowly the deeper shadows receded, and in their place came the dim forms of houses. Then a sharp turn and we were walking along a real road with the familiar knitting-needles of the Japanese tramway shining in the twilight. After a while the houses grew denser, and some of them had lights; but the contrast only made the pale dark of the open roadway seem still blacker.

Large trucks, like kitchen-tables with their legs cut short, came sliding past us as we stumbled on, gliding slowly down the road alone and unattached.

Parties of pilgrims in white, with white staves in their hands, came unexpectedly out of the darkness, and the lighted paper lanterns in their hands warmed their white clothes into a rich cream-yellow, precipitating them into solid bodies from the waist downward, while their heads and shoulders drifted slowly on through the pale night like impalpable ghosts.

We had reached the top of the hill, and the road, in a sudden turn, ran sharply away from us. The houses were on both sides now in one continuous line, and the shock of meeting trucks jarred through the street. There was a flare of orange light where the knitting-needles became a shunting-yard.

This was Yoshida.
Our landlady was aristocratic to her finger-tips. She had the long slim neck, the long thin face, with its pure outlines, the long narrow eyes, the long graceful body, and the delicate poise which is the ideal type of the aristocrat—and rare even among them. When she knelt on the matting to receive us, she did it with the distinction of a queen, and all her movements showed that clean-cut grace, that courtesy without effort, that refinement of pose and gesture which only the continued culture of long generations can produce, and which is to mere politeness or mere beauty as the subtle music of the poet to Monsieur Jourdain’s prose. Her husband was a bullet-headed man of the people, stubby and plebeian. His manners, like his Japanese, were polite of course, but undistinguished, while our hostess spoke a language as courtly as her ways. When she glided over the matting, her long sleeves swaying, or stretched out her thin slim-fingered hand to take our tea-caps, we felt like beings of a lower evolution, and this higher product, evolved by centuries of self-control and a living love of beauty, was the human form made perfect, to which we might, perhaps, one day attain.

Even the inn possessed something of her grace: the matting was whiter, the woodwork smoother, the steep stairway—set like a ladder between the walls—more polished than elsewhere. The tiny medallions set deep in the shōji, which are as the handles to our doors, were works of art. The miniature garden of the courtyard, with its hills and trees and swift grey stream, was a living landscape, perfect in form and colouring. Even the shallow brass pans in which we washed, the commonest of hotel furniture, had an elegance of their own. And in the refined and beautiful inn our graceful, courtly
landlady knelt and offered us platefuls of "mixed biscuits." They were certainly cheap ones, but never did the utter vulgarity of their shapes, or thecrudeness of their colouring, strike so sharply on my senses. If they had tasted like manna from the wilderness I could not have eaten one. They were too ugly.

It is vivid still, the bliss of that hot bath in fresh mountain water pumped from a stream which comes from Fuji's sacred slopes, and the joy of that long dreamless sleep under the green mosquito curtain in our white matted room. Vivid still, the breakfast cooked over the hibachi, with our aristocratic landlady, every line of her graceful form looking purer and more refined as she stooped to hold the handle of the frying-pan, while her stolid husband on his knees before his office desk in the corner looked on good-naturedly, and the stout little maid watched the foreign cooking of our ham as though it had been a sacred rite.

We were to return by the lakes which encircle Fuji, and we set out that morning along a dull dusty road between dull dusty banks.

It was but a little way to the first lake, but hot beyond believing, and when we reached it, and pushed out in our boat beyond the narrow inlet which ran deep into the road, the heat settled down like a roof above our heads.

The sky was one superb arch of azure blue; the earth in front of us a wide, bare flat, glittering with heat. And from out of that gleaming, quivering mist which hid the level land Great Fuji rose dark blue on blue. Naked and superb he stood against the background of the sky secure in his strength, perfect in his beauty, beyond words, beyond praise, in sober truth—divine.

It took an hour and a half to cross the lake, and
all the time Fuji San, set in the framework of the turquoise sky, with the gleaming, glittering mist of light sweeping like an iridescent cloud to the edge of his dark blue slope, stayed with us. For an hour and a half we looked, and the form and the soul of the mountain sank deep within our hearts.

The second lake is divided from the first by a natural wall of hill over which we climbed, the sun striking fiercely on the pathway where one small patch of shade lay black on the thick white dust.

The second lake was set deep within the circle of the hills, and we crossed it in company with three men who had drunk much sake, and another who stuck fuses into a row of dynamite cartridges and then, leaving them under a corner of the matting in the bottom of the boat, apparently forgot their existence. These four passengers and the two boatmen were continually stumbling up and down the boat to row in turns, and always within a few inches of the dynamite.

It was a somewhat agitating row, although we were assured the cartridges were “only for fishing.”

It ended at last, after a long two hours of suspense, among the quiet grey boulders which stretched for a hundred yards between the water and the wood.

Down the little valley beyond the stones, a winding river of rice-fields ran like a grass-green stream, and we followed it, as one follows up a mountain brook, till it dwindled and disappeared. Then the wood closed in above it, and we were in the middle of a weird uncanny forest, all grey and wrinkled, where multitudes of thick-set pole-like trees, covered with a powdery dust, ranged ghost-like out of sight.

And here we walked, the only living things in a
spell-bound world, walked until the earth grew thin beneath our feet and the rough grey boulders came up through the soil.

Then for a long, long while we went beside a grey lava-river flowing between the grey tree-stems, a wide and furious river arrested as it swept in angry tumult through the wood, stopped dead, and each breaking wave turned into stone. We looked at this still, dead river and saw how the years had covered the waves with a thick white crust of dust. Buried deep lay that tempest of passion which once had swept burning from Fuji's sides, buried deep beneath blocks of grey lava and the drifting ash-grey dust.

Yet the very stones that buried it were carved in its image. And the face of that passion, petrified and deadly, looked up from the river. And all around the grey wood stood dead too, and very still, coated deep with a powdery dust, ash-grey. For the spell of the river was over the wood, and it was the death of Destruction.

For miles we walked beside that Medusa river, sometimes we left it, sometimes we crossed it, then losing it between the trees we wandered where the ghostly pole-like trunks grew thickest. But always the river came back with the dead passion that made it staring rigid beneath the stones.

Miles and miles of lava, wide, and long, and deep. The ghostly trees were rooted in it, the very lakes lay cradled in it, the world for far around was made of it. Verily the fires of Fuji San were mighty in those days.

The third lake was black, ink-black, black as strong-cast shadows in the moonlight. Tarnished and still it lay, without a glitter or a gleam; yet the washing
wavelets, as they poured over the stone at our feet, were pure and clear, and the high steep hills that half encircled it were dense with the greenest trees.

The ghostly wood was ended, the petrified river gone; on the banks of this sombre lake living trees were growing. Tangled and thick and high, they walled in three sides of the lake, and, sweeping round in a long thin promontory, divided the ink-black waters with a sword of green.

Along the hill there ran no pathway, the trees stood too thick, the hill too steep. There was no boat upon the lake nor any road around it. The black waters washed to the foot of the trees, the trees stretched green to the top of the hills, and lake and wood were still as undiscovered country.

And behind us lay all the long silence of the ghostly wood.

On the very edge of the promontory a white house rested, poised like a gull on the water, but the dead-black lake gave back no reflection, and the dark-green hills caught no colour from the sun, nor stirred a leaf. Silent as the waters the house poised white beneath the evening sky.

On three sides the high hills shut in the lake, but on the fourth the lava-stones met the marsh, the marsh the common, and wide and flat the common stretched away to the beyond.

A little while and the setting sun was down behind the hills, and all the sky was darkening into night. Far over the common, and purple as a king's raiment, rose Fuji San. Grand and lonely he stood between dark earth and darkening sky; far off on the edge of the world, and all the solemn stillness of the evening wrapt him round.
Gently fell the twilight on lake and hill. The grey spaces of the common stretched more vast and wide. The night was coming fast.

Beneath my feet the blackness of the waters opened as the deep abyss. Behind, the horror of the spell-bound wood waited wide-eyed. Sweeping onwards in the twilight the indistinctness of the common passed out of sight, the pathless hills closed round me.

Then the spell of the ghostly wood reached out to clutch. I looked towards the light. . . . Dim as Life’s hope it lay, far off beyond the horizon, while all the blackness of the lake and hill surrounded me.

I strained my eyes across the indistinctness, and from that far-off heaven a lofty Presence leaned.

It was the Great God Fuji.
III

EPILOGUE

The blue sea lies sleeping warm and still; the sky, another sea, sleeps too; only the green headlands standing between blue and blue watch, their feet in the water. And the heat is the heat of a summer's noon.

So still the sea, so quiet the sky, so calm the earth that the soft breath of the sleeping ocean comes as a rippling sigh towards the land, while the blue sea above floats lazy.

From their low hill Tesshuji's forsaken Gods look out. The temple walls are bare, its altars dumb, and the grass-grown court has shod even silence with a velvet shoe. Dreaming, the Gods sit undisturbed, and the hush of the noonday's heat is deepened.

It is long since the clang of the praying-bell overhead called them to listen. Still they sit, and look.

In the shadow of the doorway at the still Gods' feet, I, too, sit and look.

Over the sleeping sea, blue and still, beyond the watching headlands, out into the liquid sky above, where in utter majesty great Fuji rises one sheer line of beauty in the blue. The rounded curve of his snow-crest shimmers white as a sun-caught sail, and the long slope of his perfect form is a deep blue line on blue. Fuji rises as a tower, he floats in that limpid
sea above a mist-clad iceberg. And the glimmer of his snow-crest is a shining crown of glory in the sky. So real, so simple, so beautiful. Just a crescent of white snow floating thirteen thousand feet above the world, and two long lines of blue sloping gently downwards, outwards to the earth. So simple, so beautiful, is it real?

A faint stir in the sleeping sea and I drop my eyes to the blue below.

Beauty, said the Greeks, was born of the waves and the foam. Once in that clear sea above, a great blue wave came leaping with a crest of foam. It was Beauty’s self, all-perfect, and they called it Fujiyama. Beauty content to be but beauty.

Tesshuji’s Gods look out over the sea, beyond the green headlands into the blue. They dream undisturbed. They have looked so long.

The noonday heat has spread the land with a quivering haze of blue. It sleeps. The softly breathing sea sleeps too. No prayer has roused the Gods, they too are sleeping.

The whole world, says the Scriptures, is but a dream of the great Lord Buddha. Tesshuji’s Gods are dreaming, and Fuji is.

Dream Gods for ever.
THE ART OF THE NATION
"All that is superfluous is displeasing to God and Nature; all that is displeasing to God and Nature is bad."

Dante, "De Monarchia," bk. i. chap. xiv.
I

GRACE BEFORE MEAT

The *kuruma* running quickly through the narrow opening in the high bamboo fence curved into a tiny garden set with dark green shrubs, and stopped abruptly.

In front of us, where a square recess broke the long line of wooden wall, a pile of *gheta* lay heaped on a grey stone block. At the sound of our coming the wooden wall opened, and a Japanese in *kimono* and *hakama* stood bowing before us. He came with pairs of soft woolly night-socks to cover English feet, and, sitting down on the narrow knee-high platform of polished black wood, we took off our boots. Two giant curb-stones at right angles made a solitary step to reach the platform, and leaving our leather boots, looking caricatures of feet among the wooden sandals, we followed the waiting *kimono* along the three-foot-wide platform.

Round the corner of the square recess, and shut off from the tiny courtyard by a thick screen of fence and shrubs, was a white garden, sunny and still, where, under a pale blue sky, the tall shadows of the trees fell black across the pure white snow. Sliding back the paper-paned wall the waiting *kimono* bowed us to enter.
"Come in, come in," said our friend the professor, his familiar face looking strangely unfamiliar from out the wide-sleeved silken *kimono* and pleated silken skirts of his *hakama*, as he laughingly bowed us a Japanese welcome.

The first sensation on coming into that low matted room, bare of all furniture, was one of intense awkwardness, all one's limbs seemed to have swollen to ungainly proportions, and to have grown correspondingly wooden and jerky. In a flash I had slipped back to a child's years, and was lying in my little iron bedstead in the dark, the haunting terror of the unknown upon me, as I stealthily pinched a mountainous leg with a hand twelve feet thick, and trembled to feel the bedstead giving way beneath me. That old sensation of unaccountable largeness, of bursting one's surroundings, stayed as the unreal background to my mind until the paper-paned walls closed behind me again.

"If you would like a chair, there are just two—" began the professor.

But we had come to be really Japanese, and Japanese we intended to remain at all costs. So, getting gingerly down on our knees on the square cushions that lay on the matted floor, we tried unsuccessfully to sit on our heels with the same grace as little Miss Hayashi opposite. There she sat, demure, serene, and, above all, supremely graceful all through lunch, while we, like chestnuts on hot bricks, hopped from knee to knee, bobbed up and down, tucked our legs under us like Turks, or bunchwise like children, leaned on one arm, then on the other, enduring untold horrors of pins and needles as we became more intimately acquainted with our own anatomy than we had ever done in all the previous years of our existence. And my admiration of
Miss Hayashi grew as she sat there, one line of pure grace from the curves of her slender neck, rising from the folds of mauve and white, to the thick wadded hem of her *kimono*.

As I looked I grew more and more conscious that the dress and the room were one, each the necessary complement of the other, the right frame for the right picture, and the right picture in the right frame.

"The soul of Japan," they say, "is the sword of the *samurai*." "Then the soul of the *uchi*," I thought, "is the *kimono* of the housewife."

The simplicity of the straight-falling lines, the perfection of the embroidery on the innermost of the folds around the neck, the richness of the *obi* at the waist, there was the same severity of design with richness of decoration which characterised the room, where two paper-paned walls, one of sliding wood and the fourth stained a subdued brown, enclosed the bare matted space. Against the one solid wall was built a slightly raised platform of polished black wood, forming with the two low pillars of wood a wide recess, the *tokonoma*. Within the *tokonoma* hung a long silken scroll where pale storks flew across the moon, a *kake-mono* of price. On the black wood of the platform, which was raised but a few inches from the ground, were set the two swords of the *samurai*, a bronze horse of exquisite workmanship, and in the corner some long branches of white plum-blossom in a vase. In these four objects (as in the *obi* and the embroidery of the neck-folds) lay the entire decoration of the room. And looking, one realised that great truth, almost unknown to us, but a truism in Japan—the artistic value of space. In a European drawing-room you often cannot see one ornament for its fellows: here the bronze horse and
the *kakemono* held the eyes; one looked, and one *saw*; their beauty filled the soul; next week, next month, they will go back to the store-house, and others will take their place. I could never forget the curved lines of those two swords against the polished black floor under the white fragrance of the plum-blossoms, any more than I could forget the soft half-moon curves of Miss Hayashi’s *kimono*, white below mauve, as she glided over the matted floor.

Our lunch, we had come to lunch, opened with tea, pale amber tea in little round bowls on bronze stands, and sugar chrysanthemums, rice-paste storks and dolphins, cakes and sweets as perfect in design and colouring as though they were intended to last for ever. A rosy-cheeked maid, who bumped her head so vigorously on the floor that I thought she must get a headache, presented the tea, a bump for each guest and three as a salutation, while Miss Hayashi, folding squares of white paper in double triangles with one sweep of her hand, delicately heaped them full of sugar flowers and fishes, and passed them round, one to each of us.

Then came a long pause, while we asked all the questions that occurred to us about *kimono* and *hakama*, and swords and etiquette; and then our lunch, a whole lacquered trayful of bowls for each one of us, with all the courses served together, and all irretrievably and, to us, inexplicably mixed. I pass the hot soup in a lacquered bowl, and the hot rice in a china one, but the rest—a golden bream on a pale blue plate set round with oranges in jelly; slices of pink raw fish, and a design in brown seaweed and green roots; a deep bowl of pale yellow custard, its surface ruffled with silver fishes, oriental whitebait, and its depths filled
with bamboo shoots and lily bulbs and other surprises; and one dish, a triumph of design and colour, where an oval slab of pounded fish, white as snow, rested against a green mound of preserved chestnuts, while in front, arranged in a curving crescent like the tail of a comet, were purple roots, brown ginger, and slices of a red radish. And all this you eat as you please, a bit here, and a bit there, now a drink of salt soup, then a mouthful of sweet chestnut; custard, vegetables, fish, sweets, with relays of rice for bread, and saké for wine, paper napkins, and withal two penholders to eat with, and your Japanese dinner is complete.

Having tried everything with the greatest perseverance, and wriggled our chopsticks until our hands were as tired as our toes, we gave in and rested from our labours. The little maid, rosier than ever, removed the trays of food, and brought in bowls of oranges and dried persimmon.

At this moment there was a rustling of screens, and a dear, little old lady with shaven eyebrows and blackened teeth slid into the room, and instantly went down on her knees, and putting out her hands bowed her head right down on to them.

“This is my aunt,” said the professor, “a real old-fashioned woman—there are not many left nowadays—who blackens her teeth and shaves her eyebrows.”

The little old lady laughed, and made many polite speeches, asking after our “honourable healths” and our “august appetites.” At every word she made another bow, until I felt as if I really must get down on my knees and hit my forehead against the ground as well. Luckily the professor, after a moment’s consultation, suggested we should see the house, and we all got up. The little old lady was on her feet in a
twinkling, but our half-dead limbs sent pins and needles up our legs, as we stumbled on to them and awkwardly walked away.

The sliding paper wall of our room hid another absolutely bare, no tokonoma here, only a poem painted on a long narrow board fastened against the door-post, and in the further wall, shut off by sliding screens, a large cupboard, full of the household linen, which means the silk-wadded quilts or futon, on and under which one sleeps. Sliding aside the door-panel we found ourselves on another three-foot-wide platform, looking out through more paper-paned walls into another garden. This house was just a long series of rooms with a platform and a garden on each side, and a little square bunch of rooms at one end. In one of these we cuddled down under a silk quilt thrown over a square hole in the middle of the room, and felt the heat coming up from the glowing charcoal sunk in a sort of pit beneath the floor.

Then we peeped into the bath-room, containing a high wooden wash-tub with a stove-pipe running down one end. The wash-tub is filled with cold water, and lighted charcoal put down the stove-pipe, and in a few minutes the water is hot, and you get in, and the longer you stay the hotter grows the water, until having boiled yourself in the approved Japanese way you step out and wipe yourself dry with a yard of white cotton adorned with blue storks.

Then we invaded the kitchen, bare of everything like the other rooms, and with only a two-fold brazier to cook over; one brazier has permanently fixed above it a coppered wooden tub, dedicated to rice-boiling, the other brazier cooked everything else. That was all. Wooden pots, pans and dippers were hung up inside
the sliding cupboards, or were washing in the yard outside. A tiny shrine, like a mantelshelf over the sliding door, held minute gods in a dim light; a paper-framed bamboo lantern, like an afternoon-tea cake-table, with shelves between the legs for plates, stood in a corner. This is the andon, and inside the paper panes a floating wick in a saucer of oil burns all night.

Our advent into these regions was attended with much excitement punctuated with peals of laughter, it striking the dear old lady as irresistibly funny, that it was all funny to us.

In the midst of our hilarity came the summons of the kurumaya, and out we had to go, take our boots from the friendly company of the wooden gheta, and laden with mysterious boxes neatly tied with red and white strings, and bunches of plum-blossom, say stiff English "Good-byes," while the little old lady, the rosy-cheeked maid, and the rest of the household bowed us graceful Japanese sayonara and mata irasshai (Come again).

The kuruma curved out through the tiny snow-covered garden set with dark shrubs, the paper-paned walls shut with a soft thud; the picture was gone, but the memory of it will remain with me always.
II

IN A CLOISONNÉ FACTORY

Nagoya is a manufacturing town with a quarter of a million of inhabitants. It is full of porcelain and fan factories, cloisonné works and cotton mills. It is the centre of the celebrated potteries of Seto, and is famous for its embroideries and its silks. It is bigger than Nottingham or Hull, and is almost as large as Dublin. Nagoya is both Staffordshire and Bradford—and yet a city clean and still. A town of sunny streets and pure fresh air, whose sky is blue and clear, whose trees are green. Its 250,000 inhabitants are mostly factory hands—and there is neither dirt nor din. The golden dolphins on its castle's roof are three hundred years old, and they glitter in the sunshine like new-fired gold.

On the edge of the growing rice-fields the porcelain factory lies. Its doors are open to the sun; and in the corner of the low, white room, where the workmen sit cross-legged like Buddhas, each beside his potter's wheel, a yellow vase of purple iris stands.

The room is still and fresh and clean. The whirr of the turning wheel is soft as the drowsing of a bee. There is no hurry as there is no idleness. And each worker, as he moulds his clay, looks towards the purple iris in the yellow vase.
The cloisonné works are built in the heart of the city, in the middle of a busy street, where blue-clad coolies continually load and unload the wide coster-barrows which are the waggons of Japan. The hum of working life is in the air, and the wide road which stretches without division of pavement across from side to side, is thronged. Business men in grey *kimono* and foreign hats go out and in; the loaded barrows drawn by the blue-clad coolies pass up and down; fast-running *kurumaya* steer in and out among the foot-passengers and the traffic. And the occasional collision is followed by mutual bows and polite *Gomen nasai* ("I beg your honourable pardon"), on the part of either coolie or *kurumaya*.

Nagoya factories and cotton mills are hard at work. The gateway of the cloisonné works leads down a wooden passage into a tiny court, a garden set round with the workshops of the factory. And such a garden. It is not larger than the front lawn of a suburban villa, but the skill of a Japanese gardener has planted a whole mountain side with forests of pine and bamboo, has spanned with an arching bridge the stone-grey stream at the mountain's foot. From inside the tiny matted rooms, no bigger than bathing-boxes, which shut in three sides of the garden, the illusion is complete. And the shade and coolness of the real trees and water, of the imaginary forest and stream, brings a sense of calmness and repose, of quiet peace and beauty, to all the many workers of the factory. It is a living landscape growing unspoiled in the heart of a workshop in the centre of a manufacturing city.

Each on his mat in the clean, bare, matted rooms the workmen sit, the rice-paper *shōji* pushed open to the mountain stream, and the forest of pine and bamboo.
In the first room sit workers outlining the design on the bare metal vase with metal wires, silver wires on silver vases, copper wires on copper vases. And each design is different, and many of the men are old. In the second room the bare metal vases are getting a coat of coloured paste, and now the design stands out rough as a cave-man's drawing. Here the workers are younger, while boys fill in the body of the vase. In the third and fourth rooms the matted floor at the back is replaced by a large hearthstone, and a round earthen oven; in this the vases are baked, passed back to the men and boys to recoat with the coloured paste, and then rebaked, recoated and rebaked many times, until at last the vase is handed over to the workers in the last rooms. It has lost all trace of design by now; the metal wires are no longer visible; the colours have bubbled over in all directions, the vase is an unmeaning mosaic of a thousand shades. Then the workmen, sitting on their heels on the kneeling-cushions in their clean, bare, matted rooms, tiny as bathing-boxes, polish, polish, polish, sometimes for a whole year, until the worker's hand wears down the hard smooth surface and the design shows through clean and true once more. The workmen here are grey and old.

But the oldest of all sat by himself in a little room just opposite the arching bridge which crossed the mountain stream. He wore a pair of quaint horn spectacles, and his face was the face of an Eastern sage. He sat with his tools before him fixing silver wires on to a silver vase, with a certainty and a rapidity beyond his fellows; and all that is most beautiful and most difficult in the cloisonné works of Nagoya comes from his hands. The old man pushed
back his horn spectacles as I stopped before the open shōji, and his eyes rested on the still picture of the garden with a smile.

I, too, turned to look at the row of tiny paper rooms stretching out like arms on either hand, at the living landscape lying in their midst, at the blue sky above, and at the old face beneath the horn spectacles. I did not wonder at the peace which lay upon it, nor at the exquisite beauty of the finished vase standing on the matting beside him. For the garden was still as a cloister, though the cloister was a workshop for cloisonné ware in the manufacturing town of Nagoya.
We sat opposite each other on the matting, and she laughed. The polite, audible smile of the Japanese. All around us lay cut branches of fir; and on the long wooden footstool they call a table stood a shallow bronze dish and a wonderful cleft stick of bamboo.

She was a little bent old lady, with the courtly politeness of a thousand Grandisons refined to a subtle essence, and she gave lessons in flower arrangement. The close-cropped grey hair gathered into a slide behind told its own tale of widowhood, and the withered careworn face its story of work and want.

The shōji were shut, and the light through the rice-paper panes sent a warmed white light into the room that knew no colour, a light as though one sat inside a luminous mist, or in the heart of the plum-blossoms. A passionless, lifeless light which was simply light.

And the little old lady laughed again.

"There is much to learn," I said, stopping to watch her bending the warmed fir branches over the hibachi always to the exact curve, never too near or too far, and mine snapped at the first touch.

She handed me another branch in place of the one
I had broken, and watched while I wedged it into the cleft bamboo stick with little chips of wood.

"Very much," she said. "It takes three years of learning for the pupil and seven for the teacher. And the *Ijin San* has had four lessons."

The fifth and last branch being successfully wedged into line, I got on to my knees to admire the effect, while Arabella, from her camp-stool in the corner—she considered it lowering to sit on the floor—bridled.

"Oh, the *Japanese*," she said; "but any European could learn in half a dozen lessons."

The little old lady bowed, letting her forehead almost touch the ground, as she sat on her heels on the kneeling-cushion.

"The august stranger——" she began, when I interrupted.

The contemplation of my five branches of fir, two curving to the left and three to the right, had not filled me with any satisfaction. They wobbled. All their curves were wrong, and the five stems, instead of being hidden one behind the other, so that the illusion of a single branch growing out of the bronze dish was created and kept, were all distinctly and decidedly visible.

"It doesn't look a bit right," I said; "but what is the matter?"

The task of sticking five branches of fir, already bent to the proscribed curves for me, into a cleft stick had not seemed difficult, especially with three lessons behind me, and I had worked hard and been very confident that morning.

With a thousand apologies the little old lady pulled the bronze dish towards her, while Arabella cleared her throat.

"In Europe," she said, in the tone of voice adapted
to a kindergarten class—her Japanese voice, "we do not learn such a simple thing, we do it naturally. Every European woman can arrange flowers, and they are flowers" (with a glance at the fir branches in the little old lady's hand—she was busy correcting) "not trees."

The little old lady was putting back the five fir branches into the cleft stick with the deftest of deft fingers. Arabella unclasped the brooch at her neck and pulled out what she called a "nosegay." A bamboo vase, just a piece of the stem hollowed out, in which the fir had come from the florist that morning, lay on the floor. She picked it up.

"It should be of glass," she said forgivingly, "but I will make it do."

And then with her own hand she proceeded to arrange the Yokohama nosegay in the slender bamboo stem. There was a bit of spiræa, one fat red rose, and some miscellaneous leaves, which Arabella referred to grandiloquently as "green." These she crammed tightly into the bamboo stem, and then placed it, with a "who-shall-deny-me" air, upon the table.

I looked at it. No, it was not a good specimen even of Western flower arrangement, but in how many buttonholes, on how many tables, had I seen something like it.

Flower arrangement is taught in the schools in Japan, and every Japanese girl learns. If she did not, she would not "arrange" any more than we should paint or play.

The little old lady had finished, and she pushed the bronze dish along the table beside the bamboo vase. Then, with many compliments and much bowing, she
thanked the Ijin San for her “august kindness” and her “honourable condescension.” And the smooth phrases ran on and on, while I sat back on my heels and looked.

East and West, they stood there before me. At the best, what we aimed at was a scheme of colour, and at our worst no scheme at all. And what they strove after was line, whether in fir branches or lily leaves, in plum-blossom or iris flowers, line, and a coherent whole. Each branch, each twig, each flower, nay, each curve of the branch, each petal of the flower, each leaf of the twig, were parts, essential parts of the whole; for in Japan they draw with flowers and fir branches as we only draw for “design.” And line is beyond colour as sculpture is beyond painting.

The sun through the walls of rice-paned shōji spread a warmed white light through the room, a limpid, liquid light in which there was no shadow.

The little old lady had been busy tidying up. The room was one clear sheet of pale yellow matting. On the low empty tokonoma stood the bronze dish and its pure line drawing in fir. Arabella was offering the bamboo vase and its mixed contents “as a model,” and the little old lady bowed to the ground.

Once more I looked at the bronze vase and the pure outlines of the fir branches, at the bare room perfectly proportioned, at the rice-paned shōji, and the snowflake whiteness of that light which knew no colour and no shadow struck on my consciousness.

I think I understood. Colour, as colour, in that luminous, shadowless room, whose beauty was its line and its proportion, would have been not colour but a blot. Outside the rice-paned shōji lay life and colour enough. Here was but light and line.

Arabella was removing the white night-socks from
her boots, she always refused to take them off, on the veranda. The little old lady, down on her knees with her forehead to the ground, was saying sweet Japanese sayonara.

I looked back one last time—and Arabella’s nosegay vanished.
IV

GOD'S MESSENGER

The first fresh heat of summer is here, and outside the city the rice-fields spread in quivering pools of green. It is the month of the Iris, Hana-shōbu, and along the raised causeway, between the fields, the miniature hansoms, drawn each by the bent dark figure of the kurumaya, silhouette against the blue sky.

You pay as much as three sen (three farthings) to enter an Iris garden, and they are an hour's 'ricksha ride from the city, so that the fête is select. In the covered court of the entrance the kuruma are stabled in long lines under a pale yellow roof of mats, while the kurumaya, their black mushroom hats on their knees, sit on the slender shafts and smoke their pipes—three whiffs from the metal thimble in the bamboo stem, and then the sharp tink, tink, as the ash is knocked out against the shaft. Inside the garden the blue tunic of the coolie is absent, three farthings and the long kuruma ride proving prohibitive; but the grey kimono of the classes, Tokyo shopkeepers for the most part, is everywhere. The gardens are large and full, but in no sense crowded, for the Japanese, by the very polish of their politeness, contrive to create a sense of space and repose around them even in a crowd. But the gardens are full, and the deadened clack of
the wooden _gheta_ on the earthen pathway, as the little _musmé_ carry the "honourable tea" and the "honourable cakes" to the mat-roofed summer-houses, is incessant.

We do not sit on our heels on the flat cushions on the low matted table, under the bamboo roofs; we sit on the cushions, with our feet on the ground, and the little waitress laughs, her polished black hair shining like a metal mirror in the sunshine. It is so ridiculous to see the _Ijin San_ sitting on the tables with their legs hanging uncomfortably down in front of them, when all the world agrees it is much more natural to sit on your heels with the cleft toes of each little white _tabi_ sticking up behind like rabbit's ears. The idea of getting cramp in such a comfortable position makes little O Haru's brown eyes open very wide indeed. I believe she revolves the idea, inside that metal-polished head of hers, that the _Ijin San's_ legs are not made aright, or why do they hide them so? And surely the civilized boot could only have been invented by people without toes?

The open summer-houses, behind the bamboo bushes, or on the tops of the miniature hills, are full of family parties, with children in all stages of age and coiffure, from the shaven baby heads and the stiff horsehair ribbon bunches of the children, up through the flat fronts and the first freehand designs of the schoolgirls, to the black cockscob fronts and the elaborate polished rolls of the grown-up daughters. And they are all content to sit in the sunshine, drink tea, and look at the flowers. They do not want to be for ever restlessly doing something, not even the children.

In the summer-house over the way a party of bachelors, students from the University perhaps, are
also drinking tea and smoking cigarettes; one of them is writing a poem. And a bourgeoís Sabbath peace is over the land.

The tap of the tiny tea bowl on the lacquered tray, the deadened clack of the musmé's gheta on the pathway, is hushed, for I have left the summer-house, and am standing close down by the river of flowers.

Iris, the messenger between Gods and men, said the old Greek legend, Iris, Hana-shôbu. And surely this swaying river of lavender-blue flowers, floating out from the fleckless blue of the summer's sky, on into the young green of the rice-fields, is a living message from the Gods. A message of beauty and peace, and of the holiness that springs from these. A message which this cultured, courtly, beauty-loving people alone know how to create—and how to read. For many generations have lived and died, tenderly caring for God's Messengers, before these flowers learned to unfold their petals in a hundred ways, and wear a thousand hues from pink to purple, from blue to grey, from grey to black or to the purest white.

The river of exquisite blossom flows on, straight out from the fleckless blue, on into the delicate green, bearing God's message of beauty to man. And these who see it know how to read.
THE ART OF THE PEOPLE

It is usual in judging the art of a nation to consider solely the art of the artists and never the art of the people. The first is naturally of greater importance; it affords moreover an easy method of comparison and enables art critics to register the high-water mark of a country's art, and this being found, the question is considered settled and the nation judged accordingly. We say the French are artistic and think promptly of Corot, Meissonier, or Puvis de Chavannes, not of the people of France. But the art of a nation, always something less, is often something very different from the art of its artists, and though the artists' art will give you the high-water mark, it does not and it cannot give the general art level of the people. The English nation produced the greatest dramatist who ever lived, and several fine comedians, yet the level of the nation's dramatic instinct is acknowledged to be far below that of the French. If we wish to get a true opinion of French and English dramatic feeling we must study something more and something other than the dramatists. For it is not the presence or the absence of a certain number of celebrated men, or even the greater or the lesser value of their works, which necessarily makes a whole nation dramatic or artistic, but it is the general level of
the dramatic or artistic feeling in the average individual of that nation. That a truly dramatic or artistic nation has more chance of producing a greater number of dramatists or artists is certain, the conditions under which they would work being so much more favourable, but to consider no one but the artist and nothing but his art, and then to transfer the judgment on the artist's art to the whole nation, is surely a confusion of ideas. It is a confusion to which art seems particularly susceptible. For most people, in England any way, seem to regard art as comprising only expensive objects suitable for exhibition in museums, and not as an integral part of every article used in daily life. Museum art is the product of a nation's artists, for the enjoyment of the rich and the cultured, but the art of a people is as wide as its life, it touches everything and is for the joy and the pleasure of all men.

Artists' art is an end in itself, its whole reason for existence is to create beauty, but the art of a people is not an end, but a means. The problem before it is very different and really more complicated, for it is to add beauty to mere utility, and by force of art to create art in objects whose raison d'être is usefulness. And the greater the number of useful objects made beautiful, and the more beautiful the useful objects, and the further removed from beauty and the more sunk in mere utility the useful object is, so much greater will be the people's art.

To add beauty to mere utility, art may be said to use three ways. It does it

(1) Directly, by moulding the shape (the material of useful objects being already determined);
(2) Indirectly, by decoration; and
(3) Extra-directly, by arrangement.

And if art be truly in a people, even the most ugly and stubborn of useful objects will, by one of these three methods, be made beautiful.

I suppose that any one who has ever seen a rice-field will allow that for at least some six months in the year it is one of the ugliest objects in the world. Made of liquid mud, it lies for half the year a slimy, greasy black pond shut in by low mud walls. On its oozy surface gather unwholesome growths that shine with metallic reflections, while the manure, in Japan mostly human, decomposes in the thick mud. There is nothing, I suppose, much uglier, nothing more useful, and its ugliness is the condition of its utility. The Japanese cannot change the thick black ooze, they cannot change the low mud walls which embank the slimy pools. These, with all their ugly consequences, are fixed and determined. But the art of the Japanese people has yet rendered the rice-fields beautiful. They change the shape. Those embanking walls of mud are moulded as a potter moulds his clay. A series of dead square fields I have never seen. Two, three, four, five, six, even eight-sided rice-fields can be found in Japan, and often the curves of the mud wall itself are graceful as the lines of a Greek vase.

Beneath the temple of Tesshuji, which looks towards the wonder of Fujiyama, with its two pure lines of exquisite grace, is a great fertile plain, a plain of innumerable rice-fields, one of the richest in the country. When I stood on the steps of that deserted temple and looked down, the fields were all black and naked, and yet the plain was neither ugly nor monotonous, for the peasants had curved their rice-fields into exquisite lines, and not two were alike.
A wall has certainly more possibilities than a rice-field, but our modern walls, the high brick atrocity of a prison or an embankment, is not usually beautiful. We make spasmodic attempts to beautify their monotonous ugliness with creepers or other coverings. That is, we do not beautify the wall, we take something less ugly and conceal it. Now the Japanese beautify the wall. (We are only considering here walls of mere utility, where all decoration or ornamentation is out of the question.) Except for the brick walls of the foreign buildings, walls in Japan are made of hewn stone usually shaped like pyramids and hammered base outwards into a bank of earth. In a country whose architecture, from the most glorious of its temples to the humblest of its houses, is all of wood, a clumsiness, a gaucherie in its stonework might be well excused, yet Japanese walls are a wonder to all who see them, for the hard enduring granite is plastic beneath their fingers. Their walls are never dead straight. The line always curves softly outward as it touches the ground. And this not only in the strong walls of the daimyō’s castle, or the long moat walls of the Mikado’s palace, but in the embankment walls of the tiniest shrine, in the modern walls of the modern temple of the modern coaling port of Moji.

To beautify a useful object indirectly by decoration is a great deal easier, at any rate the means and the possibility of doing so are more apparent; and yet, do we draw designs on our sacks, on our flour sacks, grain sacks, potato sacks, as they do in Japan?

For many months I passed regularly every day through a street of warehouses where sacks of all kinds, and containing all sorts of produce, were lying on the
ground, were being carried into the godown or were loading or unloading. It was some time before it really struck me that the sacks were decorated, that their blank yellow sides were made beautiful with a design; but when I had once realised it, I used to look carefully to see if I could find sacks without. They were extremely rare. The designs varied considerably. A flower, conventional or natural, a maple leaf, a broken branch of plum- or cherry-blossom, the delicate outline of the bamboo in a thousand different shapes, were the most common, but there were others, birds, geometrical patterns, rice-ears, Fujiyama. These designs were with true decorative feeling in one corner, rarely in the exact centre, and admirably proportioned to the size of the sack. They were mostly drawn in, in soft blues—the commonest colour in the Far East—sometimes in a pale but very beautiful green; colours which, on the unbleached cotton or pale yellow matting of the sack, made complete harmonies.

But a sack, whatever its business in life, is at least an article of considerable duration, it is not made to be used and thrown away the next moment like the paper wrapping of a parcel. Yet it is very few parcels in very few shops which are not wrapped up in paper whose monotonous surface is broken by just one tiny design. The papers in which piece-silos are wrapped, the equivalent to those whitey-brown covers which drapers seem perpetually doing up on our counters, are often really beautiful in both colour and design. I do not think a Japanese can see a blank surface without wanting to design something on it, something little, something beautiful, just to redeem it for art.

These designs are to be found, if one looks for them, in the most unexpected places, on the axle-heads of
your *kuruma* for instance. A casual and rather dilapidated *kuruma* in an out-of-the-way town in Japan had such exquisite flying storks beaten on to the bronze metal of its axle-head that I had to get out and look at them. The *kurumaya* was amused at my enthusiasm, and entered into a detailed comparison of these axle-heads with all the other axle-heads of all the other *kuruma* of his acquaintance, explaining their respective merits and defects. If there is no actual design the metal is usually beaten in such a way as to form an irregular pattern.

When a Japanese cannot mould the shape of an object, when he cannot redeem it by a design, when in fact he has no control over its creation at all, but it is placed in his hands as it is, finished, he will still contrive to add beauty to it merely by arrangement. I first noticed this on board the steamer going out, where the Japanese "boy" arranged the extra blanket on the berth in a new design each day. He folded it into lotus leaves and chrysanthemums, into half-opened fans and half-shut buds. He had one wonderful arrangement which, being patriotic, was more often repeated than the rest. The blankets of the steamship company had, instead of the usual stripes at top and bottom, just two thick wavy lines of deep red—the steamer's flag was two wavy red lines on a white ground; by some wonderful twist of his fingers the "boy" would fold that blanket into the rising sun, with the four red lines coming out of it like blood-red rays. It sounds difficult, but he did it so perfectly that I recognised the flag of Japan the moment I saw it. Nor was he exceptional; the other "boys" on board were just as artistic, all the other cabins, for in the course of the voyage I entered most of them, were equally
decorated, though in most cases the art had been quite lost on the occupants.

A Japanese servant, any servant, even one in a hotel, will set out your hair brushes, clothes brushes, nail scissors, collar box, tooth-powder tin on the ordinary average hotel dressing-table and make a design of them. The toilette table will somehow be a picture, an artistic whole. It was an application of art I tried hard to learn, and failed dismally. After awhile I could manage something with the brushes; but the nail scissors, and more especially the tooth-powder tin, remained, in my hands, the unbeautiful necessary articles which they intrinsically are.

We make in Europe various attempts at beautifying our food. We put parsley on white dishes round cold mutton, and paper frills on ham bones where the pins are dangerous. On special occasions, such as a Lord Mayor's banquet or a cookery exhibition, we serve pastries as Tower Bridges, or jellies as broken lutes, but we do not consistently arrange our food so that each dish is a colour scheme and an art design of its own.

I lunched once with a professor in Tokyo; it was a modest meal in the house of a man badly off, according to our ideas, but when the red-lacquered trays came in, each lunch on its own tray, and all the courses served together, I could not restrain a cry of delight. The whole set out in its red-lacquered tray was a picture, each dish in itself was another. The golden bream lay on a pale blue dish; an oval slab of pounded fish, pure white in colour, rested against a mound of lime-green chestnuts; in front and lying in a crescent curve were purple roots, brown ginger, and tiny slices of red radish. It was simply a triumph. I have eaten
pinky brown soup in which the curved peel of an orange floated like a golden dolphin; pale yellow custards, served in delicate blue bowls, whose surfaces were ruffled with silver fishes; white rice-moulds wrapped in the delicate tendrils of a vine-green seaweed; thin slices of pink raw fish, the colour of an uncooked salmon, laid out on green dishes and garnished with little heaps of olive seaweed shaven fine and eaten with a burnt-sienna sauce. The very hawkers in the streets serve their one-rin (10 to a ½d.) sweetmeats or their snow-white tōfu daintily, on plates of appropriate colour, artistically set out. The rice-paste biscuits are veritable works of art in shape and colour. You can eat almost every variety of chrysanthemum, as well as see it, and the colouring, all vegetable, is almost as beautiful.

We have, I believe, in England, a profession called "window-dressing," and in a few cases this does truly attain to art. But with us it always ends at the windows. Enter the shop and, unless it is a showroom, you stand in the midst of undigested cargoes of goods; and whose eye has not been pained by heaped rolls of stuff where a post-office red will lie, as often as not, on the top of a crimson and underneath a magenta? That is a thing which could not happen in Japan; the eye of the young man behind the counter would forbid it.

I once watched a whole consignment of silks being put away on shelves in a shop in Tokyo. It was the European side of the establishment, so that the shop was fitted with counters, chairs, and the usual drapers' shelves, the silks, too, told the same tale in their width and pattern. It was only a boy who was putting them away, sixteen at the outside, yet he did it with a con-
conscious choice, and when he had finished, the silks, which ran through the whole gamut of colour, harmonised delightfully. But the real Japanese shops are more beautiful still. To go over the Mitsui is to walk through a gallery of pictures in still life. Here are no heaps of undigested goods, no mere piles of articles, but a definite and deliberate setting forth of certain things which left the impression that the clerks of the Mitsui posed their silken goods as an artist his model. The Mitsui is one of the best shops in Tokyo; to be perfectly fair compare it with one of our "art salesmen." But the best of our shops tie up their parcels in whitey-brown paper with tow-coloured string, thinner or thicker according to the weight of the parcel. In the Mitsui the string is all pure white or scarlet-red, and each parcel is tied with a strand of both laid side by side, the heavier the parcel the greater the number of scarlet and white strings, always laid side by side, until sometimes they make a wide white line above a wide red one, kept evenly together by a skilful knot. The ends, too, are not snapped off anyhow after tying an ugly knot, but are cut slantwise, to form a V or a point, and even the knot is beautiful because it is a coherent whole, and not a conglomeration of successive ties.

So far, all these things, rice-fields, sacks, and food, with the sole exception of the blankets and hair brushes, have been exclusively Japanese, the nation has evolved them in itself, and by itself, and consequently in comparing them with things European it has only been possible to take similar and not identical objects. But since their first contact with Europe, and more especially during the last thirty years, the Japanese have borrowed a certain number of articles directly from the West.
They have borrowed beer-glasses, windows, and wall-papers. And from the Dutch, three-hundred years ago, they took pipes and tobacco pouches. A light kind of lager beer is rapidly becoming a universal drink in Japan. There are several native breweries, and those places where beer has not penetrated are considered hopelessly "old-fashioned." After the beer came the beer-glasses, and though the art of the nation has not been long at work upon them, they are already very different from their European models. It must be remembered, too, that glass was unknown to the Japanese until it was introduced from the West. The first thing which the nation did when it set to work upon beer-glasses was to reduce the size, otherwise they would have been out of all proportion to the rest of the dinner service, and so the beer-glasses of Japan are small as dolls' tumblers in which, if you are lucky, you will find three sips of beer under the egg-white froth.

If this example illustrates the love of the little, generally supposed to be the chief characteristic of the Japanese, the case of the windows will show their dislike to unredeemed blank space, and at the same time their knowledge of the artistic value of space in design. So long as windows only existed in houses built in the style called "foreign," they remained severely Western, just another European object like the railway or the telegraph set up in the land, but when they began to be introduced into Japanese houses, then the art of the nation set to work upon them. They are still rare, but in a few private houses and in some of the best native hotels windows exist. They do not open. They were not introduced to supply ventilation, an unnecessary consideration in a Japanese
house, which is all draughts, nor really for light, the paper panes of the shōji admitting light readily; but just in order that the person inside might have another picture before his eyes—the picture of what lies without. The window then is not a glass fitting to an oblong hole knocked into a wall, but a broad band of glass running round the whole length of the shōji at just that distance from the ground which will allow anyone sitting on his heels on the floor to see through comfortably. A pattern on this glass window would have interfered with the view, and the window was there expressly for the view. So the glass is empty and clear, but not blank. Then it would have been merely useful, and the Japanese never stop at utility; it had to be made beautiful, and so the pure perfect curves of Fuji were traced upon the glass. The design was quite small and only occupied one end, but the area of the glass was no longer blank space, but the demanded setting to a picture.

There is no place in a Japanese house for wallpapers, but the number of foreign-built hotels and houses has created a certain demand for them. Also the Japanese are beginning to export wall-papers abroad. As the patterns are mostly supplied to them direct from European firms, or copied from models sent them on order, they have to please their market, and yet I have seen a wall-paper in a hotel bedroom where two golden dragons drawn back to back studded a white ground. It was a perfectly conventional pattern, and at first there seemed nothing remarkable about it. The tiny dragons, looking something like a fleur de lys, occurred at six-inch intervals. Then it dawned gradually, the intervals were not regular, they differed both lengthways and widthways. It took
indeed ten feet of wall before the pattern absolutely repeated itself.

But windows, wall-papers and beer-glasses are new growths, only just engrafted on to the life of the people. They are still thought of as something foreign, whereas pipes and pouches, although coming originally from the West, have in the course of three hundred years become thoroughly absorbed and transformed by the genius of the nation. To judge from the old pictures the first pipes were three or four feet long, with a bowl to correspond, in size and capacity suggestive of those long wooden pipes with china bowls smoked by the traditional Dutchman. At the same time we in the West have also been evolving our pipes and pouches, as the art and the convenience of Europe demanded, and to-day the British navvy has arrived at his clay and the city clerk at his briarwood, and both at the gutta-percha pouch. When bent on "something tasty," they may indulge in skeleton-head pipes with carbuncle eyes, or magenta plush pouches embroidered in apple-green silk. In Japan the navvy (or his wife, for smoking is equally common to both sexes) uses a doll's pipe made of a slender bamboo reed, whose bowl and mouthpiece are of metal, beautifully finished, and holding just three whiffs of their fine-cut red-brown tobacco. The pouch is made of leather, fastening like a purse, and the metal snap is always fashioned into a design, however simple—two birds flying, a fish, a grasshopper. There is also a leather case to keep the pipe in, like an open spectacle-case, and the two are fastened together by means of a twisted silken cord. The pipe-case is stuck into the obi, and the pouch hangs over. It was to allow of the free hang of the pouch, and also as a finish to the silken cord, that the netsuké was invented, and some of
the most beautiful of museum art objects produced. But *netsuké* are not for the navvy or the people, or if they do occur in the cheap pouches of the poorer classes they are nothing more than a rounded bead only valuable artistically as a spot of colour. The pouches, the pipes and the pipe-cases are genuinely beautiful in shape, make and proportion. They also have the merit, rare in gutta-percha, of endurance. A pouch bought four years ago by a careless European, and in use ever since, shows to-day no sign of wear. It is not cracking at the seams, and the snap is as firm as ever. A smoker, I believe, has no particular hankering after the Japanese pipe with its metal bowl and mouthpiece, but anybody with a sense of form must enjoy the delicate refinement of even the commonest native pipe with the gentle yellow of its bamboo stem, the finish of the metal mouthpiece, and the perfect shape of its acorn bowl.

These are, after all, only a few examples, sufficient perhaps for the purpose, but any one who has lived in Japan and looked at the common objects of daily life used, owned and produced by the people would be able to multiply them almost indefinitely.

In thinking them over perhaps the thing which occurs most frequently to the mind is the simplicity of the means used. The whole artistic effect of the rice-fields consists in the variation of their shape, in the curve of the mud wall; in the shops and in the food simply in the right choice of given articles. But through all Japanese art, even the most elaborate, this same simplicity of means is noticeable. I have seen the most elaborate imperial brocade which produced an effect of running water, and it was done by simply throwing over the original blue brocade
a rough mesh network of brown silk. Every garden in Japan is an illustration of this point, for a Japanese in a dull back yard as big as a bath-towel will, by the judicious planting of two small palm-trees, the setting up of a stone lantern, and the careful making of a puddle, convey to the mind of those who look the greenness and the coolness of a dense forest, the freshness of clear water, and the delight of hills and dales. I have seen it often in wayside inns, in shops, in big towns, in factories, everywhere.

Exactly the same thing is true of their flower arrangement. Putting aside all other points of beauty and charm, a Japanese with three chrysanthemums, with one branch of fir, will produce a whole which we should only think of attempting with a shilling's-worth of flowers and two penny bunches of "green."

On the characteristics of Japanese art European writers have varied greatly, but in considering only the art of the people there are perhaps fewer difficulties or differences, and we come, I think, to four—value of space, desire for line, sobriety of taste, and thoroughness of workmanship. I do not include the dislike of symmetry, because a want can hardly be called a characteristic. Symmetry is more properly a characteristic of our art. The Japanese dislike it, they make nothing in pairs, and if certain things, such as candlesticks, are required in twos, each one, though resembling the other in the main idea, always differs from it in detail.

The sense of the artistic value of space shows itself everywhere, in every form of decoration and design, as well as in every object of art. In Japan there is no such thing as overcrowding. It is one small leaf which decorates the sheet of paper wrapping. It is
the scarcity of articles in the Mitsui which accounts for nine-tenths of the artistic effect of that draper's interior. If ever a nation has thoroughly and aesthetically realised the psychological fact on which much of our theory of backgrounds is based, that we only really see an object by its outlines, it is the Japanese. They have worked out this fact to its last artistic value. In a Japanese room there hangs one picture; on the raised and polished platform of the tokonoma, the artistic altar of the room, there is set one bronze or porcelain vase of flowers, one ornament. These are changed as often as the fortune or the taste of their owner permits. When a Japanese comes to Europe he complains that our drawing-rooms, with their dozens of pictures and their scores of ornaments, are "like warehouses"; and after this first disturbing feeling of crowd, when he has lived in that drawing-room for several months and finds that the ornaments are never changed, only perhaps added to, he complains then of the monotony. For he knows and has realised another psychological fact, that it is in the freshness of observation that the eye sees clearest and the brain works best.

With the sense of the supreme value of space comes an intense feeling for line. Whether this has something to do with the climate, which is clear, and the landscape, which is mountainous, I do not know; but compare the purity of outline in the Italian painters, more especially in the Tuscan and the Umbrian, Botticelli and Perugino, with the Netherlands School, Rembrandt and Rubens, where light and shadow, and colour as colour, play so great a part. But whether it is due to the landscape or not, personally I should be inclined to attach a great deal of importance to the
artistic value of Fujiyama, a mountain whose exquisite outlines, visible from thirteen provinces, have simply permeated Japanese art; but landscape or no, the desire for line is a fact. The Japanese draw with everything; with the mud embankments of their rice-fields, with the granite stones of their walls, with the trees in their gardens, with the flowers in their vases. The whole essence of flower arrangement is not colour mass, but line drawing. It is the same with their trees, the dwarf trees in their pots, or the grown trees in their gardens. Both are trained and educated to produce a beautiful outline, and they succeed. It is perhaps interesting in this connection to notice the number of illustrations in Japanese books where the trees are simply silhouettes washed in in Indian ink on a blank background. We should have, I think, a great disinclination to treat our trees in this way.

The feeling for line is very strong, and it is perhaps perpetuated by the daily use of those dead pictures, the Chinese ideographs. Several hundred years ago the Japanese invented the phonetic syllabaries called kana. It is interesting from an artistic point of view to compare them with our alphabet. A very short contemplation of the alphabet as used in our books and handwriting will show that it is mainly composed of straight lines, often parallel, with a certain admixture of circles. Now, although a straight line is the nearest way between two points, it is rarely or never the most beautiful; did not some one once say, “The line of beauty is a curve”? I do not think any one’s artistic soul has received much nourishment from a contemplation of the letter “m,” three parallel lines, or “t.” Compare them with the corresponding kana, and the difference will be felt at once. Indeed, we are all
unconsciously well aware of the artistic failing of our ordinary alphabet, for directly we carve or write an inscription, or introduce it in any way into something which claims to be an object of art, then we discard it altogether, and either fall back on the Gothic letters, or adopt some kind of fancy alphabet. As the average Japanese child is taught writing four hours a week for the first three years, and three hours for the next two, and as their writing is really painting, their feeling for line has at least a chance of development.

Of the thoroughness of Japanese workmanship I do not think anybody would disagree; when the wing of the stork on your rice-bowl is finished inside, when the chrysanthemum petals on your wooden tray curl over the edge, when the bottom of your flower vase has a design as well as the outside, you are convinced that the Japanese knew Ruskin’s dictum long before he said it. I have seen the feet of a bronze statuette, the feet which were entirely hidden under the folds of the kimono from in front, carefully finished off underneath. The statuette in question cost 50 sen (1s.), and was sold by a street hawker. Nobody really sees the designs on the kuruma axle-heads, not unless they look for them, except perhaps the kurumaya himself, when he squats on the ground waiting for a fare; but they give a thoroughness of finish to the ricksha which it would miss without.

Most people are agreed, I think, upon the thoroughness of workmanship, but sobriety of taste is a more disputed point. We are very fond of talking of the “gorgeous colouring of the East,” and using terms like “barbaric splendour” and “oriental luxury.” These terms may have had some truth as applied to the art of India, but because Japan is also situated in
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the East, they do not necessarily apply to her. We do not sufficiently realise over here that there is considerably more difference between China and Japan, let alone India and Japan, than there is between any two European countries whatsoever, be they Greeks or Dutch, or what you will; that they are not of the same race, nor do they belong to the same linguistic family. Therefore, to transfer an adjective applicable to India to Japan, just because both are Oriental, is like applying an adjective suitable to the Turks or the Laps to the English, on the ground that both are European. This is, I think, one source of error; the others are more subtle. There is first of all the climate. Now a colour, any colour, under a bright blue sky in a dazzling yellow sunshine, will always look more subdued than that same colour under a grey sky and in a cloudy atmosphere. This is simply an effect of contrast. Therefore, Japanese colouring must be judged as it is seen in Japan, not as it may look when transferred to England. And, again, a study of the actual colour itself will show that the Japanese have learnt how to make the very brightest colours soft in tone. This fact has been well rubbed into me lately, for I have tried both in Paris and in London to match certain Japanese stuffs, or at least to find something in the same note of colour which would go with them. It was quite impossible. All our soft colours, the so-called artistic shades, are too dull in tone, while none of our bright ones are soft enough; by the side of the Japanese colours they look simply crude. These are all quite material reasons, objective facts, but there is another which only those who have stood and looked at the glorious splendour of a Japanese temple such as Nikkō or Shiba, where
the whole rainbow is resplendent in carved wood and gilded lacquer, and that is their matchless power of combination and of background. The temples of Nikkō or Shiba are both built in the midst of a wood; the dark, deep, sober forms of the giant pine-trees stand all around. This is the setting; then between each gorgeous gateway comes a still clear space of court, paved with quiet grey pebbles; and when the glory culminates in the temple's interior the building is of unstained, unpainted wood, soft as the dust-brown carpet of the beech-leaves when the sun's rays are level. But the temples, supreme in their way among all the products of Japanese art, are exceptional. The average Japanese room is colourless, luminous, but practically colourless. The floor is of the palest yellow matting, the one or two solid walls of the room are washed in the softest of bark browns, the wood of the tokonoma is dark and polished, and the other walls are shōji, that is, composed entirely of small panes of rice-paper. Through this paper the sunlight comes luminous but colourless. To sit in that room is like living in the heart of the plum-blossom, or within the petals of a warm white rose.

In their dress the Japanese are equally subdued: the men wear mostly grey or dust-coloured silks, the women soft mauves, blues and greys. It is only the children who are dressed in bright colours and gay patterns. All the working classes, both men and women, wear a dark indigo blue. The Japanese wear no jewellery. Precious stones they have, exquisite mauve and purple amethysts, crystals of blood-red splendour or soft and milky as flushing pearl. And the rich man buys these, not to wear, but to look at,
as works of art, as exquisite natural objects. He never hangs them round his own neck, or enmeshes his womankind in them. The Japanese are, I believe, the only nation on the earth who know and value precious stones, and yet wear no jewellery. Might not this be considered convincing evidence of their essential sobriety of taste? Even the landscape, though supremely beautiful and sunny, is never flaunting. There are too many sober green pine-trees, and pale, bewitching bamboos for that. I have never seen anywhere in Japan, in the poorest house, in the cheapest shop, anything that was tawdry or even "loud," except in that part of porcelain and other factories which supply goods, mostly from "foreign" patterns, for the European market.

In this enumeration of the characteristics of Japanese art, you will perhaps wonder why I have omitted the very popular one of their love of the little, the small, the minute. I have left it out simply because I do not believe it exists as such. Many writers have exclaimed in paragraphs sprinkled with interjections on this passion for the little which they say the Japanese possess; and they have apparently seen in it nothing but a blind unreasoning prejudice for the something small as opposed to the something great. I think this opinion is mostly due to the "little knowledge" of the tourist or the restricted knowledge of the specialist. It leaves also entirely unexplained and inexplicable the Dai Butsu of Kamakura, a bronze statue of Buddha, fifty feet high and of the most exquisite workmanship; the Buddhas of Kyoto and of Nara; the big bronze bell of Kyoto, the largest hanging bell in the world, besides that at Chion-in, the second largest, and at Nara, the third; the Hongwanji at Kyoto, the
walls of the castle at Osaka—and the battle of Mukden. A wider acquaintance with the Japanese people and the realities of their daily life will show, I think, that this so-called love of the little is really a highly cultivated and acute sense of proportion, where it is not purely ethical.

The Japanese beer-glass, you will remember, was the size of a doll's tumbler. "Why?" "Oh, because they have a passion for little things" is certainly the easiest and most obvious answer. But follow that glass to its home on its Japanese dinner tray, in its Japanese room, and you will see that its littleness is in exact proportion to the tray and the room. Nor are the rooms so small, but because we insist on bringing our encumbering "foreign" ideas into them. There is no furniture in a Japanese room, no furniture of any kind whatsoever. Two kneeling-cushions and a round box, a brazier, are the only possible objects which could come under that heading, therefore the whole space within the four walls of a room is space for movement. If a measurement were taken of the actual feet of free space in many a modern European drawing-room, I believe that it would be found to be something less than that in the "tiny" Japanese apartment.

Another thing to be borne in mind is that life in Japan is lived, not above the floor on chairs, but on the floor itself. Try living on the floor and you will find the whole horizon of a room opening out in the most astonishing way. What we call a stool, for instance, represents the same level as a table. The actual difference in the height of the eyes sitting on one's heels on a Japanese floor and on a chair is really between two and three feet, while it must also be remembered that Japanese eyes, belonging as they
do to a body shorter on the average than our own, come still nearer to the ground.

Thus a careful examination of the things which are small in Japan, which they have deliberately chosen to make small, copied smaller than the foreign originals, will show, I think, that it is due to their acute sense of fitness and proportion. There is also another reason, which is not artistic but ethical.

The Japanese are a sober and abstemious race, a race of high culture and of ancient civilisation. When we were running about clad in the inadequate skin, gorging off half-raw oxen, and drunken with seven-day feasts of mead, they lived already under an ordered and an organised government with most, if not all, of the essentials of civilisation. And after all, is not one of the hall-marks of real civilisation the learning to take "a little" instead of "a lot," in extracting from each atom the whole of its use, enjoyment and pleasure? Children and savages are always wasteful. We do not now try to eat whole oxen or drink mead for seven days, we have learnt to get as much if not more pleasure out of one glass of wine and one slice of beef, and the reason is that we are slowly learning not to gulp. If you watch the working man drink his beer, or the working woman her tea, you will see that they usually gulp it down in big draughts, imagining, I suppose, that it is sheer quantity which produces flavour. They have not yet learnt that profound ethical truth, expressed by the old epicure when he said approvingly of some young man that he "had already learned to sip his wine and not to gulp it." The Japanese have learnt to sip. Their wine-glasses, which are china bowls, hold perhaps two tablespoonfuls, their tea-cups three, their pipes just
three fleeting whiffs. Drunkenness is exceedingly rare; it does exist, but with a glass holding two tablespoonfuls there is time for reflection. It is also more economical than the foreign variety, the actual quantity required to produce intoxication when taken in small doses being, I believe, considerably less.

There is always another side to a people’s art, a side which is frequently overlooked, and that is the art, not in the object, but in the workman. A people’s art will show itself, not only in the actual object produced, but in the life of the producer and in the conditions of production.

In the cloisonné works of Nagoya, an industrial centre of a quarter of a million of inhabitants, the workers sat in peace and solitude, not a sound of the busy streets penetrated to the long series of matted rooms where they worked. Each room and each workman looked towards a quiet garden, cool with running water, and still with the deep mystery of the pines. In the modern porcelain factory, dedicated to the production of goods for the “foreign” market, the long white room looked out through open doors upon the waving rice-fields, and each potter’s wheel was turned to see the branch of purple iris standing in its yellow vase. There is a cotton factory in Japan which is a positive addition to the beauty of the landscape.

Nor is it only the big and wealthy workmen who produce good art. Some of the most beautiful silver enamel-ware in Tokyo was made by a little man who owned the smallest and poorest of general shops, where halfpenny tooth brushes and farthing sheets of paper formed the richest portions of his stock. All this beautiful silver enamel-work was done in the back parlour,
and at no time could he have had more than ten yen (£1) worth of such goods in hand. Yet he was an artist to the tips of his fingers, and the sheen and colour of his enamelled silver lotus flowers were a joy to the beholder.

In Nikkō there was a carpenter who made wooden trays for the inhabitants. His stall, the merest shanty, was the littlest imaginable, yet he carved me a wooden box with a design in chrysanthemums which was skilled artistic work, and even his cheap wooden trays had the stamp of art. He did them with a penknife, and the whole surface of the tray was grooved in shallow curving lines.

And the worker himself? If there is art in the product and in the conditions of production, what of the producer? Is there art in his life and his tastes? Is there art in the life of the labourer, of the coolie and the 'ricksha' man? Is there art in the daily life of the common people as well as in the things they use?

A man's tastes are known by his pleasures. When the common people of Tokyo make “Bank Holiday” they go to see a handful of pink cherry-blossoms against the blue of an April sky. They walk politely, looking up at the trees, and though the crowd is thick, endless, nobody pushes or fights or swears. No special posse of policemen is turned out to keep order. Down the long two-mile avenue of cherry-trees at Mukōjima the crowd wanders amiably, and the municipality of Tokyo has never thought to invent a single penalty for the destruction of young trees and shrubs. The world stares contentedly, drinks tea, and goes home again. And this is considered to be the rowdiest crowd at the most popular resort on the favourite “Bank Holiday” of the year.

The blossoming of all the other flowers, plum,
peach, azalea, peony, wistaria, iris, lotus, convolvulus, maple, chrysanthemum, are equally visited, and advertised daily in the newspapers. The people of Japan take few holidays, but those they do take are almost always at the time of the flower festivals.

When they can afford something more expensive they go to the "Royal Academy," which opens its doors twice in the year for the aristocratic sum of 3 sen (½d.) gheta (wooden clogs) and umbrellas left outside, 5 rin (10 rin make ¼d.). The other picture exhibitions, not having the status of the Tokyo "Royal Academy," are more moderate, averaging 1 to 2 sen for admission, and gheta, free. The entrance to the exhibitions of bronze, lacquer, porcelain and other arts is the same. Even on the basis of Japanese incomes, where a General earns £300 a year, the Headmaster of a Public School £160 and a coolie 6d. a day, the charges are exceedingly moderate. And the people, the real working people, go. I should be curious to find out how many working men have paid at the turnstiles of Burlington House.

Besides art exhibitions, Japanese workmen go to the theatre, but this is a taste they share with many other nations; what is all their own is their love of pilgrimages, not only to temples of religious repute, but to places of celebrated beauty. Fujiyama is yearly ascended by hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. Here religion and beauty are mingled. For the great mountain is sacred. So is almost every spot in Japan that is particularly beautiful. As one journeys through the country, the traveller will always find that the most beautiful point of view, the grandest scene, the loveliest nook, has a temple, or at least a wayside shrine, set up by the common people and tended by them. There
never was a nation since the days of Ancient Greece who so entirely believed that beauty is sacred, or who so entirely disbelieved that art can be divorced from ethics. They have the love of beauty innate and inalienable. A man I knew was once crossing Tokyo in a 'ricksha; he was a prosperous, commercial being with a vast contempt for the "heathen." It was late afternoon. His kurumaya, after looking round at him several times, suddenly stopped short, and waving his hand to the west said respectfully but firmly:

"Honourably please to observe the unusual glory of the sunset."

"And I told him to jolly well get on," was the end of the story as I heard it.

A favourite pastime of the 'ricksha men on the cab-stands as they wait for a fare is to draw in the dust of the roadway one against the other. If sand has been spilled from a cart anywhere within reach the whole 'ricksha stand migrates and has the happiest time. I have seen really good outlines of Fujiyama and of flying birds, or blossoming flowers, all on the roadways by the 'ricksha stands. And whatever their faults, they at least had life, for the 'ricksha man has knowledge, knowledge based on intelligent observation and on the inherited training of his race.

In the Japanese language there is a word, edaburi, which means "the formation or the arrangement of the branches of a tree." Merely to possess such a word shows the long training in art and observation which the nation must have undergone. But this word is not a technical term used only by artists and the cultured classes; it is a living, breathing expression, part of the vocabulary of every Japanese, even the
Board School educated. Kurumaya discuss *edaburi* in the streets of Tokyo. Railway porters at wayside stations argue the matter with the stationmaster. Every peasant knows, understands, and talks of the matter as though he had brought himself up on long courses of Ruskin. It has often been a subject of great regret to me that Ruskin did not know the Japanese, for in them he would have found the living proof of so much of his teaching.

But the people of Japan not only discuss *edaburi*, they write poetry. There is an exceedingly simple form of poetry called *hokku*. It consists of only three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, and is written in the language of daily life. The *hokku* was invented by a man called Bashō, for the definite ethical purpose of cultivating the taste and improving the morals of the people. He believed in the composition of poetry as an ethical force, and he wished to bring it from the home of the educated into the lives of the poor. He succeeded. Not because the *hokku* is a so much easier form of poetry than the English couplet, but because the people have taste, and art, and civilisation in the very cells of their brains. Every one writes poetry, even the typical *jinricksha* man, who is to the Japanese what the charbonnier is to the French or the coster to us. When the *kurumaya* and his wife go to visit their relations the whole party amuses itself by composing these tiny poems. On all occasions of joy and grief, on birth, death and marriage, at the time of each flower festival, or of any other happening, the people compose poetry. Literary composition has always been inculcated as the best medicine for sorrow, and as such is practised daily.

This is a little poem taken from the diary of a woman
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who died in Tokyo a year or two ago. She lived with her husband, a doorkeeper, on an income of $1 a month, and she was very delicate. She bore him three children, who all died shortly after birth; then the poor mother died herself. Her diary came into the possession of Lafcadio Hearn, who translated it under the title of "A Woman's Tragedy." This poem was composed on the death of the third baby and runs:

"Tanoshimi mo
Saméte haka nashi.
Haru no yumé."

"All my delight has perished, and hopeless I remain.
It was a dream, a dream of spring."

Here is another poem which is more typically Japanese. It was composed by the same woman after the death of her second baby, and runs:

"Sami daré ya
Shimerigachi naru
Sodé no tamoto wo."

"Oh, the month of rain; all things have become damp;
the ends of my sleeve are wet."

Which being interpreted is: "Oh! the time of grief. All things now seem sad. The sleeves of my robe are moist with tears." *

It is this very allusiveness, this saying of something simple and commonplace, and hiding behind it a whole meaning of intense emotion, which makes this poem so typically Japanese, for Japanese art is always suggestive, it always needs the observer to bring his share of thought and mind to its interpretation.

It is interesting to speculate how much the two most

* The long sleeve of a Japanese kimono is always held before the face to hide emotion.
universally recognised characteristics of the Japanese, politeness and cleanliness, owe to their sense of art. If one looks into the psychology of the race, one sees, of course, that this national trait of exquisite politeness was built up, or at least assisted, in many ways. There was that stern training of the *samurai* which taught eternal, never-ending self-control. There is the whole Buddhistic teaching, which is one long gospel of unselfishness and kindness. But other nations have had training in self-control, we ourselves among the number—think for a moment of the Puritans and our public schools. And other religions preach kindness and unselfishness, our own again, and yet there is no other nation so widely recognised, even by the snappiest of tourists who ever wrote his "memoirs," as universally polite from the Emperor to the coolie in the streets. It is a hypothesis which I put forward with some hesitation, because the origins of national psychology are not for the amateur, but I do think that a certain stress is to be laid upon this innate and instinctive, but much cultivated sense of art. Has not the politeness something to do with that love of a beautiful outline, that desire for a perfect curve in the relations between man and man as well as between man's eye and his drawing? Is not, in fact, a rude action a something inartistic in the social whole, a blot of crude colour that jars?

The whole of the *cha-no-yu*, or tea ceremony, one of the few Japanese things of which Europeans have heard more or less vaguely, is an illustration in point. The tea ceremony, divested of its subsidiary and attendant growths, is in essence nothing more than the proper making and the proper drinking of a simple cup of tea. This, in the course of
centuries, has been elaborated into an imposing and very complicated ceremonial. Nowadays the cha-no-yu is regarded mainly as a useful reservoir of etiquette and politeness, and is taught as such. But the whole idea on which it rests is that for every given action there is always one, and only one, right and proper attitude, that is to say, the most graceful. So that the curve of every finger in the mere passing of a tea-cup is the result of careful thought and long experience. Everything has to be considered, the room, the person, the relation of the body to the arm, of the arm to the hand, of the hand to the tea-cup, the position of the person serving, and of the person served, the place of the tea-cups, of the tea-pot, and the tea-kettle; all have been taken into consideration by the tea ceremonialists, and the proper, the most graceful attitude carefully evolved.

That you may not think politeness a matter of social caste in Japan, I may say that the kurumaya when they run into one another at the corners, the coolies hauling carts when they collide, bow profoundly and beg one another’s pardon.

And the exquisite cleanliness? Some one once defined dirt as “matter out of place.” Is not much of art just the putting of things in their right places, in their best and most appropriate and consequently their most beautiful place; in the putting of a thing in such a place that you feel it never could have been otherwise. As the child said when lost in admiration of his birthday cake, “It’s so beautiful I think God must have made it.” It is this cleanliness, this neatness, which the Japanese possess, a neatness which has passed beyond mere precision, passed on into its essence—grace.
All this may perhaps sound far-fetched to English ears. If we are clean and polite it is on sanitary or on ethical grounds, not for æsthetic reasons, because "it is healthy or right," not "because it is more beautiful," and we make a broad distinction between ethics and æsthetics. In Japan, on the contrary, there is the most intimate of relations between them. The whole modern controversy of "art for art's sake," all the dearly cherished views of French critics that art has nothing to do with morals, is simply unmeaning to them. You might as well say that the sun had no relation to light.

I have already mentioned how the hokku form of verse arose as a moral influence, how literary composition is always recommended as the best medicine for sorrow; but what of a nation whose gardens are arranged to express an ethical abstraction such as courage, resignation, obedience, or to suggest a saying of Buddha, the Blessed One; whose dwarf trees are not merely grown to make a design, but also to express an idea and suggest a reflection; where every single tree, and flower, and bird, and beast is a moral symbol and is commonly used as such; where a simple candlestick of a stork standing on a tortoise and holding the stem of a convolvulus in its mouth is a whole philosophy: the stork, representing Life, standing upon the tortoise, Eternity, and holding in its mouth the Morning Glory, a flower whose brief life, only blooming for the few hours after dawn, is typical of mortality, and the impermanence of all things. From Life based upon Eternity springs Mortality, whose joys are fleeting. Here is the kernel of the whole Buddhistic faith. The impermanence of phenomena and the eternity of law, that is, cause and effect.
Even such an ordinary art as that of arranging flowers is deeply ethical. The whole of Chinese philosophy is bound up with it. Each stem is known by the name of some tenet in this philosophy, and at the end of the lesson on flower arrangement the teacher sits down and talks to the class of the underlying ethical ideas.

I do not think there is any art in the world into which so much thought and meaning has been poured as into that of the Japanese. Every design, even the simplest, even the most stereotyped, has behind it a whole world of symbol, of suggestion which speaks to the mind of the beholder as the outlines to his eye. And this is the reason why no design is ever unmeaning, haphazard, as it so often is with us. It is there not only because it is beautiful, but because it is appropriate to the place and the occasion, because it has some connection with the object it decorates, with the person who gives or the person who receives it, with the time and the circumstances of the giving. Their art, in fact, regarded from the ethical point of view, is often a sort of moral shorthand, a very beautiful, finely wrought shorthand, which men can take away and think upon.

And this brings me to my last point. John Addington Symonds, in one of his wonderful essays on the Italian Renaissance, says that painting inevitably fell from its high estate among men because modern life is too complex to be expressed by it. That just in the same way as the Renaissance required something less simple than the sculpture of the Greeks to translate its thoughts and feelings into outward form, so we in this century cannot express our own more subtle and complex thought in terms of painting, and therefore
never again can we hope to rival the perfection of that old Renaissance art. And he concludes by remarking that it is in music, more plastic and suggestive, that we must seek our best expression. Now Japanese art is not dead but intensely living, and it has always seemed to me that it lives, it holds its place in their life, thought and culture just because it has learnt to express those complex and subtle emotions which make up our world to-day. And it does it, not by imaging them forth defined and definite as our painting seeks to do, but just as our music would by suggestion.

To every Japanese painting a man must bring his own soul and his own thoughts, and where he has none or little, then he will turn away complacently, saying, "Here, there is nothing." For his are not the eyes to see all the dim eternal problems, all the vistas of unwritten poetry which the artist has but shadowed forth; the artist whose part is not to portray, but infinitely to suggest.
SCENES IN RAIN AND SUNSHINE
"What it is
That dwelleth here
I know not;
Yet my heart is full of gratitude,
And the tears trickle down."

SAIGIO.

I

THE MOAT

It is winter, and yet a summer sky of clearest blue, faint and pure. A white sun rides in the southern sky, winning me to believe it summer until the cold northern wind lifts the edge of my cloak, and I know it winter.

It is warm here in the corner of the bridge, full in the sunlight, and I linger. The dark, still waters of the moat creep stealthily along on either side of me; in the distance I can see the rounded arch of a bridge, so arched is the span and so white that I could believe the people had stolen the young crescent of the moon to span their waters.

I lean on my bamboo parapet and look. The dark still waters run between brown stone walls all overhung with the twisted limbs of the fir-trees, such big strong branches lying almost along the ground, and twisted as if in a vain endeavour to get back to the earth beneath. I watch the thick strong branches, soberly green, the masses of foliage riotously so, a green line and its shadow.

The stone banks of the moat are unhewn and unemented, but their surface is one unbroken line of sober brown; and I look at the long wave of muddy finger-marks traced by the tide's edge, and now high up
the wall, and drop my eyes to the deep mud-brown of
the waters below.

The bambo<sub>4</sub> parapet grows hot, hotter. I wonder
who laid those stones, and who keeps them so free of
grass and weeds. On the whole they are not more
silent and solid than the big limbs of the trees above.
Past the bridge in the distance is an unkempt space of
yellow grass, then a tall red building shoots abruptly
into the sky. The small brown policeman, hidden by
his military cloak and sword, stands motionless as I.
Am I dreaming that this is a city of a million souls?

Blue, green, brown, black; sky, trees, stones, water;
a white sun, a white bridge—and suddenly the two
seem to meet in a whirl of dust, my scale of colours
vanishes and with it the dreamy quiet and the summer
sun. A clatter of gheta on the bridge, two kuruma
past the policeman, a boat on the moat, the voice of
the tōfu man following his bell along the road, the
shadow of the tall house over the world—and I awake
to winter and the town.
II

A RAINY DAY

Rain!
And the world lies like an impressionist picture washed in with white. Shut up in my miniature hansom, with the apron up to my eyes and the roof down to the brim of my hat, it passes before me in misty unreality. But for an occasional bob of the black mushroom hat of my kurumaya as he pulls the 'ricksha out of a hole, I am drawn by an invisible force.

It has rained for a week, and the streets are bogs, the puddles—ponds. The wind drives the rain with a murmured "ssssh" against the tarpaulin sides of the kuruma, but in front there is no rain, only an intangible, shadowy whiteness between the world and me.

The green bank of the moat, the dark water, even the fir-trees whose green arms stretch down long fingers into the water, are uncertain and swollen as the world to sleepy eyes. Black kuruma splash past me, with the large glass eye in their aprons shadowly suggestive. The coolie in his straw raincoat, just a walking sheaf finishing in two bare brown legs, plods on, a golden figure against the grey. A long string of carts pass by me, long narrow carts drawn by long
thin horses; cart and horses hidden under a structure of yellow oil-paper, until they look like huge golden bats or mythical dragons. And with his back to the head of the horse, a halter in one hand, a yellow paper umbrella in the other, his bare brown legs lost in the mud, the walking sheaf moves on.

All the world to-day is four inches higher than its wont; and the stilt-like gheta seem an uncertain footing for their owners. Bare to the thigh is the kurumaya, and his brown legs look like the statues of Greece sunned into life, so perfect are their outlines.

Down the vanishing road are two pale yellow umbrellas, gold on grey, and I marvel at the beauty of the colour. Suddenly round the bend of the street comes a third—foreign, black—and in a flash the beauty goes; a muddy road in the drenching rain alone is left, cold, prosaic. And I shiver in my kuruma.
III

MMÉ (PLUM-BLOSSOMS)

They lay in fleece-white purity down the hillside, and the brooding stillness of that garden was as a sheltering wing above the world.

Beneath one's feet the six-sided tiles set in the brown earth were clean with a Dutch cleanliness, and the soil all around had been raked with the same quaint precision. Not a fallen leaf, nor the foot-mark of a bird, marred the soft brown surface—only the narrow line of glazed tiles ran on and on under the trees.

On every side the curve of the hill sloped upwards, outwards, drawing the white garden nearer as a mother draws her child close within her arms.

A hot sweet scent is in the air, delicate as honeysuckle, fragrant as the pine, half-soft, half-spiced—the scent of the blossoming plum, mmé, the emblem of chastity, of womanly purity and strength.

The pale grey stems of the trees are bent and old; some are covered with a grey-green moss, and between their silvered stems I walk as in the cloistered calm of ruined abbeys.

Up through the white fleece of blossom overhead bright stars of blue shine down. The sun-warmed
presence of the living earth draws her children near. In all the world there is no sound. . . .

"Like as a hen gathereth her chickens." . . .

Is not that the white wing of the eternal mother overhead? And the warm, sweet fragrance of herself is all around.
IV

WET LEAVES

It had rained all night and all day; big, solid drops of rain that fell as compactly through the air as battalions of small shot, but at twilight the raindrops dwindled, slackened, dwindled, ceased.

The clear, colourless sky, which the whole day long had shot down its drops of rain, drew together in grey clouds, growing momentarily greyer, thicker and more grey, and shining with a pale light as though far away behind those thick coverings a great white light was burning.

The stones on the pathway were all wet and shining and crushed down into little pools of water under one’s heels. The trees were dripping raindrops at each leaf, the trunks of all the pines were a dark brown with wet.

In the garden there was peace, a peace of plants weighed down with raindrops, and very tired. Up on the damp hillside the note of a solitary bird sounded forlornly. *Uguisu*, the Japanese nightingale was calling. One sweet short song, and then a greater silence.

Above the little grey shrine to Inari, the Fox God, two golden oranges swayed out against the dark green bush. The raindrops on their under sides trickled
slowly over the little temple, and down the miniature steps, while those on the upper sides stood out in little clusters growing larger and larger until an imperceptible stir of the heavy fruit sent them chasing their fellows down the temple's roof.

And the sky above grew greyer. The golden oranges, larger for the raindrops, swayed mysteriously out, bright yellow against dark green, in a damp, dark world.

At the path's edge another pathway of clear water encircled the temple and the orange trees; a water so clear that it hardly seemed to exist, while the brown banks and the brown stones showed wet and dark as the pathway under foot. And round the temple and the orange trees in ever silent motion along the brown pathway swam strange fishes; bright blue carp with black sides and designs in creamy white, large orange carp with tracings in silver, golden carp with six or seven waving tails, and solitary in their midst one white patriarch whom age had turned to driven snow.

And the damp, dark world turned slowly darker. The wet hillside grew a black, blurred line; the light behind the cloud was going out; the trees had lost their colour.

All silently the blue carp moved along the dark pathway, and the golden orange globes dripped above the little temple. Bright blue, orange; the light behind the clouds was out.
We were to climb Asamayama. The plan seemed simple and delightful; to take horses in the cool of the evening and ride by moonlight to the last green frill of trees upon the mountain side; to climb the nine thousand feet to the very edge of the crater; and then in those blackest hours before the dawn to look into the volcano’s mysterious depths, all red and glowing, where flame and smoke strive ever for the mastery, where the long orange tongues leap up through rolling purple masses of the smoke; and all around and all below, as far as eye can pierce, is lurid glowing red. And still on the crater’s treacherous sides which hold smoke and flame unsteadily as a drunkard holds his cup, to look down fascinated until they crumble beneath one’s feet, and the thrill of terror bites in the memory of the mighty force indelible. Then to breakfast under the sheltering walls of the old crater; to watch the darkness melt before the coming day, to see the sun rise swiftly in his strength, and the long circle of the hills stand clear and blue and liquid on the upland plain; to see the giant ridges of the mountains stretching from sea to sea with the faint white cone of Fuji a dream upon the distant sky; to look in the freshness of the morning upon the beauty of the land,
and standing on the cinder slopes of Asama to trace the tortured lava beds stretching like long grey snakes among the green till the trees grow over and the forest engulfs them. And still in the first hours of the dawn to ride back slowly with the memory of the crater and the sunrise making pictures in one's mind, tired but contented.

The programme was delightful, perfect, it only remained to carry it out. So we started, on the sorry horses of the upland regions of Japan, and the full moon fitful behind thick clouds shone sadly. It was distinctly chilly, for the table land of Karuizawa is 3000 feet above sea level, and in the air was the damp shiver of coming rain. Still we started, out of the village and along the wide still plain where the dark shadow of a hill showed round as a basin on our right. This was Asama's satellite, born of her fires, made of her ashes, a round, smooth, green hill, cruelly deceitful.

The empty plain stretched dark to the edge of the misty clouds and diffused through it was a pale grey light that shimmered, trembling. Over the plain and the mountain, through the air and the shadows, the light filtered mistily, swaying and rounding the outlines till they looked like solid bodies seen through a vast perspective of clear water. As we plodded on, the paper lanterns held by each boy at the horses' heads turned all the wet black path to shining silver pools which gleamed as the light fell on them, quivered like spreading veins of ore, and disappeared into the blackness. The limpid flowing air that swayed above the plain, all luminous and clear, grew darker, shrank as it were together, lost its liquid light, turned slowly into rain, and came down steadily.
We passed through a second village, and went on, over a rutty road, between high banks, persistently upwards. All the sounds of the world had died away, and the life of the woods, the rustle of leaves and of grasses, the long thick hum of the insects was dead. Nothing moved. Even the rain made no sound as it fell in great wet clouds upon the ground.

High up on the rutty road we halted, while the two boys plunging downward through the bushes in the darkness drank of a silent stream which flowed below, the last water we should pass that night. The leaves of the bushes cut sharp green silhouettes upon the blackness, stiff and metallic as tinfoil, as the boys, lantern in hand, plunged downward. But we did not go, for the soft cloud of rain was falling thicker, wetter, and we were cold. When each had drunk his fill, and the metal green leaves of the bushes had flashed back into darkness again, we plodded on, over the common, under the trees, along another piece of road, looser, more rutty than the last, and definitely among the dripping trees we climbed upward.

The moon was gone now, hidden deep behind the falling layers of cloud. And there was a hush, a stagnancy upon all things as though an unseen, unknown force were terrorising life to stillness. Not a tree had leave to stir. The branches huddled dumbly, and all the seething insect life which makes the woods so full of sound lay stricken, lay dumb, paralysed; and among the damp trees we journeyed on.

At midnight the horses stopped, in a fold of the hills on the edge of the trees, where the blackness lay solid, and we slid down. One boy tied the horses together
and sat down patiently to await our return next morning. The other snuffed the candle in his paper lantern and prepared to lead the way. By this time it was raining hard, in distinct material drops, which splashed sharply on face and hands, and it was pitch dark. The boy, lantern in hand, went first, and all the light of the lantern so carefully trimmed was cut off from us by his stout round body. We knew by the crunch there were cinders under foot, by the cold wet dabs that ghost-like pressed our hands that there were bushes, and that we climbed.

From time to time the boy would sway his lantern to one side or the other, and stunted shrubs like London laurel trees would start into being, and disappear. With each swing of the lantern the stunted shrubs grew scarcer and more stunted, till they dwindled to bushes, to mere green weeds like dandelions, to nothingness. Then the light fell on cinder, piled up, half-burnt cinder with ends of broken brickbats, and all the rubbish of a dust-heap. And at each step the wind came up and up; colder, stronger, wetter it tore down the bare steep slopes driving us backwards. Then we would sit down upon the cinders, our backs to the mountain, our feet on the brickbats, and pant. It was distinctly exhausting. Each footstep was a launch into the unknown, and a searching for a foothold, each pause an adding to the weight of cinders that drifted down boots and clothing. And it rained with fierce splashes when the wind blew, with dull persistency when it died away, but still unceasingly. And that sense of an unseen, unknown force, paralysing all things, grew with each footstep. The chill of a dumb terror lay upon the world, and the utter desolation struck colder than the wind.
We rested again while the icy wind rushed screeching through the cinders; and, as it died away, the chirp of a Japanese grasshopper came into the stillness. We were far above the weeds now, in the region of perpetual cinder, and still that grasshopper chirped weakly. But the spell was too real, the terror too deathly; the unseen, unknown force took a step nearer in the darkness, and the weak wee chirp seemed only the voice of the horror, the breath of the dumbness giving it life.

The cinders grew looser and looser as we climbed, more difficult to tread, and the stagnant silence was filled and filled with sulphur. It did not come in breaths or gusts, or driving before the wind, it was there in the silence, part of it, and it wrapped us round. If dead silence can grow more deathly, then did that stillness die again. The dumb terror tightened on the world, and the unknown force came nearer.

From far below the sound of pouring heavy stones drove up and up. The mountain rumbled in its depths, rumbled and was still. The presence of that unseen force was manifest. Before it terror crouched still as a bird beneath the swooping shadow of the hawk.

We climbed up heavily, up through the thick sulphur and the loose steep cinders, up till we turned, and the full force of the wind came sweeping round the side of the mountain. We were walking on the edge, the real edge over which you could fall, and it was all of lava, sticky as clay and crossed with deep black cracks that had no bottom. The wind swept down here undisturbed, the gusts of rain broke sharply on the paper lantern as it swayed from side to side to peer out a way. The sticky lava softened rapidly until
it sucked around our feet, drawing them down. Then a long fierce gust blew out the lantern and we stood still.

"Honourably please stand very still," called the boy quickly.

And we stayed dead still.

The gust of wind rushed by us, rushed on. Then another blew till we cowered on the sinking lava. It was so long in passing that the moments seemed as hours. We stood like statues. Insidiously the lava crept above our feet, crept stealthily, and motionless we waited.

The gust died down but the wind still blew, still blew. A light quivered for a moment in the darkness and went out. The boy had lit a match. He struck another. It flickered in little yellow leaps that showed the lantern and his face and went abruptly out. Again the tiny mandorla of light shot up, the boy was holding the lantern in his hand all ready. We could see the flame double as the candle caught, then both went swiftly out, for again the wind came rushing down. It blew and blew. Then it blew so fiercely that to blow again it stopped to take its breath. Quickly in the second's pause the match flared up, the lantern lit, and we could move.

As we drew out our feet the wicked sticking lava sucked, and the boy held the lantern low to peer out the cracks. Then he turned sharply to the left, and the wind was gone.

We stood in a narrow roofless cave whose sides were overhanging rock, whose floor was lava ash, wet with big rain pools. This was the old crater. Asama has three craters, and two are at present in disuse. We were sheltering in one of these. It
was a still haven of refuge after the fury of the wind outside, and a sure. There were no cracks, no sticky sucking lava here. With relief as from a heavy burden we sat down upon the wet ash to rest and eat, the lantern in our midst.

It was now 3 o'clock. Since midnight we had been climbing, our clothes were soaked and heavy with rain and cinders, and we were very tired. The boy prosaically unpacked the hamper, and by the flickering light he set out plates and food. But before we could take one mouthful, the wind rushed down the roofless cave, upset the hamper, swept the lantern along the ash before it, tore like a whirlwind from end to end, and left us in an unearthly livid darkness that lighted nothing.

For a moment we all stayed numbed, then the boy sought the remnants of his lantern and we the remnants of our meal. They were both embedded in thick lava dust.

We could not go on up the crater now, for every minute the wind blew fiercer, and the paper lantern was torn in several places. We must wait for the dawn to show us the way. So we huddled under the shelter of the overhanging rock and waited.

The livid darkness that lay upon the mountain grew more livid and less dark to our watching eyes, till we could distinguish the faint outlines of things, though not the things themselves. It was, oh! so cold, and that sense of stagnant terror, dispersed for a little by the wind and the food, crept back and back, intenser, dumber than before.

Then the mountain rumbled in its depths, and the sound of pouring heavy stones came up again. This
time it did not die away, it stopped abruptly, as though by force of will. And we waited.

It was so cold that I could sit still no longer, and, wrapping my cloak around me, tired as I was, walked up and down, up and down.

The overhanging rocks, whose outlines showed so ghostly against the livid darkness, rose high above our heads. From time to time the sulphur thickened in the air, making us cough.

And the deathness of that silence, the dumb horror of that stillness spread and spread and spread. It was all afraid.

The boy, curled under his rock, slept peacefully. We walked and waited.

Then, in an instant, two great tongues of flame shot into the darkness, leapt high toward the sky, and two reports, as of the heaviest thunder, shook the mountain. The boy, awakened, jumped up quickly, looked at the flames as they sprang into the darkness, and the thunder of the second report shook the ground beneath his feet, turned to speak, when a sudden sharp clatter came like a hiss past all our ears, calling "Stones, stones," he threw himself flat on his face and rolled right under the rock.

We, too, rushed to the overhanging rocks and crouched down quickly, and the sharp clatter of stone on stone went on all around us.

Asama had rumbled to some purpose, and she was resting.

Then the utter silence, the dead, dumb horror came back, came back again. Fear breathed beside us in the darkness.
Slowly the little stars above the rocks dropped out of the sky, the livid darkness changed to livid light, and it was dawn, a cold, grey dawn, but little lighter than the night had been. Still we could see, see the lava and the ash, so, rolling out from under our rock, we shook ourselves together, chattering with cold.

The ground at our feet was sprinkled with pinky-grey stones, daubed with bright yellow sulphur, and glowing hot. They were as large as a clenched fist, with edges sharp and jagged. We stooped to pick up one—the least hot—and carry it wrapt in handkerchiefs, which it burnt, and mackintoshes which it singed, back to Karuizawa.

The boy looked at the stones, looked at us, looked towards the crater, and asked with many warnings if we were to go on. We, too, looked at the stones, and thoughtfully towards the crater, and, as we looked, the mountain rumbled slowly in its depths.

Seizing the basket, the boy fled, our one and only guide. We followed him, over the cracks and the spongy soft lava, too occupied with wondering how we had ever passed over it safely the night before to be afraid now—too busy, too, watching the boy fleeing in front of us, too occupied marking his path to think even of eruptions. And somehow we got over safely, back on to the solid cinder slope of Asama again, the slope that went down straight as a shoot, and fell away as abruptly on each side as a bridge. It was ground, and after the cracks and the sucking lava, solid, though the cinders did shift beneath our feet. We had leisure to look round us, and found the mountain wrapped in a thick white mist. By this time the boy had disappeared entirely, but we did not trouble now. There seemed no choice of paths down. Our cinder bridge
went on, sloping steeply downwards into the hidden world below, and we followed it.

A little way below, the mist sank suddenly beneath our feet, and we were walking in the yellow sunlight—walking down a cinder slope that shone jet-black against a pale blue sky, while all around and all beneath, and surging up against the cinder slope, floated a wild wide sea of dead white clouds—a dead, still sea, with its waves stiffened into frozen snow. Tossing, it lay beneath the clear blue sky, and the pale sun glinted on its snow-white crests, glinted on the still gigantic billows that stretched from cinder pathway to the far blue sky. It lay a silent sea of milk-white frozen waves that was such stuff as dreams are made of.

And we went on, down. As the gods of old along a sloping bridge that crossed the clouds and stretched from the blue heaven to the hidden earth beneath, like Izanagi and Izanami, as they crossed the rainbow bridge from the High Plain of Heaven and stirred the floating brine with their jewelled spear—stirred till it went "koro, koro"—till it went "curdle, curdle," as the old chronicle says, and the drops that dripping fell from the celestial spear piled up into the firstborn of the islands of Japan.

A sudden peal of echoing thunder shook our cinder bridge, and we turned abruptly. Somewhere on the other side of the topmost edge of cinder rose up a huge column of thick smoke. The wickedest dead-white smoke, which, slowly curling over at the tips like ostrich feathers, showed shadows of deep mauve and dull blue-purple, while from below the heavy
pouring of great stones drove up and up. Asama rumbled, rumbled in her depths. Half an hour sooner we should have been up there still. Had we gone on to the crater we should have been on the very edge. The memory of the sharp-edged clattering stones, red-hot and big as fists, came back to us. We looked at one another silently, and went on, downwards.

Slowly the gigantic plumes of thick curdled smoke drifted up into the blue, and they were very beautiful. It was as though Asama wore a sweeping white *panache* in her coal-black helmet. But the thundering roar of the eruption had torn our sea of frozen snow to pieces. The blank white mist shut swiftly down, and hid the mountain and the smoke, the cinders and the sky; only the wide black bridge was left sloping straight downwards.

We reached our horses drenched, to sit on high-peaked saddles and journey back through dank dripping trees, over rutty roads, across thick green commons heavy with mist, back cold, wet and hungry to Karui-zawa again.

But we kept our stone, and though we had not seen into the crater, we had perhaps come nearer to that mysterious force, itself unseen, unknown, which dwells beneath the lava and the ash, and terrorises life.
VI

CAMELLIAS

Blue bay below as far as eye can reach. Blue sky above, blue to the edge of the horizon. And in between a steep cliff of green: dark fir, pale bamboo, and that impenetrable undergrowth for which alone a botanist has a name—or names.

The time of the plum blossom has been, is gone, and the world is drowsing in the dream of summer. Up here in the green the quick sappy life is stirring, I can hear it plainly; for in all the world there is no other sound.

The trodden green path runs up, from blue to blue. Midway between the two I stop. And the green world closes in around me, shutting out the blue I came from and the blue to which I go.

The tall dark firs sway slowly. The pale bamboos wave slim fingers, green as March lime leaves in the sun, their golden stems are elusive and bewitching, sunned dryads of the East.

The green world has me in its hold. I forget the steep path to the blue above. It is warm and still, and the bamboos beckon as they sway.

How green it is! All the greens a painter ever dreamt of... and the graceful bamboos beckon Eastern Vivians to bewitch.

I stay to look and look—never trees so graceful nor
the green world so fair. A step. I have left the path-
way,—and then—I stop. Beyond the pale bamboos
and above them, its dark green branches rising up-
wards to the blue, is a camellia tree. Each glossy
handful of leaves holds a single blood-red flower.
And the tree stands there beyond, above the swaying,
beckoning bamboos, stern, severe.
“ And the Wages of Sin is Death.”

I turn back to the path. The blue below spreads out
as far as eye can reach, the blue above lies shining
at the end of the pathway. The green world between
is still.
But the path is very steep.
The world is wet as when first parted from the waters; and the firmament above, uncertain in its new position, seems slipping bodily down to join the waters below. The sound of falling rain, unformed, continuous, seems to have come from the time before Time was; while the tiny squelch of liquid mud oozing up between the bare toes of the kurumaya alone marks the present.

It is dark. The paper lantern, swinging at the end of the shaft, lights up the pools of the roadway with a transient gleam. For the rest, alone in my miniature hansom, with the apron up to my eyes, and the roof down to my eyebrows, the world, with the rushing swish of falling rain, seems dissolving slowly into the waters, and the history of creation marching backwards.

A splash of wheels behind me, and the black mushroom hat of my kurumaya bobs up above the apron, for the hill is steep. A shout, and the ricksha behind me stops. My kurumaya stands still, holding the thin lacquered shafts in his hands and shouts back. Then he drags me to the roadside, and, putting the shafts on the ground, steps over them and disappears with his lantern. Balancing in my kuruma like the monks on the miserere seats I am left all alone.
What is the matter?

A splash of wheels, the heavy panting of two men. They are pulling the other kuruma up the steep hill, and will come back for me. So I wait, rigid; for the hill is steep, the mud slippery and the angle of the seat precarious. I strain my eyes to see—a corner of muddy road, half the blurred outline of a hedge. And not all the light in all the world could show me more, for the roof above my head is as a hand on my eyelids pressing them downwards.

The wheels have splashed their way up the hill, and I can hear them no longer. Only the sound of the falling rain, driven momentarily away by the sharper splash of the moving wheels, comes back, slowly, steadily, irresistibly, submerging the world and me.

I am all alone, a stranger in a strange land, behind me an unknown road, in front—I strain my eyes to see. Even the hedge has grown unfamiliar. It is no hedge, nothing but impenetrable undergrowth. I am on the edge of a forest.

And the road?

For the first time I notice how strange even the mud of a road can be. This is trodden all over with the prints of naked human feet, and the endless knife cuts of the gheta.

The loneliness is wrapping itself around me as a pall.

The dull swish of the rushing raindrops goes on and on. How long have they left me in a dissolving world alone. No sound above, no sound below. And the rush of the falling rain is drumming in my ears.

A hideous nightmare possesses me. Surely the trickling pools are carrying away the mud from under my wheels. I shall slip down, down into nothingness with the falling rain.
I dare not move. My eyes are fixed on the narrow strip of muddy road in front of me. The shafts are surely slipping——

Then the rush of the falling raindrops drowns the world.
THE BLACK CANAL

The handle of the Japanese guitar, from which Lake Biwa takes its name, is at Otsu, six miles from Kyoto and three hundred feet above it. Between stands all the thickness of Kyoto's girdle of mountains. Built in the flat bottom of an immense bowl, dark green with pine-clad hills, Kyoto, the ancient capital, is still the artistic centre of Japan. It is a city of 350,000 inhabitants, and many manufactories, but with little water or water transit, while only six miles away, beyond the mountains and above the town, Lake Biwa stretches a long arm from the ports of the west coast towards the city.

It was in 1890 that Tanabe Sakuro, piercing the heart of the mountains, brought the waters of Lake Biwa, running swiftly under the hills, into Kyoto. And the Black Canal begins at Otsu.

Deep down in the last of the rampart of locks which shuts out the lake lies the long narrow sampan, a white gondola, carpeted and cushioned, a large torch flames on either side, and the boatman stands ready behind. We sit on the cushions on the carpet, for the canal is but just the height of a man, and but just the width of two sampan. The cement sides of the lock rise up like walls; in front is the black arch of a tunnel, cut
like a tiny doorway in the base of the great green mountain. A moment, and we are inside, in the pitch blackness; rushing swiftly, silently along in the freshness of a subterranean night. The two huge torches that we carry show the darkness falling like a thick curtain before, behind us; and the silence is the silence of infinite ages asleep.

The rhythm of the rushing water passes like a breath through the darkness, but the speed is unfelt. Move your hand beyond the side of the boat, and the contact of the wall will tear all the skin from the knuckles in one swift scrape. For the water rushes, rushes silent in the darkness, not a current but a force.

Suddenly in the blackness there is a light; three nude figures poised, their muscles strained, human strength pitted against the water's force. Their boat moves but slowly, we are by in a flash. The naked orange figures form but one picture, one posture against the blackness, a living red group from the black urns of Greece; seen, gone; and the darkness drops down in thick curtains all around.

Swiftly the water rushes, silent, the rhythmic breathing of black night. The darkness deepens, deepens; then cracks. A thin, thin slit parts black from black, and slowly grows a narrow streak of faintest grey.

It is light; light like the thinnest edge of a sword set in the far distance. But the crack broadens, widens, rounds, and grows by imperceptible degrees into an open archway, showing the bright water and the green hills beyond. And swiftly we rush towards the light, while the little picture no bigger than the reflection on a camera grows curves and outlines, swells here, retreats there, and passes from a flat reflection into a rounded reality.
The tunnel itself is no longer black. The walls, the rounded roof, lie like shadows, deep brown, growing quickly greyer. And above, on either side, the bats are clinging thickly, in long rows.

We shoot into the light and see that walls and boat are covered with a fluttering half-dead mass of ghost-grey moths. They coat the tunnel from wall to roof, they lie in struggling heaps on boat and carpet, our clothes are full of them.

With one last swift glide we are out of the grey shadow, out under the blue sky. The green hills rise on either side, the water dimples in the sun. Slowly the grey moths flutter back to the darkness. For through the heart of the mountain Lake Biwa has come to Kyoto.
The little steamer lay tilted up against the end of the pier, for all the waters of the ocean were rushing madly through the Straits of Shimonoseki into the Inland Sea. The waters lay encircled as a lake, for the space between the inner and the outer strait is narrow, but they ran swift as a mountain river. The square-sailed junks, all sails set, were racing down the stream in the very eye of the wind, while those coming up with a strong breeze behind them hardly seemed to stir. And the little steamer at the end of the pier tilted herself up higher and higher.

She was a foreign-built boat, though only about the size of a launch, but she looked like a Moorish house afloat, for all the boat was cabin, and all the deck was roof, whitewashed, ribbed roof, with a striped awning. As we left the pier and struck the full force of the current, the striped awning and the uneven deck dipped down and down until the Moorish roof turned Gothic. We were in the full force of the current now, and tearing down the stream with, as somebody said, "all our engines going the wrong way." Up the side of the boat the water climbed, pulling it down with long strong hands, until the flat deck was turned to a gable roof.
For five breathless minutes we balanced between air and water, and then we were through the inner strait which turns the waters of the Inland Sea between Moji and Shimonoseki into one big lake, and the coast of the South Island began to fall away. The tide was running less swiftly now, the ridge of our gable roof sank slowly into the water, and the little steamer floated a white, flat-roofed, Moorish house once more.

"There is nothing," said the steward, "for the Ijin San to eat."

He had been standing behind us, balancing himself on the steep gable roof, for some while, but the current and the laws of gravitation had been absorbing all our attention, and like a true Japanese he was much too polite to interrupt.

"There is nothing, nothing," said he, "to eat."

For the rare missionary, or the rarer tourist, who patronises the coasting steamer of the Inland Sea comes provided as for an Arctic expedition.

"But we shall eat Japanese food," we explained.

He bowed, a low, polite bow, but I do not think he believed us. Then he went away, and returned bearing foreign cups with saucers, full of a hot brown liquor called, he told us triumphantly, "coffee." It was of the kind bought ready mixed in cakes, and made with hot water. We were pleased to know it was coffee, and the attention touched us, still, Japanese tea would have tasted better. We thought the pinky-brown soup flavoured with orange peel, the fried fish with chestnut preserve, the custard stuffed with shrimps, and the bowls of rice eaten with salted plums and spiced roots off which we dined infinitely preferable; and the steward who fanned us with one hand, and served us
with the other, saw that there was "something for us to eat."

It was eight o’clock when we climbed the steep ladder which led to our Moorish roof, eight o’clock on a July evening, and already the tall, deep-dented mountains of Kyushu lay dark and indistinct. They lay cut sharp against a twilight sky as though they had no thickness. And slowly the coast-line fell away grey into the sea. Kyushu was dying as the ship and sun moved on, Shikoku was but a blur upon the ocean, and between them the open sea made a pathway to the sky, all silver-grey and trembling, a road of light to that sunken light beyond.

The sun had set, and the fleeting twilight of the East was night already. Japan’s green hills were turning grey. Night held sky and islands fast, but the pathway shone and trembled until it died in the last long streaks of light on the edge of the horizon. Night was come.

From Kobé to Shimonoseki stretch the two hundred and forty miles of the Inland Sea; and in it are gathered together most of the islands of Japan. Continuous as a mainland the coast of the big island runs down, while on the other side Kyushu and Shikoku with ancient Awaji, the first-born of the Gods, dip their high green mountains in the sea; between, in lines and clusters, lie thousands upon thousands of baby islands; some large enough to hold a village, others too small for a single house; some green with trees and rice-fields, others a mere speck of rock reaching up out of the water. From morning until night we sat under the striped awning of our roof top, and watched as they glided past, green islands on the
blue water; and always on our left hand the tall, deep-dented mountains of the mainland ran on and on.

In the morning sunlight Miyajima’s granite tori stood knee-deep in the pale blue waves. Its temple roofs were brown against the dark, green pines, and the sacred island, where neither Birth nor Death may come, slept blue-black with shadows in the dawn.

And still they glided by, the green islands on the blue water. The sun travelled up the sky; it grew hot—hotter.

At mid-day we had reached the narrow channel, where mainland and island are so close that the sea is but a canal between the houses; and the children of the two villages throw stones across the stream. Here, at the end of the passage, a great stone lantern stands deep in the idle water. Then, abruptly, as we turned, the canal was gone; and the wide, blue sea lay shimmering among the green islands in the summer sun.

Under the striped awning of our rooftop it was cool, but outside the sun was smiting sea and land, until sea and islands quivered, quivered, losing themselves, colour and outline, in one mist of shimmering, shadowy blue. And the ship and the sun travelled on.

Five sturdy naval cadets shared our luncheon with us, and knew the number and the tonnage of England’s smallest gunboats, and for all their blue uniform and “foreign” dirk, their Sayonara as they left us were courteous with an old-time courtesy.

And the sun grew hot and hotter. The light like a mist wrapt sea and islands round. The continuous quivering hurt. On the other side the deep-dented mountains of the mainland, grown bare and scraped
now, caught the sunshine on their rocky patches, and sent it in glittering arrows of light across the still air. And yet in the brown villages, at the mountains’ feet, the blue-tuniced, brown-legged peasants were working in the sun; and at each stopping-place the bare-headed men and women came off in boats to offer their fruit and saké in long-handled fishing-nets, scent-bottles full of saké flavoured with plum-blossom, saké flavoured with chrysanthemum or peach-blossom, white rice, “woman’s” saké, saké to ward off old age, or all and any of the nine different kinds of saké for which Tomotsu is famous, and all in scent-bottles, artistically tied up and labelled, and costing, bottle and all, is-sen. One old lady was highly indignant when after much excitement we had contrived to haul up in the fishing-net the exact scent-bottle we coveted, and had sent her down one sen in return, for the patois of the district makes is-sen of jis-sen (10 sen = 2 1/2d.), to the unaccustomed ear.

And the ship and the sun travelled on.

As the shadows grew the quivering ceased, the light no longer like a veil of darkness hid the land and sea. The islands grew a gradual green, as they drowsed on the clear blue water. And slowly the still sea opened wider; the islands passed more slowly until they ceased to pass at all; and then on the blue water there grew that indefinite look of ocean space. The Inland Sea was ending. Away on the still sweep of waters lay Awaji, the First-born of the Gods, the Eden of Japan.

“And when,” says the legend, “the first man and the first woman met after they had journeyed round a pillar set upon the land the woman cried, ’How joyful
a thing it is to meet a lovely man!’ Whereupon the man, displeased that language had been invented by a woman, required the circuit to be made again, that he might speak first. So again they journeyed round the pillar, and again they met, and loudly the man cried out, ‘How joyful a thing it is to meet a lovely woman!’ And thus,” says the chronicle, “was Speech invented, and the Art of Love and the human race begun.”

Dim grey on a grey sea lay Awaji; before us stretched the broad sweep of the landless ocean; the Inland Sea, dreaming among its islands, lay behind.
THE LAND OF THE GODS
"That which I saw seemed to me a smile of the Universe."

"Paradiso," canto xxvii.
ACROSS THE LAGOON

We sat still on the deck, with our backs propped against portions of the ship’s cargo, and watched.

It was necessary to sit still, for a rise of only a few inches would have sent the awning over our heads into the blue waters of the lagoon; and each newcomer, as he stepped from the wharf on to this Kensington Garden craft, doubled himself in two and stayed so. First-class passengers lay flat, for a square hole in the side of the boat opened into a three-feet-high saloon elegantly carpeted; we had matting. When the first half of the passenger was inside, a big-headed boy removed his gheta and piled them up on the deck, re-shoeing him in the same way when he emerged. The difficulty of extracting foreign boots in this manner would alone have deterred us from using our first-class tickets; and then the deck passengers under the awning had at least six inches more room, besides ventilation. So we sat on the matting and watched.

Anything out of a toy-shop so tiny as this absurd little steamer was never seen. She might with generosity have been fifteen feet long; yet she carried some twenty passengers besides cargo down the lagoon and up the river, from Matsué to Shobara,
with safety and Oriental speed; and did it twice a day too.

The carpeted saloon was reasonably filled with half a dozen passengers; the deck overflowed with the rest. The brown-skinned, bullet-headed, ugly, good-natured Japanese peasant, sitting on his heels with his dark blue kimono tucked up above his brown legs, and his fan in his hand; or his little wife, wrinkled and meek, her white cotton towel, with its bamboo design in blue, folded round her head and tucked up under her hair behind in something between a night-cap and a sunbonnet; quiet and sweet, but never abject, and always respected. Here and there a shopkeeper or a clerk, or some one from the town in a grey kimono, with a face pale yellow against the other's brown. We all sat bare-footed on the matting to keep it clean, with our gheta in our hands, fanning ourselves with rice-paper fans decorated with storks flying across the moon, or sprays of plum-blossom or pine-trees, each man of us showing his well-turned leg and thigh, with all the muscles brought into strong relief by the weight of the body on the toes. All polite, all amused, all conversational.

After a great deal of snorting on the part of our very small steamer, we casually left the wharf and shot into the lagoon. Matsué, hidden by the sunlight, disappeared; and even the wide sweep of waters waved indistinct beneath the hard glitter of the morning light. It was not yet nine o'clock, and already the distant blue shore was blurred with the shimmering heat, and the near green one fitful with the scissor-grinding of the semmi. The heat was dropping down on the world with the swiftness of a tropical night and the glitter of it hurt.

Away over the surface of the waters a red-brown
head floated, lazy, the nimbus of straw hat against
the light glowing yellow as a halo. Slowly, idly, the
head moved over the water, suspended between blue
and blue. Too hot to doubt or question or deny, I
accepted the head and shut my eyes, only to find on
opening them again two, three, a dozen heads strolling
slowly over the lagoon.

"Honourably please to understand, dredging for
mussels," said a voice at my elbow. And the pas-
sengers repeated the information in a sort of Greek
chorus with many bows.

Matsué's only representative of the vast world of the
Ijin San is one missionary; but these peasants, with
the refinement of true breeding, accepted our out-
landish dress and faces, our boots on their matting
too, without a stare of curiosity, although when our
attention was apparently absorbed elsewhere, the
whiteness of our skins; the aristocratic bridge of our
noses (it is only the noblesse in Japan, and not all of
them, who possess an aquiline nose), were commented
on with interest and admiration.

The near green shore ran in and out, and in and
out, wooded thick with the slim green fingers of the
bamboo, until it opened into a tiny green bay, with
a thin bamboo landing-stage running out into the
silent water. Here we stopped with such an amount
of "ay-aying" on the part of the captain—a short
man in a grey kimono, who sat in a hole in the
deck the other side of the funnel reading Chinese
poetry—and the crew, a tall youth in "foreign"
trousers, who greased wheels, that we might have
been an Atlantic liner approaching an unknown
shore. There were no passengers for the invisible
village behind the landing-stage but the captain, who climbed over the side of the boat up on to the landing-stage, and disappeared.

By-and-by from out of the green there came a charming little figure in a sea-blue *kimono*, lined with lacquer-red, followed by a maid bearing neatly matted parcels. The crew wiped its hands and moved forward, while the sea-blue *kimono*, kneeling on the landing-stage, handed down the parcels on to the boat for safe carriage to Shobara. They seemed to require quantities of explanation those parcels, accompanied by irrepressible giggles, principal giggles on the part of the mistress, and secondary giggles on the part of the maid; while the crew listened, replied, grew eloquent. It was one of the most effective flirtations I ever saw, but alas! conducted in that Izumo dialect so hard for the Tokyo-taught foreigner to understand. And it went on like the hum of the *semmi*, while the water, the world, and the boat drowsed in the heat.

Suddenly, from out of the nowhere, appeared our captain, who swung himself down from the landing-stage on to the boat as imperturbably as a stone Buddha. The sea-blue *kimono*, still on its knees at the edge of the water, swayed in one last enchanting giggle that showed all the lacquer-red linings in a quiver of flame, while the supplementary giggles of the stout little maid followed us regretfully out of the bay.

With more “ay-aying” we shot back into the hard glitter of the lagoon. The captain retired to his hole and his Chinese poetry, the crew had completely disappeared, but the big-headed boy, emerging from some unknown region behind the captain, carried out a *hibachi* and a kettle. He set the kettle on the brass
tripod over the *hibachi* and blew up the charcoal fire with a large fan; and we all watched him with interest as he made Japanese tea in a green china teapot, rather larger than the kettle, with a black handle and with dividing lines of black separating the green into leaf-like petals. At this we all sat up, thirstier with anticipation, and the little china bowls filled from the green kettle-teapot vanished from the tray. Then the big-headed boy handed round *manju* cakes (like boiled chestnuts in a white coat of sweet rice-paste), and collected payment, one *sen* (a farthing). We all promptly demanded more tea, and the little bowls were filled and refilled until the green kettle-teapot ran dry; and we all subsided again. Only the *tink, tink*, of the metal pipes, knocking out the glowing wad of tobacco on to the deck in order to light a fresh pipeful from the burning remains of the old one, broke the drowsy silence. Three little whiffs and the acorn bowl of a Japanese pipe is empty, so the *tink, tink*, of the metal on the deck was rhythmic as the *vee-um* of the *semmi*. They were all smoking, men and women, and the scent of the bright brown tobacco, fine-cut as hair, lay under the awning.

The near green shore ran in and out, and in and out, until all the wide sheet of glittering light, spread over the blue waters, lay behind us; in front a bright green bank of rushes hemmed in the light. The lagoon was ended, and still we went on, seemingly with the intention of stranding ourselves among the bulrushes. But the bulrushes stood back as we came on, and ranging themselves on either hand, left a water pathway down which we went, until the bank of rushes following the lagoon lay far
behind, and we found ourselves in a narrow river that seemed half natural stream and half artificial canal.

Our unnnautical captain, who, ever since we had entered the rushes, had been intoning directions to the invisible crew as though he were reading poetry aloud, got up out of his hole. The tink, tink, of the metal pipes on the wooden deck died gradually away as each smoker knocked out his last wad of tobacco and put away his pipe. Then with a sudden and terrific snort the absurd little steamer, an end in either bank, stood still. The big-headed boy, hanging over the side of the boat, kicked violently with his heels, while the unexpected apparition of the crew’s head rose up at our feet. The head took a look round and sank again, and the engines rattled. Still with an end in either bank, and with the big-headed boy clasping the gunwale in his arms, we proceeded to turn slowly round, and then, assisted by several ropes and several haulers, to back majestically into the main street of Shobara.

Our journey was ended. The big-headed boy, leaving the gunwale, rushed to reshoe the first-class passengers as they wriggled from the saloon on to the roadway. The bullet-headed peasants and their little brown wives bowing low bows to each other, the captain and to the Ijin San, took up their bundles and trudged off, while we, like a Royal arrival, were received by the authorities of Shobara, in the person of a fierce little policeman in a new white suit, and duly escorted the three-and-a-half paces from the ship’s side to the tea-house door in a procession, the people lining up the way.

And the last we saw of that absurd little steamer, as we turned into the tea-house, was a glimpse of the crew looking down the funnel, while the big-headed boy, standing amidships, handed out the cargo to its owners on either bank.
II

TO KIZUKI

The green earth lay burning in the sun, wrapt round and round with heat. Between the tall blue lines of hills it stretched, the flat green floor of a deep blue cavern, whose roof-top was the sky. And through the green the long white road ran out of sight. The only living thing that moved was the running kurumaya, all else lay sleeping in the bright night-time of heat, a heavy drugged sleep that neither rested nor refreshed.

Inert the green earth stretched between the blue hills, weighed down with heat; a palpable heat through which we moved as a fish moves through water; a visible heat which was lying there heavy on the land, floating round the blue hills, quivering against the white sky, humming in the still air, rolling in great drops down the bronzed back of the kurumaya, drowsing me to sleep as with the soft waving of a heated fan, a heavy, encompassing heat that stunned.

And always the white road ran on through the green earth, and the long, straight lines of hills on either side shut off the sky.

Between the fields of rice, here and there among the green, a brown-thatched house like an open shed rose up, its roof supported on the square pillars of the four corner posts, its walls rolled out of sight. And on the
matted floor the women and children lay sleeping, their necks supported on a narrow stool; the men stretched on their backs, or lying prone, their heads between their arms.

Not a living thing in house or field, in land or road, was moving save the running kurumaya. Heat had slain the world and life itself was senseless.

On either side the straight blue hills stretched out of sight, the green earth lay like a narrow passage-way between; and on and on we ran, until the green floor contracted, and the white road became a broad still street, where brown houses shut out the hills.

A rapid spurt through the empty village, for a kurumaya never stops except at the top of his speed, and we arrive at the tea-house. Dazed, weary, and stiff with two hours of continuous running, we struggle from under the shawls and wraps that keep out the sun, and sink on to the matting; while the crowd which has grown no man knoweth how, from out of an empty village, stands silently, staring. With equal suddenness a small policeman starts up in front. He inquires our names, ages, residence and destination; orders back the crowd with one wave of his arm, commands that we be taken into an inner apartment, remote from public gaze; and, in short, declares we may repose on him.

We are taken into an inner apartment, a room that is almost cool, while the crowd drifts patiently round the house trying to look in. One little wide-eyed nesan brings us tea, and then house and world sink back into slumber again.

The nesan, reluctant, but at last dismissed, lies down on the matting, beyond the courtyard, and falls
asleep. Her neck rests on a narrow wooden pillow that has the curves of a tori; she lies like a long-stalked flower on the ground, rigid, quite graceful. Every fold of her kimono, every twist of her hair, is in place. She is fast asleep, unconscious, perfectly tidy, with a neatness that has passed into its essence, grace, and is natural as the feathers to a bird.

We cannot sleep, the mere transition from the greater heat outside to the cooler heat of this open matted space makes us wakeful. It is cooler here actually, in degree, and imaginatively, from the green palms of the baby garden. The garden of a doll’s house, which any moderate-sized bath-towel would have roofed, yet with a forest of dwarf palm-trees in one corner, a winding pool in another, the cool grey outlines of a stone lantern to hold the eyes, and a sense of still greenness, of limpid freshness, which not rivers of water or forests of giant trees could more distinctly convey. To look at that garden was to take a mental bath and drown out the sense of heat. But the heat itself remained, intense and stagnant, a heavy presence in the house that permeated all things.

Out in the courtyard one shaft of burning light shone down, turning the cotton towel on its bamboo line to a white-hot banner, the polished passage to a molten pool, while the water in the big stone font was warm as condensed steam. Like the flaming sword of the Archangel Michael, the shaft of burning light cut the passage-way in two, and the sharp white-heat of it seemed to cut. It was absolutely still, only the heat moved awake in a house and a world asleep.

Very slowly the little nesan sat up; some one had
called her. A moment, and she was on her feet, neat as a growing flower.

"The kurumaya awaits," she said, kneeling on the matting, "when it honourably pleases the august ones to come."

Then she touched her forehead to the floor and waited for what it honourably pleased the august ones to do.

They came, down the polished passage, under the flaming sword of light, out into the open space before the tea-house, where the little policeman waited to command them to be packed into their kuruma, to deliver stringent orders for their safe conduct to the kurumaya, to authoritatively bid them the politest of sayonara.

The crowd had disappeared, harangued out of existence; the village street was empty as a desert, the houses dead; and then the steep line of blue hills grew up on either side, shutting in the sky, and the long white road stretched away through the green earth.

Palpable, visible, the heat lay over the land, quivering against the white sky, floating round the blue hills, humming in the still air, drowsing me into a somnambulant life that was neither sleep nor waking.

Between the green earth and the white sky the telegraph wires cut a bronze line against the quivering blue; and the rows of little birds, all sitting with their tails to the road, hung drowsily there, rows on rows of them. And still the long white road ran on and on.

Beneath the short thick hair of the kurumaya the heat gathered in wet patches on the white scalp, rolled
in big drops over the black head, trickled down the bronze neck, and was wiped off with one rapid movement of the blue cotton towel, as the running *kurumaya* sped swiftly on; gathered again, rolled again, trickled again, was wiped dry again; gathered, rolled, trickled, until the automatic movements, repeated and repeated, grew part of Time itself. They were Time.

Then I awoke. It was as if some one had slid a thin lining of fresh air along the tops of the blue hills, beneath the burning sky. A thin, thin sheet of fresh air, but the green earth gave a great sigh, the *kurumaya* a little shake, and I awoke.

The peasants in their brown thatched houses, open as a shed, were stirring, the naked red figures in their white cloths were moving down the road.

In the fields the long bamboo poles that shot up out of the green earth like masts were dipping up and down, drawing water for the thirsty rice.

The little birds on the telegraph wires were chirping sleepily, flying off in twos and threes, and settling down again, audibly fussing over the laziness of their friends and relations.

The bright night-time of heat was over and gone.

I sat up in my *kuruma* and looked. We were running through green rice-fields, under a blue sky. And it was a hot summer’s afternoon.
III

IZUMO'S GREAT TEMPLE

"So they made fast the temple pillars on the nethermost rock-bottom, and they made high the cross-beams to the plain of high heaven;" and the god Onamuji, the "Master of the Great Land," King of Izumo, in accordance with his compact with high heaven, entered into that temple and dwelt there.

So the province of Izumo and the kingdom of Western Japan passed under the rule of the great Sun-Goddess whose descendants endure to this day. But the Master of the Great Land, the god Onamuji, is worshipped from end to end of the Emperor's dominions, and his temple and his priests are sacred as the mirror of the Sun-Goddess in their eyes.

All through the year, the pilgrims in thousands journey into Izumo to remote Kizuki, whose name to their ears is still resonant with the beating (tsuku) of the pestles (ki) which made the foundations of that first great temple firm and everlasting, while in the month of October the immortal gods themselves, from every shrine throughout the land, come to visit Onamuji, and that desolate month known in Japan as kami-na-zuki (month without gods) is called in Izumo alone kami-ari-zuki (the month with gods).
At the foot of the everlasting hills the temple stands, and the far-off ripple of the Western Sea, half a memory, half a dream, wanders through its sunlit courts, a sound to listening ears.

The long dark avenue of twisted trees, so old that many are almost limbless, the three giant torii, hewn in solid granite, lie behind us; we have reached the white sunlight of the outer temple space, and the scattered buildings of the shrine are in front. Our landlord, in his Sunday-best kimono of silver-grey, leads the way. He has walked, since we left the inn, exactly three paces behind us, while three paces behind him came our kurumaya. In Kizuki it has not been considered consonant with our dignity to allow us to move anywhere without them.

Our landlord, with the profoundest bow, moves on in front. He has a letter to deliver on our behalf, so that when we reach the long, low building at the end of the first enclosure, an authoritative young priest in long white robes is there to greet us. He wears a wonderful head-dress of black lacquer, the model of a meat-cover, tied on under the chin, with two red cords in the manner of a doll's bonnet; but his chin is human, not inflexible, so I watch to see the meat-cover tumble. It never does, not even when with a low bow he invites us up the steep polished steps into the room above. We take off our shoes and climb.

The room is long and low, with a "foreign" table covered with a green baize cloth. There are bright blue velvet chairs, an inkstand, pens; just a second-hand committee-room greatly the worse for wear, which impresses our landlord, so that his strangled h's of admiration sound like paroxysms of coughing. We sit on the velvet chairs and wait. Our landlord,
the letter and the priest have disappeared into an inner apartment. And the sound of much discussion comes to our ears. "How far are we to be allowed to go?" And then the terms "learned Ijin San," and "august sage" reach us. At last they are all agreed. The "learned Ijin San," the "honourable teacher," the "august sage" shall be permitted to enter the very Holy of Holies; but the "honourable interior," being a woman, must not cross the sacred threshold. Then there is a long pause before the authoritative young priest comes out and explains the position to us. We bow the profoundest thanks and follow him down the steps, and the reason for the pause is evident. He has changed his clothes, and is now in the fullest and most resplendent of sacerdotal robes.

Under the shadow of the gate of the ita-gaki, the second enclosing fence, stands the High Priest himself, whose fathers for two thousand years have led the temple rites. He is the eighty-second descendant of the mythic Susa-no-wo, and is still termed by many Iki-gami, which is the "Living God." An old, old man, whose face is almost white, a mystic sacred face, quiet as the eternal smile of the Eternal Buddha. He wears a lacquered head-dress, the most imposing of meat-covers, and his robes are of white and purple adorned with gold.

We pass within the ita-gaki, and the landlord, the kurumaya, the crowd of other worshippers are left behind. Before us rises the low fence of the "jewelled hedge," which encloses the sacred shrine itself. Again before the gateway there is a pause. The minor priests, even our authoritative young friend, do not enter here. It is explained to us that the "honourable
IZUMO’S GREAT TEMPLE

interior” must not pass within the temple. She is a woman, but it is permitted to her, as the wife of the most “honourable one,” to look into the shrine from a room above the gateway. The High Priest removes his sandals, we our shoes, and over the rounded, water-washed, grey pebbles, hot as burning plough-shares, we enter the holy court.

A long, low wooden building is the temple, primæval in its form, the broad ends of its roof-tree sticking up like pointed anchors through the roof. Six feet around it on every side the pebbles stop, and the space is filled with the whitest, smoothest sand. All those who go up to the god leave the mark of their feet behind.

Within the temple there is nothing; bare space, dim, obscure; but the High Priest, reverently kneeling on the matting, creates the god. And into that narrow empty space the shadow of the Eternal Presence comes.

Slowly the splash of the breaking waves drifts into the stillness, faint as the whisper of God in the heart of man, a still, small voice. Over the temple there is peace, the peace of two thousand years, unbroken, sacred. And the dreamy ripple grows a sound in the silence. Faint, faint, faint, is it the song of the limitless sea, the voice of the peace and the stillness, or a broken murmur of the beyond that the listening pilgrim hears? Half a memory, half a dream, it dies at the gate of the shrine, where the stir of the world grows loud; yet the soul has heard, has believed.

Out in the sunlit court beyond the “jewelled hedge” the little group of priests still wait. And as we come slowly over the hot round stones, our shoes once more upon our feet, they greet us with an added respect. Even the “honourable interior,” whose sacredness is
but indirect, transmitted through a space of court and two open shoji, has become a personage.

The old, old priest, with the face of a Chinese sage, goes on in front. We cross the second court obliquely over the stone-grey pebbles, each rounded with the rubbing of running water, and enter another building, the treasure-house of the temple. Here in a shaded upper chamber, where the white sunlight filters through the yellow matting, a long low shelf runs round, and on it lie the temple's treasures—relics of dead heroes and of living legend. One by one the High Priest points them out, and in the thin frail voice of age tells their story: A biwa, a sword, some pieces of tattered brocade, the old, old relics of Old Japan. The tales are long, as the old man tells them with the slow-moving utterance of one who has had eighty years in which to speak. But there is a personal vibration in his voice that brings back the long two thousand years of service that he and his have given to the temple, recalls the eighty-two High Priests, his fathers, who join the living man before us to the god Susa-no-wo, from whom the Great Master, Onamuji himself, descended.

All this time, the authoritative young priest has been respectfully but quite obviously waiting to show us something. At last he draws us across the room to where a life-sized plaster statue stands, the Sun-Goddess herself in the flowing robes of Old Japan, a figure full of majesty and power, with round her neck a string of those prehistoric jewels of which the Kojiki is full, comma-shaped polished jewels of jade and crystal, threaded on a scarlet string. And in the loose sleeves of the plaster figure and about the folds at the neck are touches of brightest red. A modern plaster statue of a figure old to unbelief.
And the young man tells the story. He is so eager, so proud to relate what has indeed become the great central fact of the story, that who or what the statue is, or how or why it came there we never hear; but—it had gained a prize at the Chicago Exhibition!

And all the rest of the clergy intone a little chorus of triumph and delight. Even the High Priest himself seems pleased, and a faint smile passes over his face as he bids us examine the ticket.

It is quite true. From the out-stretched wrist of the Sun-Goddess hangs a much-worn ticket, stating in printed Roman capitals that "This Exhibit has won a Prize at the World's Fair of Chicago." And the figure stands there, in the long low treasure-house of Izumo's Great Temple, while the white sunlight, filtering through the yellow matting, falls on the white-robed priests who serve a temple worshipped through two thousand years, falls on the old High Priest with the mystic sacred face, whose fathers stretch back into the mists of Time, and falling, trembles on the faded ticket on the arm of the Sun-Goddess:

**World's Fair, Chicago.**

This is to certify——

"If the august sage will honourably please to descend."

And we descended.

In the hot still court the High Priest takes his leave, with long polite phrases of strictest ceremony. The authoritative young priest who escorts us back through the *ita-gaki* into the outer court is equally ceremonious, and our polite Japanese is heavily taxed to keep up with him. At the outer court he bids us *sayonara*, and our landlord and our *kurumaya*, who have been respectfully wait-
ing, form into procession again. We have become great personages in their eyes, very great personages indeed; and the pilgrims, kneeling before the shrine in the outer court, look at us with reverence. We have entered the Holy of Holies, we have visited the god Onamuji in his shrine.

It is with the lowest of bows that our landlord leads us out of the side of the temple court, westward, to where the tall dark trees of the mountain have grown down into the plain. Here, set in the silence of the cryptomerias at the foot of the everlasting hills, is the home of the High Priest. So still, so ordered, so spotless, the house and garden lie like a snowdrop in a forest. And the sound of the sea drifts in as we stand.

Then for the last time we cross the courtyard where the pilgrims are praying in the sunshine, and the temple dancing girls, dim figures in the distance, glide round and round in the long slow circles of the sacred kagura. Court and temple are burning in the sunlight. Beyond the "hedge" and the "jewelled hedge" the great beam-ends of the roof-tree rise out through the temple's thatch. Within the shrine hangs the mirror of the great Sun-Goddess. For the heart of man, says the Shinto faith, is good and pure. And even as this mirror, when undimmed, reflects the sun, so in the tranquil soul God's self is imaged.

Over temple and courtyard there is peace; the peace of long centuries dead; the peace of enduring belief. Down from the mists of the past the teaching comes: "Know thyself; in the stillness of peace, know but thyself, and thou shalt see God."
IV

KIZUKI'S BAY

The Sea of Japan, as it wandered down the western coast, took a sudden and unexpected bite out of the land of Izumo; and that bite is the bay of Kizuki. It is the tiniest of bays, with but half a mile of sandy shore between the two steep lines of hills that run straight out to sea: green hills that stretch so far, the green has time to grow a misty blue before they curve toward the water in a deep blurred line. Landwards a length of sandy dune shuts out the village street; and the little bay, set between the hills, and cut off from the sea, lies like an ebbing lake.

On the sandy shore it is still and cool; and from the dozens of Japanese families comes only the high pitched laughter of the playing children. Kizuki is the Margate of the West, and the pilgrims who journey to its shrine stay to breathe its sea air, and combine a religious pilgrimage with a summer holiday in a manner so usual in Japan.

The big hotel under the great north wall of green, with its ground floor, and, wonder of wonders, two, yes—two storeys, is full. So full that the landlord was forced to tuck away his distinguished guests in a back room of the old inn up the village street. The square two-storied house, with all its shōji pushed back and
the contents and occupants of every room exposed to public view, looks for all the world like a big doll’s house with the door gone. And its inhabitants eat, drink, play, laugh, sing with the natural unconcern which we could only reach secure behind brick walls, curtained windows, and venetian blinds. The unconcern is so simple, so unaffected, that the Yokohama foreigner, feeling dimly that his own behaviour could never be so natural under such conditions, suspects “play acting,” and will sometimes speak of a “nation of mountebanks” with the scorn of a man among monkeys.

The hotel is built just where the blue beyond of the Western Sea, glowing between the headlands, draws eye and mind away, adding the unbroken curve of Infinity to the quiet lake’s rounded life.

The sun has set; perhaps behind that great green wall he still drops swiftly to the horizon, but in Kizuki there is twilight, a luminous grey twilight that has no shadows, which, spreading, blots all colour from the world. Between wall and wall of hill the sky stretches clear and green. The bay is flooded with a golden light. And there, a black line from gold to green, its base in the yellow water, its crest on the sunset sky, stands Kizuki’s second wonder, the third beauty of Izumo—a tall pointed rock. For the Japanese, who seek much more for line than colour in their beauty, glory in its curves; and the little bay of Kizuki owes its visitors not to the purity of its air, its fishing, boating, bathing, or casino, but to the beauty of its solitary rock and the nearness of its sacred temple.

From shore to sky the luminous grey twilight climbs. The flood of golden light is dead. The great green walls that make the bay are dark. Only in the sky
the faintest stain of colour lingers; and there the rock's lone crest blots a black line upon the dying green.

My *kurumaya*, in his long parson's coat and waistcoat, blanched the purest white, asks if I have ever seen a bay more beautiful. And all the dozens of Japanese families stand looking out to sea, for the cult of the stone is in their hearts.

Slowly the luminous twilight draws the world in Chinese ink. It climbs the sky, and the colour dies; only the sombre lines of rock are left.

The little bay is grown a mystic *kakemono*. 
IN MATSUÉ

We had journeyed in trains and in steamers, in big boats and in little boats, in kuruma and sampan, and had reached the Land of the Gods—and the inn at Matsué.

Not the least of our difficulties had been to find that inn, for our landlord at Kyoto, on hearing we were bound for Matsué, had offered to make all arrangements for us through a “friend in the Prefecture.” And the arrangements had been made, but when we asked for explanations, the address of the friend or the name of our inn, he only smiled, a polite unexplanatory smile, spread out his hands with ceremony, and bowed. All was “yoroshi.”

With this much information we had started, with this much and no more we had arrived. The baby steamer ran alongside the wharf at Matsué, her first-class passengers wriggled out of her cabin, her deck passengers crawled from under the awning; and we sat still, our luggage piled around us, wondering if, like the Peri at the Gates of Paradise, the Land of the Gods would admit us or not.

Just then, when the pause had become really embarrassing, a white-uniformed policeman boarded the steamer; with much ceremony he announced—under
the circumstances he could hardly have inquired—that we were the *Ijin San* from Kyoto. We assented, and he promptly led us outside, where a tall, loose-jointed Japanese, with a Red Indian face hatcheted out of iron wood and wearing “foreign” clothes, stood waiting. The white-uniformed policeman politely performed the ceremony of introduction, and stood aside. This was the friend from the Prefecture; and once we had thoroughly and properly and ceremoniously replied to this fact, which took time, our friend from the Prefecture, who had the smile and the teeth, and the difficulty in concealing them, of the famous Mr. Carker (only he was amiable), introduced our landlord, a little, bright, black squirrel of a man grasping an immense umbrella. More ceremony of course, while the crowd gathered round and the policeman patrolled the group. We were personages. One gesture from the amiable Carker of Matsué Prefecture and five *kurumaya* burst through the crowd, while twice as many assistants rushed off to bring out our luggage under the eagle eye of the policeman; and with his personal assurances as to our safety and comfort in Matsué, we and our luggage were packed into three *kuruma*, the amiable Carker and the black squirrel of a landlord climbed into two more, and the procession started. The policeman saluted; the crowd, at the most respectful distance, silently stared; Matsué received her visitors as the most distinguished of strangers.

The *kurumaya*, uplifted with pride, tore along at the top of their speed in the exact centre of the road, and the traffic scattered before us. We did not run, we flew, over the stone bridge built just where the canal ends and the lagoon begins, up the long, long street parallel to the lagoon, then a dive to the left
over a canal bridge, a dash through a green turning, another dive, another bridge over another canal, and with the most imposing clatter we tore into a gravel court in front of the inn, and pulled up short in the recess of the entrance. In an instant the shōji slipped aside and three women in dark blue kimono were bowing, knees and forehead, on the polished wood. We had reached the inn at Matsue.

The three figures got up, as we left our shoes on the long thick block of rough-hewn granite which forms the front door-step between the gravel and the house, and led us in a long procession to an open matted space in the garden. This was our room. It had but half a wall, where the tokonoma stood; the other half was open shōji, leading to the house, and two square pillars at the corners supported the roof. Here we all subsided upon the kneeling-cushions in the strictest order of precedence, based on nearness to the tokonoma. Our black squirrel of a landlord and the amiable Carker of the Prefecture, who had also arrived, sat on their heels with great ceremony, though the "foreign" clothes of our friend from the Prefecture got sadly in his way, and then the interchange of polite phrases began. It was exhaustive, for they were, oh! so ceremonious, and although two little girls with goggle eyes fanned us vigorously, and the blue waters of the lagoon filled what should have been wall in front of us, we grew hotter and hotter.

Then the plain daughter of our comely landlady brought in an immense white meat-dish of railway-buffet thickness, and set it down with conscious pride before her mother. It contained piles of chipped ice, which the comely landlady shovelled into miniature tumblers, the size of dolls' tooth-glasses, with an imposing iron ladle. She sifted over it white sugar
from a pie-dish, and the plain daughter presented it to the company. The drink of the Gods themselves was never more divine! Though like Sam Weller's orthography, which "varied according to the taste and fancy of the speller," you can eat this drink or you can drink it. Either way is inelegant, but both are delicious.

It was only by relays of this amphibious refreshment, which went on as long as there was anything besides a large pool of water in the meat-dish, that the polite phrases flowed, on our part at least. At last etiquette, even Japanese etiquette, was satisfied, and our amiable friend from the Prefecture bowed himself away.

The plain daughter removed the meat-dish, not resisting to tell us it was "foreign" as she did so, and retired. And we lay out to cool upon the matting.

The lagoon, the garden and a green courtyard filled the three sides of the room where walls might have been. Even the shōji here had been removed, for there were no houses visible; a high green hedge of thick bamboo bounded court and garden, beyond were the pale blue hills.

It was not a room, it was a nest, we lived as freely in the open air as the birds or the flowers; a brown roof hung like a sheltering leaf above our heads, a cool clean matting covered the ground beneath our feet, but the rustle of leaves and of rice-fields, the restless hum of insect life, the rippling rhythm of the wide lagoon, the whole stir of a growing world was ours. We did not peep at it through a window, we lay in it, we were it; and it rippled and hummed and grew part of us, for Pan is not dead, in the Land of the Gods he is living still.

Then the comely landlady called us to our bath;
“the honourable hot water was ready,” and the plain daughter assisted us out of our clothes into our kimono with an attention which, to our sophisticated code, was embarrassing, and led us down a passage whose wooden wall opened into the bathroom. Here our landlady received us. She was just sliding down the wooden plank, which shut off the pipe filled with glowing charcoal from the rest of the bath-tub, and looking up she said the bath was "yoroshi."

The water was positively bubbling, at that delicious temperature of 110 degrees which the Japanese love; but we were not yet used to literal boiling, so we demanded cold water. And the two little girls with goggle eyes ran away to fetch it in high wooden pails with stiff wooden handles. They ran out by the wooden shōji on the opposite side, which opened straight on to the gravel courtyard of the entrance, and their dark-blue kimono were tucked up into their obi, showing the bright red kimono underneath. And they were laughing.

When we demanded still more cold water they laughed again. The Ijin San had strange ideas of baths evidently. At last, in deference to their feelings, we desisted. The water was no longer bubbling, so we pronounced it "yoroshi," and they all retired.

The bathroom had a grey stone floor and walls of wooden shōji; at one end stood the high barrel-bath, and wooden buckets, pails and dippers lay all around. A three-foot-high platform ran all down one side and joined the passage-way by which we had entered; from it one stepped into the bath, on it one washed and dried oneself. A bath in Japan, which is used by all the family or hotel in succession, is not intended for washing—that is done outside. The two shōji walls, just sliding panels of wood, opened, one on to the passage-
way, the other into the front court, and had no fasten-ings. The Japanese have attained to that sense of modesty which we still feel immodest. They say to bathe is necessary; you cannot take a bath with your clothes on; a necessary action is never immodest, neither has it any prurient attractions for healthy minds. But a Japanese cannot see the low-necked dresses of western women or the pictures of Modern France without a blush. To him a bathing woman is neither modest nor immodest, but simply indifferent; while exposure, merely to attract, is indecency itself. Obscenity exists in grosser minds as in every country in the world; but the people of Japan have a moral simplicity of thought and action that is at one with the conclusions of abstract ethical philosophy.

Like lobsters going to be cooked, we bathed, and got out swiftly but not silently. A yard of cotton towel, where a bank of purple iris grew out of a pale blue stream, was all the towel we had. It would have adequately dried our finger-nails, but the design was comforting if the towel was not. At last, in grey crêpe kimono and straw sandals, clothes as naturally a growth of the climate and the country as its trees or people, we went back to our wall-less room and sat in peace.

The heat of the day was passing, and the colours of the sky and trees deepened before they died. For light in this land of sunshine can hide as well as darkness; it covers the land as a pall, all white and glittering, which blinds as surely as the night. But in that half-hour which comes before the swift descending twilight of the East, all the colours deepen and intensify; they take a strange opaque lustre which makes the thinnest leaf look solid. Mere colour seems thick, almost as though distinct from what it colours
and the colours deepen, deepen, till, emerging from a glittering pall of white, they sink beneath the grey-black pall of night. It is the intensest hour of all the day. The world is not working as at the dawn, nor sleeping as in the heat, but strong with the beating pulse of Life that fills even the stillness.

So we sat and watched the deepening glowing earth glow and deepen, and heard the throb of life grow ever louder, till from the streets came up the sound of children’s laughter, and from the town the stir of men.

Rich in richest colours lay the world, with greens and blues of polished jewellery. And then the hurrying twilight settled like the swooping pinions of a bird. The colours lost themselves in grey, the forms they coloured in a broad, still sweep of darkness. On the white bridge, set between canal and lake, the lanterns were already glowing, and the indistinct brown lines of roof melted from the light into the darkness.

For a little while the curved earth-bridge of our miniature garden, the pebbled pathway that in a fragment of a circle led across the winding pond, traced a clear black line against the open sky. Then the children’s laughter in the street grew silent, the stir of men and women stilled.

Slowly, among their shadows, the houses each hung out a light and disappeared. The purple darkness grew with each moment deeper and more black.

Then in a flash the shadows and the lights themselves went out, for our inn had lit her lamps.

Then they brought us dinner on black lacquered trays: pink soup and many kinds of fish, and rice with pickled cucumbers, white and brown and purple. And we did eat. And all the time our landlady and her plain daughter, kneeling on the matting, filled up our rice-
bowls from the wooden rice-box, or our tea-bowls from the china teapot, and the bronze kettle which filled that teapot itself needed filling many times, for we were thirsty. And the landlady and her daughter sat placidly on their heels, watching our many social crimes, for there is an etiquette of chopsticks, as strict or stricter than ours of knives and forks, and in equivalent terms we probably were eating with our knives, putting our dirty spoons upon the tablecloth and exhibiting the general manners of the stable.

As a sign that you have finished in Japan you eat your last bowl of rice flavoured with a bowlful of tea. Hardly had we reached this stage when the bright black squirrel of a landlord arrived to announce a visitor, and “Might he come in?”

Considerably surprised we said “Yes,” and who should enter but our amiable Japanese Carker, this time in his own clothes. From an insignificant and somewhat common individual he had, by the mere change from a misfitting yellow suit into a grey silk kimono with striped silk hakama, changed from an underbred clerk into a courtly gentlemen. His manners, always the same, were now at ease with himself, and no longer incongruous or even somewhat ridiculous, they became the perfection of grace and breeding. It is a change that one may often see in Japan.

Again we all sat on our heels on the kneeling-cushions in the strictest order of precedence, and exchanged the politest phrases of ceremony in the courtliest of Japanese. We heard all about the great Temple of Kizuki, the pride of Izumo, and we told of our journeys in the Far East, to Korea and Siberia; and the landlord’s son, who had come in behind the visitor, “half expected he might go there some day
with the army," a wish which may well since have been fulfilled.

In true Japanese fashion our guest had brought us presents, photographs of Matsué and of Izumo's Great temple. We could only present him in exchange with our cards, a map of the world with the British possessions marked very red, and an old copy of a railway novel. The gifts pleased him, and the whole family examined the map with great interest. They wanted to hear all about England, and the fact that cows and sheep (which they have never seen) walked over our fields, and that it was sometimes light at nine in the evening struck on their imagination. They asked many questions about the sheep, and "what the light looked like?" which was difficult of explanation.

In spite of more amphibious drinks from the white meat-dish, which seemed served here (probably as a concession to our foreign tastes) instead of the inevitable tea to visitors, the struggle after faultless politesse, the intricacies of a ceremonious Japanese made us grow all limp with heat again. And when we had bowed our last bow, uttered our last "Mata o-me ni kakarimashō" ("Another time may my eyes honourably behold you"), we were reduced to a really pitiable state of exhaustion. Our comely landlady, who had a large brain and a seeing eye, did not wait to question. She cleared the room, sent the two giggling girls with the goggle eyes to hang the green mosquito net, like an imposing martial tent, from the four corners of the room, while the plain daughter brought futon like thin eiderdown quilts to sleep upon, undressed us carefully and retired, bidding us "honourably resting deign" as she did so.

As the lamp went out the ample folds of the square
tent stood out like a royal pavilion. We crept beneath and lay down upon the matted sheets which covered the futon. In deference to our foreign bones we had several futon underneath us, and one rolled up beneath our heads; but for all that the hardness of the matted floor, stuffed though it was, rose up and hit us before the night was out.

We slept beneath our transparent tent, in our wall-less room, as the flowers sleep, part of the living night. All the little sounds of leaf and lake stirred round us undisturbed; the rice-ears rustled in the silent night; the great trees stretched their branches as they slept. Dreaming, the waters of the salt lagoon moved towards the sea, and all the wealth of insect life, turning in its sleep, called faintly. The still small voice of the sky whispered softly in the breezes, and the great green Earth reached up to listen through her dreams. Bound in the chains of man, it is at night-time that she stirs so restless, when all the humming, conscious life is laid to sleep, when men and insects slumber. Then the green Earth wakes; but she has endured so long that even in her waking she is half asleep. Bound down with streets and houses, she never wakes at all. And so all night we listened to the voices of the world. At the dawning, when all Nature stands hushed before the coming of the sun, we slept. But the dawning in this southern land is short and swift. With no clouds to dim his strength, the sun soon sat flaming on his wide blue throne; and all the insects of the tropics, warmed into life, rose up to buzz and hum. And we awoke.

In the Land of the Gods there are no clocks, and although one in the main street of Matsue proclaimed
its "foreign" time, the inhabitants beneath go their own way, and the baby steamers arrive and depart in open disregard of the hours upon the dial. So some time between the dawning and the noon we woke. The house was getting up. All the little sounds of rising men and women, of a day's beginning, were about us, so we got up too. Crawling from under our vast green tent, we went down the polished passage-way to the inner courtyard, where in a cool green cloister all the rooms of the inn looked out. A long stone font filled with water, a hanging wooden dipper, a row of shallow brass pans on a wooden shelf stood waiting. Here the whole inn washes. With water from the font, cool and fresh from its night's sleep in the grey stone basin, you fill the bamboo dipper and pour out into the shallow pans; and then, standing in the passage-way, with all the rooms around you, you wash. And unless a nēsan, attracted by the whiteness of your skin, should stop a moment to look and wonder, no one is interested. The usual lengths of cotton towelling hung beside the dipper, like banners on their poles; and a crevice of sunshine piercing into the green courtyard quivered on the round brass pans.

Tent and futon had vanished when we returned, and the two little goggle-eyed girls, still with their blue kimono tucked up to show the red ones underneath, were sweeping the matting with bamboo brooms. We dressed in corners unattended, and sat down to wait.

From the sounds of passing feet, and the directing words of our comely landlady, it seemed that great things were preparing for us—quite what remained a mystery. At last the plain daughter, bubbling with the pleasure of our surprise, came to call us.

"As for the morning meal," she said, "all is prepared,"
and even the ceremony of her bows suffered from her eagerness.

We went through the half-wall of shōji panels, across a room, into another, where the family, all assembled, almost (had it not been entirely un-Japanese) clapped its hands in pride.

There on the matting, and each leg protected by a supporting slab of wood, stood a foreign table; four foreign chairs, their legs too nailed into long slats of wood, stood round. Across a corner of the table lay a thin strip of cotton cloth, and on this, in all the majesty of its solid ugliness, reposed the white meat-dish of our god-like drink. This morning it was full of something smoking, dimly resembling Irish stew.

The comely landlady beamed as we approached.

"Sea-food forthcomes," she said proudly.

And to our "foreign" breakfast we sat slowly down. How bad it was! But the family, even to the old, old grandmother, were so delighted, so proud of their unexpected triumph, that we ate that abominable stew till not a fragment of its tough meat or a spoonful of its gluey gravy remained.

Many times since have I wondered how that Napoleonic landlady organised the feast? How did she get the meat? Who cooked it? and where did they learn? Did she invent the recipe out of her own head? Perhaps she raided the garrison? She was capable of it. There was bread too. Matsue was quite in the front of the fashion; not like poor Kizuki, which was sadly out of date; they hadn't even biru (beer) there.

All this she told us as she helped us, always with the iron ladle, to that terrific stew. With the foreign food too, we had "foreign" china, horrible railway-
restaurant plates and cups, clumsy and thick, sprawled all over with a large design in bilious blue; knives and forks that never matched, and, of course, the inevitable cruet. This hideous article is always the first vestige of “foreign” fashion in a Japanese hotel, where it accompanies every meal. Once it may have been of German silver; it is all drab now. Long centuries of use have left it bent and dinted. Its bottles leak, their stoppers never fit, and whatever they once held, all now drip oil and taste soy. We thought of our dainty lacquered trays, our delicate white china with drawings in faint blue, the refinement and the art of that meal, and we sighed. The fish they could not spoil, and their tea is always good, so we breakfasted. And the plain daughter, whose ambitions (or her mother's) soared to Tokyo heights of fashion, asked if everything was really “yoroshi” upon the table, and, if not, “would we show her how?” The knives and forks had puzzled her woefully; how ought they to be laid? So we laid the table, and we set the forks, and we placed the bread, and we handed plates and glasses, and the ancient grandmother shook with astonishment. Was ever like seen under the sun? And even the capable landlady exclaimed. So the conscientious plain daughter worked through her knives and forks, her bread on this side and her glasses on that, with the zeal of an earnest student; and afterwards we caught her displaying her great accomplishment to a circle of admiring friends.

We were to see the sights of Matsue. Our friend from the Prefecture and the black squirrel of a landlord had talked it over exhaustively the night before. We were catered for like Royal visitors. We did not need
to plan, or ask, or seek. "Honourably trouble not. It happens." And it did.

That morning the landlord, in a long polite speech, made us over to his son, a quiet clever lad who might have been the twin of his plain sister; and we set off. We wished to stop for many things, temples and toy shops, the peeps of life on street and wharf, but our guide, though never contradicting, was so preoccupied, so intent on something that we gave in and meekly followed down the long streets over the many canals, whose bridges showed an arch like the young crescent of the moon, along the hot white road, until we reached an ugly wooden building in the style called "foreign," all decorated with flags and policemen. Here we entered. The policemen drew up in line as we passed, and the scurrying feet of a dozen officials all clothed in long frock-coats came down the vestibule.

It was an Exhibition of the Arts, Industries, and Manufactures of the Province of Izumo, and quite inadvertently we had arrived to open the proceedings. The distinguished strangers from England, received by the phalanx of frock-coats, were conducted majestically through the whole building. We were not allowed to miss a single room. If, after peeping into one, and finding it contained nothing but sacks of rice, or samples of raw silk, we retreated, instantly a frock-coat or a policeman appeared to lead us round. We did not miss the least little exhibit of the least little room. We saw them all: bags of rice, cocoons of silk, hollow candles with growing designs in faint pale colours, Izumo crystals famed throughout Japan, lengths of piece-silk, twists of sewing-silk, embroideries, china, the famous yellow china of
Matsué, all the roots and grains and wood of the province, fishing nets and field tools, and a whole large section of the beautiful Izumo matting. In our admiration we wished to buy, and instantly all the frock-coats ran after one another, each official going to consult his chief. They arrived in groups and talked; they went away and came back again. We had unknowingly placed the whole officialdom of Matsué on the horns of a dilemma. We were the distinguished visitors from England; we wished to buy Matsué's most especial production; the honour was great—but the regulations said no exhibit might be taken away before the close of the exhibition; and the Japanese respect the law as they respect the Emperor. So we waited. At last a most wonderful frock-coat appeared resplendent with decorations; solemnly he made a speech explaining the difficulty, excusing the delay, expressing great honour at our request, and at a sign his attendant handed over the matting to our attendant, and with many bows we parted.

That afternoon, as we lay upon our matting in our wall-less room, fanned by the plain daughter, our landlady brought in the local newspaper, and sitting down on her heels she read to us a long account of the arrival in Matsué of the "distinguished strangers from England," and a kind of "Stop Press telegram" announcing their gracious purchase of matting at the exhibition that morning, besides an editorial advertisement of a description of their visit to the exhibition for the next issue. Our rooms at the inn were described at length, our appearance "with faces white as milk"—the foreign simile showing great learning on the part of the reporter—our ages politely overstated, for the young here, women as well as men, desire to be
old so that to be thought older than one's age is the greatest of compliments; the paper therefore called us most politely "upwards of forty," causing our dear landlady to beam with delight, and the plain daughter to utter a long series of those curious strangled "h's" by which the Japanese express intense admiration, as she fanned us more vigorously. Then, à propos of our "milk-white faces," the landlady, with much hesitation, asked a favour "so great that to speak unable am." Might she have our soap? Japanese soap they had, but somehow, possibly, that "foreign" soap of ours might account for some of our strange whiteness. So she and the plain daughter retired with the soap; and for the rest of the afternoon they scrubbed diligently in the bathroom.

And we sat quiet upon our matting in the heat, while the green hills and the rice-fields, the pebbled pathway of our garden bridge, and all the wide still spaces of the lake hung as frescoes round our room. The hot blue sky burned fiercely, the blue of a heated brick-kiln, and our living frescoes hung motionless as the work of man. There was neither change nor shadow. Hills and lake and rice-fields lay still against the sky—flat as if it were upon a flattened background, and in that light which did not shine but suffused itself through all things, there were no shadows, a deepened blueness here and there, but neither shadow nor perspective. The sense of distance, as the sense of shade, was quite annihilated. Those old Japanese artists saw truly, despite our western dictums, light does not lie here as we see it, still less as it lies in the actual tropics; it has effects of light and distance which are all its own, and the Japanese, seeing them, reproduced them, not
because there are no others, but because these are so truly Japanese. And we, knowing neither the country nor the climate, but strong in our arrogance of "laws," called it "false, a childlike art ignorant of science."

In the Land of the Gods we sat and learnt wisdom, and Japan and its people, its life and its pictures took a new meaning in our eyes, and the false became true.

When our landlady and her daughter came back from the bathroom they brought a small thin oblong of soap, and their hands were all wrinkled with washing.

"Mada kurō gozaimas kara omachi nassatta hō ga yō gozaimas," they said in a melancholy, half-laughing voice. "Still brown because, leaving off had best be done," and they held out their four hands for inspection.

The Ijin San's whiteness was not in the soap. But when we went we left as a present a whole new cake of "foreign" soap; and their supplementary scrubblings must have been many.

That evening we were entertained by a small boy with the snubbiest of noses, who peeped slyly at us from out of the darkness of the garden. When he was induced to come in he brought all his lesson books, which he turned over for our amusement, and between each page he chuckled, but he never told us why. Whether it was the recollections of his lost lessons or a subtle sense of absurdity that we could not read the Chinese hieroglyphics of his primers we never knew, but his chuckles were deep with joy. Then in the pauses he would count solemnly up to ten, all the English he knew, and chuckle again.
Two wide-eyed little maidens were brought in next morning to see the *Ijin San*. In a very awestruck whisper they inquired “if we were real.”

These little babies were very solemn and very good, but not one scrap shy or frightened. In all their little lives they had never met a grown-up being who was harsh to them. Though obedience is the first requisite of Japanese children young or old, they give it as the plants their flowers, not from a sense of hard-learned duty, but as a natural product of an eternal law.

The babies made the funniest little bows as they touched their little foreheads to the ground. And then they sat and looked at us with wide, wide-opened eyes. To them we belonged to the world of the mythical *Kirin*, and the terrible *Kitsuné* who takes bad babies away and feeds them on frogs and snails; we belonged to the realm of the sea-goddess who married Urashima, to the land of the fairies. So they asked if we were real.

They could not be induced to talk to us, though they were wonderfully polite, and quite knocked their little foreheads on the floor when they said “Good-bye.” Did we figure as goblins or as fairies in their dreams, I wonder?

That afternoon a stall-owner from the exhibition came to show us Izumo crystals.

For two hours he knelt upon the matting opening the beautifully made boxes of white unpainted wood. And we looked at large divining-crystals without fleck or flaw, at the pale clouded crystals shading from mist-white to palest crimson, at the agates and amethysts; and all the time our comely landlady and her plain
daughter sat on their heels and admired with taste and great discrimination.

There was not in all this shopful of precious stones anything to wear. A few crystal hair-pins, a few "foreign" studs, but no jewellery as we understand it. The Japanese never wear jewellery; neither rings, nor bracelets, nor chains, nor pins, nor brooches, nor tiaras—nothing. One wonders how much crime and heart-burning has the nation missed. Precious stones they have, but they buy and keep them for their shape or for their colour, as a picture or a bronze, not to adorn themselves. All the rest of the world, in all times, barbarous and civilised, have fought and stolen, slain and ruined themselves just to heap upon their fingers or their heads strings of gleaming stones. In this island-empire alone men and women have looked at precious stones, have handled and admired, but never worn them. One wonders was it purely the artistic instinct of the race which kept them from it, or the stern morality of the samurai, preaching denial and self-control.

And again one wonders if too much jewellery be barbaric, where in the scale of civilisation does a nation come that wears none at all? Surely art can produce worthier things than jewellery, and are not morals better without it?

Our inn was full of guests, quite full, and all the rooms have paper panels. There are no keys, no locks, no bolts, the whole inn, were it so minded, could go in and out of every room; and yet we all sleep in peace and quite secure. It is true that an innkeeper here must bear an unblemished character or his house is shut, and that the guests often
come with a letter from their last innkeeper, but not always, and yet we all sleep with half an inch of rice-paper between us, and walls of sliding panels. Could a hotelful of civilised Europeans be so trusted? If not to steal, then not to pry as well? But here nobody looks. Although we have become great personages indeed, nobody looks. And in the big towns as in the country villages, in railway hotels as in this remote corner of the Land of the Gods, we have slept in absolute security in rooms that are always open. Only once in all our wanderings did someone push the shōji. It was an Ijin San who thought it was “a lark.”

And so we lived in the Land of the Gods and learnt wisdom, wisdom from the lake, and the hills, and the rice-fields, from the night and the daylight, and the inner beauty of the land lay before our eyes, still dim, for western eyes are blind to eastern meaning through want of power to focus, but in part we saw, and the joy of that seeing has never passed away. The town, the inn, the comely landlady, and the wee, wide-eyed children all taught us wisdom and the meaning and the beauty of the land. Slowly we saw, dimly too, for western eyes are very blind to eastern meaning, and race, religion, training and the whole up-make of our ideas and beliefs stand so often in the way. Still in part we saw, and the lessons of that seeing have never passed away. We had come in all humility, so the Gods were kind. They opened our eyes that we might see.

When we announced that we were going the household was upset. And on the last morning of our stay they all, landlord, landlady, plain daughter, goggle-
eyed waiting-girls, came in a procession bearing gifts. We had fans to keep us cool upon the journey, white towels with pictures of the inn in blue, and above all, gifts of the beautiful Matsue china which we had so much admired. Everything was tied up in the neatest parcels wrapped in pieces of brocade, and presented on lacquered trays. On the top of the Matsue china lay a tiny white paper cone lined with red in which was stuck a splinter of bamboo cane, the modern symbol of the old-time fish which was always presented with each gift. And the meaning of the whole is peace, plenty, and prosperity. We had nothing so beautiful to give in exchange, only a cake of foreign soap and a visiting-card. The cake of soap was considered by the rest of the household, including the old grandmother, who had come in, as a palpable hit, and the visiting-cards were much prized.

Then with every one carrying our luggage we were escorted to the gravel recess of the entrance, where our kurumaya stood waiting, and all the household went down on its knees on the polished wooden platform and said sweet sayonara.

And there in the walled-in recess with the wooden gheta lying on the big grey block of stone the kneeling figures stayed. Clad in their dark blue kimono with the bright-coloured obi at the waist, they knelt on the polished wood, their heads on their hands, their hands on the floor; and as they knelt the rolls and whorls of their coiffures seemed to grow like flowers from bending stalks of blue.

"Sayonara," they said, and all the blue stalks swayed.

"Sayonara," we called back. "Farewell." Oh, dear Land of the Gods that has taught us wisdom, not you, but we have need to fare well.
VI

THE TWO SPIRITS

Out of the town and above it, the daimyō of Matsue once built him a castle, and he filled it with the stern warriors whose soul was their sword. Daimyō after daimyō lived and died, and still a daimyō ruled over Izumo; and warrior after warrior fought and was slain, and still the samurai learned the laws of the bushi, the way of the warrior, and the strong fortress of Matsue, with its moat and its walls, was guarded and kept by men whose lives were one long servitude to honour and duty. The grim ideals of a code which feared no death and no torture, which exacted the sternest courage and self-control, were taught and practised in the castle of Matsue, until the Son of Heaven ruled in Tokyo and daimyō and samurai were feudal lord and loyal vassal no longer.

The grim walls are standing now, the castle with its moat still rises above Matsue to possess it, but the spirit of its fierce dominance is gone; instead, that twin-soul of the Japanese race has entered into the stronghold, the Love of Beauty has cast out the Love of Battle, the sword is changed to flowers, for in the moat of the castle the lotus is blooming.

Stern and very strong the grey walls rise high into the air, they have not lost their grimness though their
feet are bathed in flowers. It is true the gateway is broken, and where the drawbridge once fell there is now a broad path of stamped earth, but the long lines of solid wall are firm still and uninjured. They still rise frowning from out the deep waters of the moat; but to-day the moat itself has disappeared, in its place the broad thick leaves of the lotus stretch like a silvery green river around the walls. So broad, so strong, so helpless, the great leaves hang like unsteady giants on their stalks, and the pin-points of water gather and gather on the hairy surface, till the leaf curls to a cup and a big waterdrop, molten as quicksilver, runs gleaming over the green.

The lotus leaves lie all lazy at angles of rest, but the flowers seem to rise on their stalks as birds taking wing. All pure white or palest pink, each single flower is a giant's handful of blossom, and yet the petals are delicate, almost transparent; thin, too, in their texture, but of a satiny softness, they curl with the grace of a rose above the pure gold of their hearts.

The lotus leaves dream inert, each on its stalk hangs drooping, often awry: they encircle the walls like a green river of water that stagnantly sleeps; but the flowers are awake and they rise from their leaves as the Spirit of Beauty once rose from the waters. All pure white on this side of the gateway, all pale pink on that, the great cups of blossom stand stately. Very fragile in their texture, and yet so ample in their form the lotus flower seems the meeting-point of luxuriance and grace; the point where more of either were really less of both.

With its roots deep down in the mud, with its leaves often frankly ridiculous in the large uncouthness of their attitudes, with its beauty in no way
ethereal, the lotus is yet the symbol of Death, not of Nirvana, but of Death, of the completing of one brief period in this long cycle which we call Life. So in Matsué they planted the moat of the castle with the flower of the lotus for the life of Old Japan, of castle and daimyō and samurai, is ended. It is Death but a new Beginning.

Beyond the gateway, a grass-grown flight of granite steps leads to the castle, and we climb.

All the castles in all Japan are the same, bigger or smaller, with details of decoration or style that differentiate them, they are yet in the broad outlines of their architecture one and the same. A Japanese house is Japanese, but the castle comes from China, at least originally, and its pagoda character is very evident. The castle at Matsué had its ground floor of stone, rough-hewn blocks of granite which fitted closely to each other without mortar. The stone storey, as all the succeeding ones of wood above it, tapered gradually inwards so that the top-most wooden storey would have fitted into the one below it, and that into the next, and all into the square stone box of the ground floor, as neatly as the nest of baskets sold in the streets of the town below.

Inside, the rough-hewn stone walls were left as bare as the outside, and a long steep ladder of a staircase, which began abruptly in the middle of one floor to end with equal abruptness in the middle of the floor above, led from storey to storey. The stone storey was divided into two, the rest were of wood, and all now were absolutely bare and unadorned; the mere outer shell of a building which had once lived and sheltered lives. Only in the top floor, where on all four sides sliding panels of glass had
replaced the rice-paper *shōji*, was there any sign of life. This room had been turned into a sort of Military Museum with relics of the China war, swords and guns, and a whole long series of wonderful coloured prints, with the Chinese always fleeing, their long, long pigtails floating in the breeze, the Japanese always pursuing with impossible profiles and highly polished boots; and gravely studying the pictures was a group of school-boys. Their comments were mostly bloodthirsty; the best way of sticking the pink Chinaman on the left, or of beheading the yellow one on the right; but they did not seem moved with any animosity or any sense of triumph, they merely discussed the sword-cuts scientifically, seriously, as though it were a grave business of life and they wished to arrive at a right conclusion.

Matsue's castle is beyond and above the town, and the *daimyō* who built it and the warriors who guarded it looked down on this side over the grey roofs of the houses to the wide blue waters of the still lagoon, on that side over the grey roofs of the houses and the sweep of the quiet rice-fields where the river, like a broad path of steel wanders through the bright green fields; and further round they looked to where the tall trees climb the steep hillsides, and further still to the great blue lines of the hills themselves shutting in the sky. And the old warriors in their watch-tower looked out over this wide fair world which lay so still around them. They guarded the castle and they kept it, and the light that was set in that tower was the light of courage and of duty. Over the world beneath their feet it shone out clear and bright, but the world was wider than their horizon. After many years they learned that lesson, and then they came down from
their watch-tower, and the light which once burned there in the castle is gone to-day through all the land.

Then the Spirit of Beauty, the soul of that world which lay so still beneath the tower, went up to the castle, where with courage and duty the love of battle and of death had ruled so long, to possess it. And in the waters of the moat the lotus is blooming.

With its roots in the mud, say the Japanese Buddhists, the lotus flower is an emblem of man, of a good man in this wicked world. From among the sins and the passions of life Buddha himself rose perfect, pure as the lotus, and perfect. So for a sign and a comfort to all men, Lord Buddha himself sits throned on the lotus, showing how Goodness Eternal came, not from good, but from the midst of things evil.

In the moat of the castle the people of Matsuè have planted whole fields of the lotus, that the flower which is perfect might grow from the sins of the past, grow with each cycle of Life ever more perfect.
THE HEART OF THE PEOPLE
“Shakspeare would have us know that there is no devotion to truth, to justice, to charity, more intense and real than that of the man who is faithful to them out of the sheer spirit of loyalty, unstimulated and unsupported by any faith which can be called theological.”

DOWDEN, “Shakspeare, his Mind and Art.”
Tokyo is a city of one million five hundred thousand souls, and in its heart of hearts stands the Palace of the Son of Heaven.

The city through its girdle of brown streets works hard, its wharfs and factories, its shops and warehouses are dense with human life and resonant with human labour. The low brown streets so thick with flimsy paper houses stretch for ten miles along the plain. In them the children play, the kuruma pass quickly, the heavy laden hand-carts of the coolies push and jostle, but the heart of this great capital lies still.

From circumference to centre as you come, through street on street of houses, wharves and shops, the magic of the city grows. First the streets space out and out, then the houses dwindle as the trees and gardens grow, greener, wilder, stiller, till the heart of Tokyo’s city is a moated park of peace.

Up nine steep hills the city spreads, and sea and river, and the wide green rice-fields lap it round, while far away across the land, above the level blue of sky great Fuji rises peerless in the midmost heaven.

Engirdled by the thronged and busy streets the nine tall hills peaceful with well-kept houses and secluded gardens, make a crescent round the moated park. For
in this strange city whose centre is a palace and a peaceful walled-in pleasance the "suburbs" lie within and not without the town.

And through the town and over street and roadway, in the gardens and the courtyards the gaunt beaked crows flap coal-black wings as they sail past, and their cynical "Haw, haw" is sarcastic with an utter disbelief. With stately swoop, black wings outspread, they drift past the ear of the newcomer confident with a three weeks' visit that he understands the East, and in the midst of his cocksureness they drop their cold, sarcastic "Haw."

Brown and so crowded are the streets, bewildering with their jostle of blue-clad men and women, their open stalls, their unmade roads of earth stretching flat between the houses on each side, where man-drawn carts, and kuruma, passengers, and children get in each other's way. The white uniformed policeman, sword on thigh, stands, a bronze statue, at each busy corner, and to him even the criminal is polite. And down the streets and through and through the town, cut straight or winding, the brown canals, valleys of black mud, or slow streams of dark water, run to the river and the sea. And thousands upon thousands, too, seem the bridges, some flat and narrow as gangways, most arched in a crescent curve, and the brown canals run from the sea and from the river far within the town.

On one of them, at high tide, a steamer like the ark of Noah plies. It seems to go indifferently stern or bow foremost, and is no larger than a big-sized rowing boat. The one landing-stage to which I traced it was like a pasteboard on two rolling-pins, and stood as the threshold to the back door of a house. A European
picture hung above the entrance, bright with greens and blues and reds and yellows, where this resplendent steamer floating amid green waves, showed at alternate windows a head, male, Japanese, dressed "foreign"; a head, female, Japanese, dressed Japanese. A policeman and a soldier both in uniform balanced on the deck at either end. The ark's ports of call, as its starting-place and destination, remained a mystery. At low tide the canal was an inch of water between two banks of mud, and only at high tide could this toy ark float at all.

One long, straight street, broken into sections at the bridges, and then reset at different angles, runs from end to end of Tokyo, runs from Shimbashi to Ueno, from the " Mercantile Marine Store," which sells dried fishes, to the Parcels Office of that delicious "Internal Railway," otherwise unknown to fame. This is the main street of the town, here is the Ginza, with its red brick sidewalks, its shop-boys who speak English, even its plate glass windows. Here, too, is the goldsmith who advertises:

"RINGS, BRONCHITIS, AND OTHER JEWELRY. BEST KINDS ONLY KEPT IN STOCK";
And the residence of that mysterious baker who keeps:

"BEARDS, VINE CAKES AND SLOR FOR SALE."
And down it from end to end runs Tokyo's main tramway. With the river on the east, the moated park upon the west, north and south the broad street runs, and the park of Shiba lies at one end and the park of Ueno at the other. Shiba, where the tombstones of
the dead shōgun lie in their sumptuous lacquered temples; Ueno, where the lacquered temples stand bullet-pierced, for the soldiers of the shōgun and the soldiers of the emperor fought their last fight here before the great Tenshinsama came back to his own again. Once the closed gardens of Buddhistic monasteries, both parks now are open to the town, bicycles ride through them, nursemaids, their babies on their backs, loiter in them, little girls play classic games of bones, boys catch grasshoppers, while beneath the trees the low red blanketed tables of the chaya offer 4d. teas.

The Park of Shiba is green and quiet, smaller than Ueno, for its temples hold so large a space. It is a forest growing in the heart of a town. Ueno is lighter, brighter, fuller of flowers and festivals, with long avenues of cherry-trees, and a lake where the lotus flowers grow thickly.

And over the lake and the temples, over the cherry-trees and the tea-stalls, over the city below and the playing children within, the big bronze bell of Ueno sends forth its great booming note—that note which is outside our music, deeper, more liquid, which comes with its low, booming sway, just when daylight turns to darkness. Cast of bronze and silver, rung by a wooden beam that strikes a boss outside, the note of the great bell comes swaying as though the air were water. And slowly over the city the bell booms, trembling, and he who hears it sits still and thinks; sits lost and dreams of the song of the seven spheres.

When Ueno's avenues of cherry-trees are pink with flowers, when the stalls beneath the trees are full of flower hairpins, then Tokyo through its gardens and
its roadways blushes too, for the whole city is planted thick with cherry-trees. Not only on the river bank, where the long two-mile avenue of Mukojima is a perpetual fête, but everywhere, in private gardens and in public streets, the delicate, pale pink blossoms on their brown leafless branches catch the sunshine and the showers, and fall as little rosy clouds from heaven on to the ground beneath. For Tokyo is a city holding the country in its lap. Not an artificial bedded-out country, stiff as a Versailles park, but the real wayward country, though tended with a loving, understanding care.

And Tokyo is a city brimful of flowers. Between the cherry-trees of April and the chrysanthemums of November most of the flowers can be seen within the city in temple courts or nursery gardens or public parks. The lake of the lotus at Ueno is famous through Japan, and in the temple of Kameido grow the age-old wistarias.

Trained on horizontal trellis work, their long pale tassels hang down towards the water, stirring with each breeze. The trailing clusters of the flowers grow four feet long sometimes, and droop towards the surface of the lake in thick swaying pendants of pure colour. Behind these living curtains, in a twilight of pale mauve or soft whitelight, on the edge of the pond whose shape spells "heart," sometimes afloat on the pond itself, the tables of the chaya stand, and those who make holiday because the flowers are blooming, all Tokyo, sit and look, drinking wee bowls of pale green tea, or writing poems to the flowers.

On the waters of this lake of the letter "heart" float the pale mauve petals and the petals of pure white, which fall and drift and sink, and fall and drift
and sink, until the waters are hidden with flower flakes and the wistaria is over and gone.

Kameido lies on the far bank of the Sumidagawa, in a network of poor streets, for the left bank of the river, like the big island at its mouth, is denser with yards and factories than is the right. The streets are narrower, fuller of children and the noise of hammers and of wheels. Yet in this poor wage-working quarter the festivals of the plum-blossoms, the wistaria, and the peony are held.

In all Japan there is no other flower fête which in the least resembles a horticultural show except that of Botan, the tree-peony. For when the peony blooms, the little trees, large as dwarf rose-bushes, are placed on tiers inside a matted tent. There the resemblance ends. These plants are set each in a framework of space, and the colours are grouped and blended with the thought and the instinct of an artist.

The flowers of the peony are as large as the largest chrysanthemum, larger than ours, but their petals are rich, made of satin where ours are of cotton, delicate, fragile, and sheeny. The colouring is soft and subdued, and the faint sweet scent which comes from them is like the dream of a rose. The colours are simple, white warming to cream, paling to snow, and all the tints of pale reds, deep reds, and crimsons.

The matting which covers them is of pale yellow, but somehow the light, as it comes through it, touched perhaps by the flowers, is the light of a dream—as sunlight without heat, as moonlight warmed and living, a light that shimmers, holding colour fast within, yet fast asleep. To-day the light in that peony tent at Kameido remains to me as definite as the flowers, as distinct as the scent, as real and, in truth, more
beautiful. It was as though one saw the radiance of an unknown, unmade jewel, light but not yet substance.

All this left bank of the river from Fukagawa to Eko-in is full of workmen and workshops, of small trades and smaller traders, and here in the month of May in the grounds of the temple raised to the memory of the hundred thousand citizens killed in the great fire of 1657, the yearly wrestling contests are held. The Smō, tall, broad, powerful men, many six feet high or more, who dress in large checked *kimono* and wear their hair in the old-fashioned top-knot, are adored by the populace who come in thousands to see them.

The little round platform of stamped earth sprinkled with sand, set in the midst of a huge amphitheatre of faces, shows small as a raft on the sea, and slight despite its purple trapping. The crowd, a Tokyo crowd in *kimono* and foreign head-gear, cap, bowler, and felt hat, sit from morning until night, day in day out, for the three long weeks of the wrestling matches.

The wrestlers stand, knees bent, body horizontal, their outstretched hands almost touching the ground, and grip. And the bout is long because the grip must be accepted by both of them, and because between each false grip the two retire slowly to their respective sides and wash out their mouths with tea. This may be repeated a dozen, twenty times, but when the real grip comes, then the action can be swift as lightning; the opponent forced beyond the straw rope which lies upon the sanded earth of the ring, before one realises that the wrestle has begun, or pushed down over it with the slow resistless force of flowing water, or the two may sway about interminably before one is beaten.
Bulk is not the one ideal of the wrestler, the young and strong rely on their activity; it is only when a man is getting older that he weights himself with fat, that his bulk and heaviness may prove too great for his opponent easily to push over. The wrestlers all wear waistbands and stiff fringes of blue silk, and the rippling of the muscles beneath their golden brown skin is such a joy as the Greek nation knew at the time of the Olympiads.

A man with a fan, an average-sized Japanese who hardly comes above the elbows of some of the wrestlers acts as starter, as umpire, and as referee, and the sharp s-s-sh of his shutting fan can be heard distinctly in the silence of the amphitheatre. The judges, four old tried wrestlers, sit under purple hangings and decide disputed points, while half the front tier is reserved for the Smō themselves.

But to the non-Japanese it is not the wrestlers but the spectators who are the centre of interest. Here gathered together within the amphitheatre, concentrated on one thought, absorbed, therefore natural, sit samples of all Tokyo. For the Smō, like our prize fight of last century, is beloved by the populace and patronised by the aristocracy. Every one takes some sort of interest in it, and results are as widely known as the Derby or a test match. The crowd, a crowd of men and boys,—for the fathers bring their little sons with them,—knows, as well as the umpire himself, the forty-eight falls, the twelve lifts, the twelve throws, the twelve twists, the twelve throws over the back, alone allowed the Japanese wrestler. The excitement at disputed points is intense, the whole amphitheatre arguing with its neighbour. The enthusiasm at a brilliant, a quick, or a well-contested
throw is intoxicating. Spectators will rise in their seats and throw down presents, tobacco-pouches, purses, hats, or other property, which the owner redeems next morning in money.

The Smō are the idols of the street boys, and tall, huge, unintelligent, in gaudy kimono and well-oiled top-knots, they stride through the Tokyo streets haughty, and sometimes overbearing.

We think of the Japanese as unalterably small, yet here is a class, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh, who are huge, strong, large-framed men, taller than the tall races of the north. They are another and a living contradiction of the imaginary minisculism of the nation. If the Japanese desire to produce big things, in war, in statues, or in men, they take thought, they take care; much thought, infinite care, and somehow it is done.

So Tokyo wrestles, works and plays, and this left bank of the river toils and lives hard. Across the water Tsukiji, secluded in its "foreign" residences, dwells genteel, and gossips. The Ginza shops. The suburbs far within the circle of the streets grow hedged-in gardens and long avenues of trees, where the houses lie unseen. The schools, the training colleges, and the university, a cityful of students study, and boys in cotton hakama and dark-peaked soldiers' caps walk through the streets—boys who are passing from the indulged childhood of Japan to the iron self-control of manhood.

There is apparent in their ways and manners a touch of self-assertiveness, a touch of almost self-conceit, which at no other time in their own lives, and at no time at all in any other member of the community, will ever be observable. It is but a touch, and would pass
unseen in any other land, in any other setting; here it stands out palpable. A little hard these boys look and very earnest. They will strike work if they think a teacher is not competent to teach, so bent are they on learning. They seem to have accepted school as the modern training of the _samurai_, and to study in that spirit.

The scholarship boys at Government Colleges work harder still and on the narrowest of means. They can afford so little for their board that one whole college gave up playing base-ball in its recreation hour because "it made them too hungry."

And at the University, where the students matriculate at twenty and stay till twenty-four and five, for beside their own learning, beside the ten thousand Chinese symbols and all the philosophy of the East, they must to-day add the learning of the West, the languages of Europe, the laws, the sciences, and the arts of another civilisation and of an alien race, at the University the students live lives of hardest brain-work and rigidest economy. Many spend their evenings in earning the money that buys their day. Some deliver newspapers and sleep in the porches of "foreign" houses. Many die of consumption, brought on by over-work and under-feeding. Across the river the hammers ring, the wheels whir round, the hum of a people's toil sounds in all ears. Here within the girdle of the streets, between the factories and the palace is a work doing, silent, less perceptible but harder, higher and undertaken for that end.

Between the hard work of hand and brain Ginza and Nihon-bashi shop, and at night the wire-drawn twang of the _samisen_ comes from the lighted restaurants.
Restaurants where each diner or each party occupies a separate room, and geisha girls are sent for to entertain the guests, with puns and games, with polite conversations and endless repartee. They sit on the kneeling cushions throughout the meal pouring saké—and amuse. Then they dance. Posturing and swaying to an accompaniment of samisen and song they glide over the matting always graceful, always reserved. The quality of their dancing rings passionless, dainty, graceful, not cold but controlled. An air of serenity surrounds them. They are not trained to the duties of womanhood, but to its heaviest burden—pleasing. The licensed playthings of the nation, toys to amuse, they reach up to their limited, low-scaled destiny, through the perpetual sacrifice of self; and the national self-control encases them, so much their very own that few perceive it. With very different fates and from very different motives there is about them, as they dance, something of the charm and of the aloofness of Andersen’s mermaiden; and if their steps too are as steps upon a sword, they, too, will smile untroubled.

So the city strives and pleases, so the city learns and toils. Full and full of life the streets, quiet and very still the heart. The nine tall hills from Shiba to Ueno make a crescent round the moat, the brown streets lie without, the Mikado dwells within. Born as a camp Yedo made its ruler’s seat its centre, its nobles’ yashiki an enclosing wall; and then beyond, out of sight and sound, the necessary, unimportant commonfolk had leave to work and sell. Tokyo today is still as Yedo was. Yashiki are pulled down, their ground is sold, but parliaments and embassies, nobles’ houses and their gardens, still make a circle
round the palace, a space of suburb and of peace between the city and its centre.

Over the streets and the roadways, through parks and gardens, the black-winged crows sail past cynical, unbelieving. The web of brown canals beneath their high-arched bridges, the broad uncertain river sometimes slowly, sometimes fiercely, all flow towards the sea. The land-locked ocean, and the pale green rice-fields ripple round the streets. From sixty miles across the plain great Fuji looks towards the capital.

And here in Tokyo’s heart, in *Dai Nippon’s* heart of hearts, not the usurping *shōgun* or general in his camp, but *Tenshisama*, Son of Heaven, bestower of a western constitution, augustly dwells.
II

EAST AND WEST

EAST

The large red building covered all over with Chinese characters—a white sign on each cardboard square of red—overlooks the canal. It seems too gaudy and unsubstantial a building for sober work, and yet all day long multitudes of dark-blue coolies, like Florentine noblemen run to seed, go in and out. Fantastic key patterns in white are traced upon the skirts of their blue tunics, while on each back is a large red circle covered with the hieroglyph of the building. They may earn some 6d. a day for twelve long working hours.

From among the pale straw-coloured bales emerge two workmen. There are patches in their dark-blue hose, and the brown toes stick out through the blue of their divided socks. Even the blue designs on the white towels around their heads have faded away with much washing.

Catching sight of one another they bow low. A step nearer, and the jaunty ends of white towel tied in a knot on the forehead of one man, touch his knee.

The other, whose towel is tied like a nightcap round his head and under his chin, bends lower still.
Another step, and the indrawn whistles of politeness grow loud and shrill.

Another, and the white towels disappear entirely between the blue legs.

Then the night-capped one straightens himself and speaks:

"Shitsurei de gozaimas ga, chotto hi o kashte kudasai" ("Although this is great rudeness on my part," he says, "would you condescend to lend me a match.")

WEST

Between two rows of slovenly houses a long grey street stretches away, wet and grimy. There is just one break in the grey monotony where the gin palace stands in all its gilt and plate-glass splendour.

Coming up the street are two workmen. The billy-cock hats on their heads have lost their brim, and show more dirty stain than original black. As they catch sight of one another across the street they pause.

Suddenly one removes the clay pipe from his lips and spits profusely. The other eyes him, his hands in his pockets; then he too takes the short pipe from between his lips, and jerking his head in the direction of the public house, slowly puts out his tongue.

The first billycock replaces his pipe with care, crosses the road, and with a sanguinary word they both disappear within the doors of the gin palace.
III

YONÉ'S BABY

It lay on the matted floor, a little brown thing that cried, and Yoné sat on her heels and looked at it.

Huddled over the brazier in the corner, her skinny hands stretched out to clutch the warmth from the sticks of glowing charcoal, the old grandmother dozed and grumbled.

And Yoné did not move. The Ijin San for whom she worked had told her she ought to take care of her dead daughter's child and bring it up; but Yoné's conscience, the conscience of her race, the inherited upbringing of her dead fathers, made her instinctively turn towards the O Bā San in the corner. She could not feed two mouths. Life was hard for Yoné; and the O Bā San had a good appetite though she was so old.

So Yoné sat on her heels and sullenly listened to the quavering wail without moving.

"If the gods wanted the child to live, why had they let its mother die? Why had its father divorced the little wife 'for temper' before the baby was born? It was Fate. And after all the baby was very small and ugly, a little, cross sickly thing that cried. No, it had much better die, much better."

And Yoné got up, and went to get ready the evening rice for the O Bā San. As she did so the shadow
of the *Ijin San* herself fell across the floor, and her voice, in very English Japanese, asked after the baby. Yoné was down on her knees in a moment, drawing in her breath through her teeth in long whistles of politeness.

"The baby was not well, as the *Ijin San* could see. It did nothing but cry; and after all what was the use? It had much better die."

The *Ijin San* sat down on the little platform, the shōji pushed back between her and the room, in consternation. After all she had said the day before, all she had urged, Yoné still clung to that awful idea. The *Ijin San* had a shrewd suspicion that the old lady in the corner had something to do with Yoné's idea "it was better baby die." It would be quite easy for "baby to die" too, and that without much active doing on Yoné's part. So she sat there perplexed, the baby cuddled up in her arms. Moral persuasions she had tried, and appeals to Yoné's conscience, her love for her dead daughter, her duty—all in vain. And she looked down at the queer little atom in its bright red *kimono*, with the wide flapping sleeves, wondering whether it would look quite so odd dressed like other babies, her own for instance, and she smiled. It was a last chance any way.

"Yoné," she said, holding up the baby. "How would you like to see him dressed like the *Bot'chan*?"

"He," cried Yoné, turning round, her vanity awake in a moment.

"Well, if you'll take care of him, I'll dress him in foreign clothes, and he'll look just like the *Bot'chan*."

Yoné's strangled "h's" of admiration grew deeper and deeper. Her admiration for the *Ijin San's Bot'chan* knew no bounds; and then the pride of having
a foreign-dressed baby of her own! Why, not one of her acquaintances, not even the rich sake merchant at the corner, dressed their children "foreign fashion." It was a height beyond their ambition, a dizzy pinnacle only reached by the samurai and the Court! And Yoné's strangled "h's" of admiration and her indrawn whistles of politeness knew no bounds. Even the O Bā San in the corner turned her head round and showed some signs of interest. And the baby stopped its feeble cry and lay back on the Ijin San's lap—and smiled.

With a sudden swoop Yoné caught it up. "I take care, I take care," she said, "let the Ijin San bring the clothes."

And from that day she went about her work with the quaintest little brown morsel in a foreign pelisse and a white bonnet nodding over her shoulder. And neither the O Bā San nor the baby ever went hungry whatever Yoné might do.
IV

THE GRAVES OF THE RÔNIN

The white wing of a blossoming plum-tree casts a pale shadow across the pebbled steps of the causeway, and the spring sunshine is warm. Behind, under the great gate of the temple, is a stall with souvenir tea-bowls of the Forty-Seven Rônin and the red blankets of a tiny chaya. In front, at the end of the causeway, stands a Japanese father with his little son, buying bundles of incense sticks from the Buddhist sexton. Coming up the path are two peasants with bare, brown legs, one wearing the old-fashioned gunhammer top-knot. And the plum-tree, its scent warm and fragrant, lies a white wing above the path.

The Japanese father, samurai from his face, and modern by his clothes, and his son have passed into the graveyard before us. But we all stand together in the little square garden on the side of the hill, with its thickly clustered tombstones, shaped like Moses’ Tables of the Law in the Child’s Bible, set in the flat brown earth.

Below, a sharply falling line of dark green shrubs; above, the overhanging trees of the hillside; and the garden is quiet and still, with a little chill of damp and death that sobers and subdues.

Before each stone tablet on the earthen path are
bamboo vases filled with freshly cut branches of evergreens, and the burning incense sticks trail a thin scarf of smoke along the ground.

The two old peasants are busy sticking their thin, brown incense tapers into the little heaps of grey ash—to become grey ashes in their turn. The little son has already lit his before the tomb of Oishi Kuranosuké; and the father, gravely feeling in the pocket of his "foreign" coat, takes out a visiting-card, and lays it reverently among the pile of others on the grave.

Then they go away slowly. And I catch the names of Asano Takumi no Kami and Kira Kōtsuké no Suké, and I know that the little son is listening to the story of the Forty-Seven Rōnin.

For two hundred years now they have come up the pebbled pathway into the graveyard, country peasant and Tokyo gentlemen coming with incense sticks and flowering branches, to keep green the memory of the loyal retainers who died to revenge their lord: coming in *kimono* and *topknot*: still coming in foreign clothes and *shappo*, for the old spirit lives though the outer form is changing. The fierce unswerving loyalty, the utter self-sacrifice, the tenacity and strength of the *Forty-Seven Rōnin* still stir the soul of the modern Japanese under their foreign envelope as it stirred the heart of those fierce old *samurai*, with their hands ever on the hilt of their long two-handed swords.

"Thou shalt not live under the same heaven nor tread the same earth as the enemy of thy father or thy master," says the Scripture. And the Forty-Seven died, and more than died, to fulfil the commandment.

In the temple below their wooden effigies stand to this day. Among them are old men and young boys—one with the grey locks of seventy-seven, one with the
boyish cheeks of seventeen—but neither the old man nor the young boy faltered, through all the long months of waiting, in the dangerous moment of the struggle or after. They plotted and endured; they fought and slew; they brought the bloody head of Kira Kōtsuké no Suké, washed in the well beyond the plum-tree, here to the grave of their dead lord; they gave themselves up to Justice; they carried out the sentence of death on their own bodies with their own hands—all with the same quiet self-control which only the sense of a supreme, absorbing duty can produce.

And the Forty-Seven were buried here, in the quiet cold graveyard, beside the body of their lord. And when they had been laid to rest there came a fierce two-sworded samurai to the little garden, and, kneeling down in front of the tomb of Oishi Kuranosuké, he took his dirk from his belt and stabbed himself above the grave. For he had insulted Oishi Kuranosuké, in the long months of the waiting, thinking he had forgotten his lord.

So they buried him among the Forty-Seven, and before his tomb are flowering branches and burning incense tapers.

The two old peasants are gone, but the sound of coming steps is on the pebbled pathway.

It is the feet of the nation. They come to keep their age long watch above the graves of the Loyal Rōnin.
THE DOLLS' FESTIVAL

Enshrined in their white wooden boxes the dolls look down; and the gently drifting crowd stare their fill.

It is the eve of the Dolls' Festival, and for a hundred yards along the wide Odori, the street is wreathed across and across with swaying lines of paper lanterns.

On each matted floor, raised knee-high from the ground, a shopman sits on his heels, his hands eternally stretched out over the charcoal fire of the hibachi.

The background of dolls on three sides of him seem as interested in their sale as he. The crowd drifts, talks, points, looks, but he sits still, absorbed in his occupation. Occasionally he will turn a languid head over one shoulder in the direction of an inquiring voice, and tranquilly name a price four times bigger than he expects to get; but unless the customer pursues the bargain with vigour he does not stir. Even then, all the talking is done without moving more than a head. And when the culminating point arrives at which the would-be buyer shakes the dust off his feet and makes vigorously for the next shop, he murmurs an impassive "Yoroshi" ("All right"), and warms another finger, while a boy in the background, who for ever dusts the stock-in-trade, does up the parcel and takes the money.
I wonder—would anything stir this blast image of indifference?
Perhaps if a fool or a foreigner, interchangeable terms in the East, paid the price he asked he might—. No, "Yoroshī, yoroshī," he murmurs, and does not interrupt the warming of his hands by a finger's-breadth.

For ten long days now the dolls, all in the quaint robes of old, have looked down on the gently drifting crowd, emperor and empress, lords and ladies, and court musicians. The red silk trousers and the flowing hair, the cut-glass chandelier-like head-dress and the wide, wide sleeved kimono; the court lady leading her lap-dog; the musicians with their instruments; and along the lower shelves, the long procession of lacquered bowls, and tables and furniture, the old, old shapes of Old Japan, the realities buried for ever in museums, and only these, their midget substitutes, enjoying a brief life once a year.

They are so neat and pretty, of such exquisite workmanship and finish, that I stay to look and look. Behind me the crowd closes in thicker and thicker, looking too—but at me--; so thickly that they obstruct the rails of Tokyo's main tramway, and cause it much embarrassment.

To-morrow is the Dolls' Festival, and all the world is buying; I, too, would like to buy. So I sit still on the edge of the matted floor and watch. I shall learn what I ought to give and how to conduct the intricate matter of a purchase. But though they were here before me, and though they stay long after me, and though I wait with what I consider quite Oriental patience, they do not buy, not one of them, they only talk. So I am compelled to conduct my own
purchase without the aid of native example, and to the certain advantage of the impassive shopman.

Does any one ever buy anything in Tokyo?

In all my many wanderings I have never seen them, patiently as I have stalked them. They are always just going—just going—just going—

Perhaps that is why the impassive shopmen are so impassive.
WITH DEATH BESIDE HER

"Go-han wa skoshi mo arimasen" ("Not another grain of rice, not a grain"). And O Matsu sat back on her heels, the lid of the wooden rice saucepan clutched in her hand.

"Skoshi mo arimasen" And the grey head, with its cropped hair gathered into a slide behind, bent despairingly over the saucepan.

The O hachi was quite empty, O Matsu had eaten the last grain yesterday; she knew that quite well, but the trembling old fingers went on feeling round and round the bare sides of the saucepan, for she was very hungry. All through the long months of the rice famine O Matsu had managed somehow. To-day the empty O hachi lay on the ground while O Matsu sat staring slowly into it. Then Death stared back at her, and she knew it.

With a trembling little movement she got on to her feet and moved across the matted floor into the zashki. The sun was shining on the rice-paper panes of the shōji, and she pushed them back and stood out on the little platform of polished wood, trying to warm herself; but the piercing winter wind made her blackened teeth chatter, and she came in again. In the hibachi the grey ashes were dead and cold, the last stick of
charcoal had boiled the water for her tea last night. There was neither fire nor food. O Matsu stood still watching, while Death and his Shadow grew, as a ghost in the twilight.

Slowly the familiar walls, the matted floor, the half-opened shōji insisted that the house was yet unswept, the first duty of a housewife still undone; and with a painful effort O Matsu went and fetched the bamboo broom that swept the matting, and the damp cloth to polish the platform. The broom felt heavy to the weak old hands, and the task of polishing the platform almost beyond her strength; so she worked on slowly, stopping often, for hunger made her faint, but always going on again. At last, zashki and platform finished, she crept back into the kitchen, longing to rest. The empty O hachi lay on the floor. She made a great effort, and, picking it up, carried it outside to scrub, for cleanliness is a supreme duty in Japan.

When she came back she put the freshly scrubbed O hachi in its place. Then she sat down. There was nothing more to do. The house was as clean as a house could be. O Matsu was inexpressibly weary, and the desire for food was almost beyond control. Instinctively she wandered back to the empty O hachi and took off the lid. The copper bands, dim and splashed with the washing, caught her eye. It seemed to her the hardest thing of all her life to go and fetch her little cloth and sit down to polish them, but she did it. And Death and his Shadow sat down at her side.

Somehow as she rubbed, two tears gathered in the dim old eyes, and rolled down the withered cheeks. O Matsu dropped the cloth, and holding the long sleeve of her kimono before her face, sat still and wept.
There is nothing in all the world so lonely as a Japanese woman without husband or children. She has no claim on her own family, and little on her husband's; and in a land where the children, once grown up, provide for their parents, what can a childless widowed old woman do?

The sun moved round the house, and O Matsu still sat in her kitchen rubbing softly at the copper bands of the saucepan. And death, in infinite pity, laid his hand upon her head, and his Shadow vanished.

"O meshi wa skoshi mo arimasen," she said. And the shaven old eyebrows puckered themselves together. "Skoshi mo arimasen." And the bent little figure went on rubbing.

When the policeman came in the grey dawn of the morning, surprised that the amado were not drawn, he found O Matsu, the polished copper bands of the O hachi glittering in her lap—quite dead.
MIDNIGHT and yet as hot as midday. Over our heads the velvet darkness lay as a visible lid above the streets, warm and still. Not a breath of air was stirring from one end of Kyoto to the other; the city seemed a vast dark house with all its windows shut. Only the rapid running of the kurumaya produced the slightest breeze, and that was but the fanning of a heated ballroom; and when it stopped the hot still air settled down hotter, stiller, than before.

We had reached the bank of the river, the bridge and Theatre Street lay beyond; and, as suddenly as one opens a door in a dark passage, we were there, inside, in the press and the noise, the lights and the crowd of Kyoto’s nightly soirée.

Restaurants and hairpin stalls, geisha booths and theatres, the interesting show of the two-headed fish, or the tragic story of the Forty-seven Rōnin, embroideries, and biri, jugglers and phonographs, cheap stalls for the sale of shaved ice and sugar syrup, elegant restaurants with fish dinners; dancing-booths at two sen a head, where white-painted geisha girls continually sang four notes and assumed four postures, and sang the same four notes and repeated the same four postures to a tightly packed audience
sitting on its heels, silent but appreciative; and
all, restaurants, booths, theatres, stalls, blazed with
lights and posters, deafened with the banging of
big drums and the invitations of the proprietors,
reeked with the smell of burning tallow, the fragrance
of boiling tea, the scent of crushed geranium, the odour
of an eastern summer's night and of the press of clean-
washed, hot humanity.

Along the street, inside the stalls and out, the crowd
was dense, cheerful, polite and contented. There was
no pushing, no ill-humour, no fights, no drunkenness,
nor one policeman. The people of Kyoto were en-
joying themselves like well-bred guests in a ballroom,
with the courtesy of self-control, and the self-abandoned
pleasure of a child. The road with its shifting crowd,
and the two long lines of brightly lighted buildings,
covered with paper lanterns and cotton banners on
bamboo poles, looked more like a "set" in a theatre than
real houses in an out-of-doors street. Not a candle-flame
quivered, not a banner stirred, and the long perspective
of the arched bridge was still as a painted background.

Down in the river, in the actual bed of the stream,
were more lights, whole crowded restaurants afloat.
Sitting on the tops of tables, whose four legs driven
down into the sand brought them within six inches of
the water, supper parties innumerable ate and talked;
while the children, slipping off their gheta, paddled
their feet in the stream. Even the little waitresses, as
they ran from customer to customer, would leave the
long polished gangways that led from tea-house to
table, and take the shorter way through the water.
Every one was eating, and every one was happy—
shaved ice with sugar syrup, at two sen a glass, or
dishes of brown eels and rice at two yen, gratuitous
KYOTO'S SOIRÉE

tea or biru in thirty-sen bottles. And with the summer night above, the water all around, the hundreds and hundreds of little tables floated on the water bright with kimono and lanterns. The broad shallow back-water either side the bridge was full of them, and the gentle rushing of the actual river beyond the circle of bright light lent a sense of freshness to the shadows that they did not in themselves possess.

Up on the bridge the crowd grew thicker, Theatre Street more full; the hairpin stalls were surrounded with women and little girls, buying long hairpins carved at the end, or ornamented with silk lanterns or flowers, or ingenious designs of tortoises made of shells, with legs that quivered realistically. And the velvet blackness lying above the streets and beyond the river was warm to feel.

Suddenly, as when one throws a stone into the water, the crowd surged forwards, then rippled slowly back; half a dozen white-uniformed policemen, with the distinctive, distinguished face of the samurai, were coming over the bridge, driving the people before them, back and back. The confused noise of indistinct shouting filled the air. Suddenly on to the bridge came running in a sort of jog-trot a crowd of bareheaded men, their short white tunics hardly reaching to the thigh and their brown legs naked beneath, all tugging and straining at a huge unwieldy car, which moved in jerks on its wheels of solid wood. On each side ran bands of men brandishing flaming torches in their hands, while priests in gorgeous apparel came behind. And priests and people, torch-bearers and car-pullers, were chanting as they ran, a fierce, wild cry, which went on and on. The car-pullers swayed from side to side, tossing their hands
above their heads, the torch-bearers rocked, sending great flaming fragments among the crowd, and we all stood pressed together, shrinking back from the burning torches, and the feet of the car-pullers, singed here, trampled there, in one sweating mass of hot humanity.

In the middle of the bridge the car stood still. The men in white tunics moved restlessly on their feet, straining at the cords; the torch-bearers chanted louder, tossing their torches in the air; the priests hurried to the front, and stood gesticulating while the wild, monotonous cry, gathering fierceness and frenzy from its very monotony, thundered and roared. Then with a sudden swirl the car turned round, and torch-bearers, car-pullers and priests were rushing back again to the same fierce wild cry, the same frenzied swaying of the bodies, and the same mad tossing of the arms. The sacred procession had come, was gone.

Slowly the crowd rippled back, on over the bridge, back down the street, the policemen disappeared, the drums of the geisha booths and the invitations of the stall-owners rang out again. Down on the surface of the river the floating tables grew fuller and fuller.

Kyoto's nightly soirée was at its height,
A room whose sloping floor is cut into chess-board squares; each square flat and matted, so that the back is twelve inches high and level with the front of the square above; a bare still wooden room long and crowded. Each matted square thick with kneeling men and women, the long-headed aquiline faces of the nobles and the samurai. At the end a platform with an opening vaguely leading from it. No scenery, no footlights, no curtain. It is the theatre for the performance of the No. Those sacred old world plays written many hundred years ago, acted by samurai for samurai, the religious mysteries and moralities of Japan.

In the West the theatre long ago shook off, escaped, forgot the Church. Here the elder child, the mother rather, still lives by the side of her offspring, and lives unchanged. The No to-day is as the No of five hundred years ago, the No which grew out of the sacred dances of an immemorable antiquity. Like the drama of the Greeks it has its choruses, its chants, its unities, its one or two actors masked, richly dressed, impressive, who move with a religious solemnity, and speak as voices, not as men. Its plays, too, are drawn from sacred legend, from the mythology of Shintō
deities, from the mysteries of the Buddhist faith, and from the fairy tales of the race. Over it all there is a glamour as of a stolen glimpse into the buried past. To-day its language is archaic, but preserved by constant repetition, handed down from father to son in the families of nobles who, since No first began, have played in No, it remains the language and the speech of those dead Japanese, who towards the fourteenth century organised the No.

The chant is strange and piercing, its very notes and phrases are outside of all that we consider music, as unfamiliar as the speech of insects, or the song of the remotest fathers of mankind. It echoes like a voice from out the long dead worlds, piercing yet remote, and the tink of pipes dies out. There falls a stillness in the room.

It is the afternoon of the last day of the Idamachi No. As in the theatres of Greece the plays, each of which lasts about two hours, are given one after another throughout the whole day, while between them comes the Kiogen (mad words), or folies dramatiques, farce-like, Greek-like comedies, shorter even than the No. Many of the spectators have been here since the morning, and on the matting of the shallow square boxes are lacquered trays of food, on all teapots and tobacco-stands; others come to see a special play or so and go away again; but to one and all it is not an amusement, it is a study, a homage paid to the past, a rite.

As the first notes of the strange piercing chant wail down the room, the pipes and cigarettes go out, the tiny teabowls are set down, and a silence falls.

The actors, in their rich brocaded robes of a make and texture of a long dead past, come slowly through
the passage-way on to the platform. Their masks are made of lacquer, and they speak in a slow nasal deep voice that seems to come from the very back of their throats. They speak with every muscle strained and taut. It sounds almost as outside of speech as the chant is outside of music, and they move in strange long strides. Such movements are not merely for artistic effect, nor to mark agitation, or to reproduce nature; they are often used to mark the passing of a period of time.

For all its stiffness and its rigour, its archaic make-believes, its unnatural realities, there is an intensity and a thrill in it as of a living thing that matters. The strange music of the tambourine-like instruments, the thin wailing of the bamboo flute, the beating of the one small drum, shaped like an hour-glass with three supporting pillars, breaks in again and again upon the intoned speech of the actors with its repeated irregular cadences in notes outside of speech. And the long-robed figures, masked and rigid, stalk slowly across the stage; and the chant of the chorus, as in the plays of Greece, explains, comments, describes the action.

It is the story of the fisherman who found an angel's robe of feathers on a tree, and would not give it back though the angel begged and begged. Without it she cannot reach her home in the blue of the heavens above, and for a heavenly spirit to stay for long on earth means death. Already the chorus is chanting her dirge when the fisherman, seeing her beauty fading and her life ebbing fast, relents. He will give back the robe if she will dance for him. She promises, but implores first her robe that the dance may be more perfect. The fisherman fears she will deceive him
and fly back to heaven at once. But the spirit turns upon him.

"Fie on thee, fisherman," she cries, "deception was born of man; the high heavens know not of it."

And, touched, he gives back the robe. She dances, while the chorus sings the beauties of the landscape, of Japan. How

"Heaven has its joys, but there is beauty here,

Here

Where the moon in bright unclouded glory
Shines on Kigomi's lea,
And where on Fujiyama's summit hoary
The snows look on the sea."

Even the angel would stay awhile in a land so beautiful.

"Blow, blow ye winds that the white cloud-belt driven
Around my path may bar my homeward way,
Not yet would I return to Heaven."

And still the angel dances, and the vision of Heaven descends upon earth. She sings,

"And from the cloudy spheres,
Chiming in unison the angels' lutes,
Tabrets and cymbals, and sweet silv'ry flutes
Ring through the heav'n that glows with purple hues."

Then the voices fall away. And to the strange, tuneless music, whose notes are not our notes, the spirit dances on, round and round in gliding circles, with the slow, smooth movements of the sacred Kagura.

"Fragrant and fair—too fair for mortal eyes."

The chorus sings again. And gliding round and round in circles ever smoother, ever slower, the spirit passes from the platform and up the vague passage-way that leads to the green-room beyond.
The fisherman starts. The play is ended. In long, stiff strides, so slow, so slow, that an appreciable space of time seems set around the movement of each muscle, the actor goes across the stage, up the vague passage-way, into the room beyond.

It is five minutes before the last slow solemn stride takes him beyond our sight. Then hour-glass drum, the flute, the two tambourine-like instruments that wail, shake out their last weird tuneless tune. The chant of the chorus ends on a note that to us is a middle—and stops.

My ears still wait the end of the phrase when the hush of intense silence dissolves. There is a rustle in each square shallow box, a lighting of tiny bronze pipes and cigarettes, a filling of tea-cups, a tapping of chopsticks.

The No is over.

Note.—In quoting from this No, "The Robe of Feathers," I have followed Mr. B. H. Chamberlain's translation in "The Classical Poetry of the Japanese."
IX

A JAPANESE BANK-HOLIDAY

The bulletins grew longer, and all the world waited and watched.

The Japanese papers were full of minute descriptions and hopeful prognostications. The cherry-trees were doing well; they were expected to bloom next week.

Then came a cold wind and rain; "for flowers," as the proverb says, "bring showers." And the bulletins became paragraphs.

But the sky grew blue again, and even the foreign papers broke through their Western disdain, and announced that "Marquis Itō had gone to Kyoto to see the cherry-trees." Imagine the Times gravely recording amongst its official intelligence that "Mr. Balfour had gone to Devonshire (not a third of the journey) to see the apple-blossoms"! But the Japanese are, of course, uncivilised!

On Easter Monday the trees were out, and all the world with them. The two long miles of river-bank at Mukojima were crowded. The river itself was thick with sampan. And still all Tokyo pours itself out over the bridges, across the canals, out under the long double line of cherry-trees.

The chrysanthemum may well be the Imperial crest; the cherry-tree is the national emblem, and its
flowering a national fête—a Japanese Bank Holiday, with Mukojima for its Hampstead Heath.

The two long miles of raised bank is a sea of heads, a second black river set between pale pink banks; and it washes slowly, undisturbedly onwards. Nobody pushes, nobody shouts, nobody calls rude remarks. And the blue-tuniced coolies, like Florentine noblemen out at elbows, with the work-a-day blue towel round their heads replaced by a pink one, the very shade of the cherry-blossoms above, say polite "Go men nasai" ("I beg your honourable pardon") if in looking upwards they stumble against each other.

The kurumaya has drawn his wife and children to Mukojima, and they wander slowly under the trees, the little ones in their gay-coloured kimono, covered with the largest of large flowers. Even the little tonsured babies blink up at the pink wonder overhead from the warm pouch on their mother's backs. And the old grandmothers, with their cropped grey heads and shaven eyebrows, tell how the cherry-trees were much finer when they were young. The little girls, with their hair oiled into lengths of black ribbons and tied in loops on the top of their heads; the young wife, with the wonderful whorls of the married woman's coiffure; the bare-legged, blue-knickerbockered ricksha man; the schoolboys, with their striped cotton hakama; the fathers, in their grey kimono—all the working world, all the people are here.

Below the level of the bank, raised high here, for the Sumidagawa, like all the rivers of Japan, is fierce in its floods, and set thick together, are the chaya. These range from the humblest little roofed shed, with its broad, low tables, like a series of large trays on dwarf legs, covered with coarse red blankets, to the
superb tea-houses with their snow-white matted rooms, their painted shōji. And they are all full. The kurumaya drinks his bowl of pale green tea, sitting on his heels on the red blanket. The little wife tries the immensely popular drink of ramuné (lemonade) out of a doll’s tumbler. The coolie, with his festive pink towel, pours warm saké from slim china vases into tiny china bowls, and the smile on his broad, bullet-headed face grows broader. For the saké drinker, unlike Western drunkards, only becomes politer and politer, until the Japanese smile of courtesy broadens into a large, fixed, unending, amiable grin, and the saké drunkard goes politely, though stumblingly, home to sleep. But of even saké drunkenness there is little, for the most part o cha (honourable tea) and o kashi (honourable cakes) content these uncivilised Bank Holiday-makers, who have come out to see—just the pink cherry-blossoms against the blue sky. And will go home again—content.

On the river the red towels are perhaps more numerous, for all the fishermen, all the dock labourers, the whole riverside population of Tokyo have come in their sampan to Mukojima. And they float past now, little and big, crowded with blue tunics or grey kimono. Some with an awning of paper lanterns, and all gay with flags and banners. And full as the river is with boats, and jammed together as they are under the bank, nobody shouts, nobody quarrels, nobody swears. A garden party at Windsor Castle might be better dressed, it could hardly be better behaved. Nor in the whole length of those two miles of crowded bank, with the line of sampan on one side and the line of public-houses on the other—sampan, avenue, inns, all full to overflowing—are there three policemen. More, the trees, with their exquisite cloud of pink flowers,
are within easy reach of a man’s arm, and nobody breaks them. The municipality of Tokyo has not even considered it necessary to affix a notice regarding the penalty for damaging trees. I should doubt if it had even thought to invent one.

And yet the blossoms are beautiful enough to make a man’s heart long to possess them.

“A little pink cloud of the sunset has caught in the bare branches of the cherry-tree.” And not all Western imagery can surpass the simile, for the pink is the pink of a cloud at sunset, and soft as the softest mist. When the wind stirs the trees, the blue sky seems scattering pink snowflakes to the ground.

“What is the soul of Japan?” asked the poet. “It is the mountain cherry-tree in the morning sun.”

But a soul so simple, the civilised nations, of course, disdain!
THE PALACE OF THE SON OF HEAVEN

Kyoto is a city of immense distances where the brown earth streets, set in between their rows of low brown houses, run on interminably. Even under the weltering summer sky the streets are full; for Kyoto, the once-time capital, is still the second city of the Empire, and the art centre of Japan. My kurumaya scatters men and children as he runs; and the sounds of busy bargaining, the inevitable takai (too much), following the ikura des ka (how much?) pursue me as I ride.

At each corner two more streets stretch out, as straight as interminable, as full of life. And still my kurumaya runs.

I am going to see the Emperor’s Palace. Through many hundred years, through most that is history in Japan, the Son of Heaven dwelt in the heart of this city, and these long interminable streets so full of life stretched all around him. The Tenshisama lived in the midst of his people, and neither saw nor heard.

We have left the streets at last; on either hand stand railed-in squares of growing trees; the road is wide and smooth, the busy thousands in the streets drop out of sight and sound. My kurumaya runs more swiftly.

Here is neither shop nor house, nor passer-by, the restless hum of life itself has ceased. It is quieter than
THE PALACE OF THE SON OF HEAVEN

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a forest, for in these artificial squares of railed-in trees nothing stirs. Men's gardens are always three parts dead.

The broad road widens still; white as fuller's earth and hard, it stretches like an avenue between high walls of smooth white brick, laid flat and thin as Roman tiles, on thick layers of pale white mortar. Two carefully paved-in streams of fresh grey water run between wall and road. And streams and road and walls go on and on. It is the Palace of the Heir Apparent.

The walls are twelve feet high, the stream is three feet wide; and still my kurumaya runs. The pale white walls stretch down the road like parallels in Euclid. It is the Palace of the Princes of the Blood.

And still he runs. The pale white walls, thin tiles set in their thick layers of mortar, run as he runs.

I have lost sense of the city now, lost memory of the gardens, lost belief in life itself. The world is a dead white road between white walls. This is the Palace of the Son of Heaven, one speck of brown breaks the interminable line of white, the carved gateway whence the great Tenshisama issued once a year to visit the temple. One other speck, the gate by which he returned. And then the pale white walls, thin tiles set in thick layers of mortar, stretch out of sight.

Inside these miles of walls, in his artificial solitude, year in, year out, the Son of Heaven dwelt. The life of the city, surging through its streets, surged up in vain; he could not see it, hear it, nor conceive it. Lord of a world he did not know, the Son of Heaven lived, while all around the sons of earth fought and toiled, were born and died, and not a murmur of their being passed his Palace walls. Shut up in his rose-
garden world, fictitious, quite unreal, the Son of Heaven augustly ruled. And while the thousands in the city and the millions in the land held him divine, so that whoso looked upon his face did surely die, the men who looked usurped his power, crowned or deposed him; ruled in his name, but reigned supreme, and fought to reign. The history of Japan lies there. War and worship, divine unquestioned right and civil strife, never rebellion, each army fighting in the name of the ever-sacred Son of Heaven, to use victory for its own ends.

And the living son of these dead Emperors, brought up as they, Son of Heaven still, though without the walls, a modern monarch holding levees and cabinet councils, does that fictitious rose-garden world lie about him yet shutting out the real?

"And always in Japan," says my kurumaya, "the Son of Heaven augustly rules."

And he sings:

"Kimi ga yo wa
Chiyo ni yachiyo ni
Sazaré ishi no
Iwaho to narité
Koké no musu madé."

"The descendants of the Emperor shall live for a thousand times ten thousand years, until the little stones are grown great rocks, until the great rocks are all green with moss."
XI

AND SHE WAS A WIDOW

O Mmé San looked into her son's eyes and saw that they were sad.

It was in the month of the plum-blossom, when throughout the length and breadth of Japan the soldiers of the Empire were daily leaving for the front; for the war with Russia had been declared, and the rich were giving of their wealth, the poor of their poverty, and every one of his sons. In Tokyo the rival newspapers had agreed to bury their political differences until the war was over. An Osaka merchant had offered his priceless art treasures for sale. On the western coast the poor fishermen, forbidden to fish in the sea of Japan because of the danger, sent a petition to the Government asking to be allowed to go out "as scouts." Noble students on the far-off banks of the Sungari were risking an ignominious death as they crouched beneath dark bridges with dynamite in their hands. Everywhere, every one was giving, giving, giving. Even in this remote country town each day mothers saw their sons march away, and bid them a last "Sayonara."

O Mmé San had been waiting many days, expecting, hoping, dreading, and to-night in the sad eyes of her son she read the long delayed summons. "He has
heard at last," she thought. And for one moment her heart grew very tender over this, her fatherless son, her only boy.

Then she put away her weakness, for she was the wife and the daughter of samurai, and she knew that it was the proudest privilege of a warrior to fight for his lord, that it was the most sacred duty of her race to give her life and her son's life to the Emperor. So, looking towards the curved swords of the family, which lay on the tokonoma, she began to talk of her husband, of the grim old samurai his fathers, and to tell old tales of battle and of death that made her boy's eyes glisten, and then look sadder than before. But he said nothing, and O Mmé San wondered. She knew that he had been down to the Prefecture that morning. O Kiku San's two sons had left last week, O Hana's eldest was going to-morrow. Surely her boy must know when he was leaving, or why did his eyes look so sad?

Then she began to tell him of all the plans she had thought of for managing without him, for they were poor. And at last her son looked up, and said, very gently as he took her hand:

"Honourably trouble not; as for leaving, it is not for me."

And this time it was O Mmé San's turn to be silent.

When dinner was over her son went out to his work, and O Mmé San wondered and wondered. The wife and daughter of a samurai she was eager to give, give even her only son for Dai Nippon, and the Son of Heaven. And yet her boy was not going; what could it mean?

It was O Hana San who brought the answer.
O Hana came in, very proud and pleased to tell all the last news about her eldest and his regiment.

"They say these Russians are seven feet high," she said, as they sat opposite one another on the kneeling cushions sipping tea, "and that they never wash. And, just think, over there in Chō-sen (Korea) everything is still frozen."

O Mmé San listened. "A warrior is always warm enough when he fights," she said, looking at the long curved swords which lay on the tokonoma.

O Hana San followed her glance. There were no swords at home on her tokonoma.

"Oh! fighting's very different nowadays," she said. "My boy hasn't got a sword at all. They only carry guns now."

For O Hana was not above a certain feeling of pleasure at getting even with a samurai.

O Mmé San bowed, and gently offered more tea.

"That is the Emperor's will," she said, in her soft, low voice. "My son will also carry a gun."

"But your son isn't going," cried O Hana San. "Didn't you know? The Prefect said yesterday something about the law of the Emperor forbidding it. I forget why." And she gave a little giggle of pride at the idea of her son going to the war when the son of a samurai must stay at home.

O Mmé San's hands trembled as she poured more tea into the tiny bowls, but her voice was as low and as gentle as ever, and she did not abate one bow or one word of politeness; but how glad she was when O Hana was gone! She sat back on her heels after her last bow, her face flushed with anger. The Emperor would not take her son! O Hana must be mistaken. It could not be true. But "the Prefect
said.” Then she would go and ask the Prefect. And O Mmé San got up resolute.

The Prefect was very busy, and refused at first to see her, but, with the softest and gentlest politeness, O Mmé San still persisted, and at last she was admitted into the ugly “foreign” room where the Prefect, in a frock-coat and tweed trousers, sat on a “foreign” chair. O Mmé San sat on the edge of hers and held her kimono tightly with both hands. She was not used to chairs.

“You wish to know when Suzuki Tetsutarō leaves for the front. Honourably please to wait a moment.”

O Mmé San waited. The Prefect, deep in his work, almost forgot her. Something in the tremulous way in which she had spoken made him think she was afraid for her boy; and he was a stern man, with the sternest ideas of duty to the Emperor. So when the answer came back to him, he turned to her somewhat coldly.

“Suzuki Tetsutarō is exempt from service. It is the will of the Emperor that the only son of a widow shall stay and take care of his mother.”

A great light sprang into O Mmé San’s eyes. “Honourably please to say is that the reason?” she asked, bowing low.

The Prefect looked at her, at the strange light shining in her eyes; and in his heart he regretted the old stern times when samurai mothers sent out their sons to fight to victory or to death.

“That is the reason,” he said, and he bowed her out.

That night O Mmé San did not sleep. She sat up looking at the curved swords of her fathers and thinking.
She knew now why her son's eyes were sad. The Son of Heaven, in his graciousness, had wished to spare the widow's son, but—but a subject's duty was to give, give all, give himself, give everything that was most precious to him; above all, a samurai boy must not stay at home when peasants' sons went out to fight. And in the quiet night, with the blossoming plum-tree stretching like a white wing above the house, Mmé thought.

This gentle, soft-voiced woman, tender as the white blossoms overhead from which she took her name, was delicate as they; but in her soul there dwelt that subtle, untouched fragrance, the sense of sacrifice and duty, which, like the scent of the blossoming plum-tree, penetrated all things. Brought up on the "greater" and "the lesser learning," in the strict rule of the three obediences—to father, husband, son—O Mmé San had lived her simple life, a loving, tender woman, exquisite in grace and courtesy; but in her heart there burned that ecstatic faith and fealty which we have never truly known, but call by the cold name of loyalty. So she sat there and thought in the still, dark night, and all the thoughts and feelings of the dead, all their resolutions and impulses, stirred back to life in her all the long line of her samurai fathers, who had fought and died, the yet longer line of patient mothers, who had endured and given their sons, husbands, fathers, called to her. They were not dead nor sleeping. They were alive in her. She sat and listened as their lives thrilled through her in the silence, and their voices spoke aloud within her soul. It seemed a simple thing to sacrifice herself. She had no fear of death, rather a great desire. No haunting fear of Purgatory or Hell beset her. Even the all-loving Buddha was
forgotten; she trusted to the older gods to-night—Amaterasu, the great Sun-Goddess, from whom the Son of Heaven himself descended. Beyond the shadow of this life the great gods lived, and all the long line of her fathers stood waiting to welcome her. When she slipped into that light her son’s father himself would stoop to take her hand, content that she had proved herself worthy to be a warrior’s wife.

The snow-white mmé, the blossoming plum-tree, stirred in the cold night wind. “Chastity, purity and strength, womanly strength,” it whispered, and its pale soft blossoms sighed. The fragrance of them floated by in the chill spring air; floated wide from end to end of Great Japan.

“Strength, womanly strength,” it said, and O Mmé San looked up and smiled, a little sad, sweet smile. For the strength of a woman lies in the sacrifice of herself. And getting up she went to look at her boy tossing in his sleep.

Then she too slept, for she knew what she had to do; and Shinigawa, the Lord of Death-Desire, drew near and touched her as she slept.

It was nearly dusk the next evening before everything was prepared. All her son’s clothes mended and ready, the house put straight, the letter written, telling her boy quite simply that, having learned the reason why the Emperor in his graciousness would not take him for his soldier, she had taken her own life that he might be free to fight. On her knees she thanked the gracious Tenshi-sama, but her son and her son’s life were his not hers.

Then she sharpened her dagger, and when O Mmé San felt its edge was keen enough, she knelt down on
the matting, took off her long silken under-girdle, and tied it carefully around her knees, for a samurai woman must lie modestly even in death. Then she felt in her throat for the artery, and with one quick thrust drove the dagger home.

The Prefect was sitting with his family that evening when Suzuki Tetsutarō came to the house. He carried a paper in his hand, and he was trembling.

"Honourably please to take notice," he said, "that I am qualified to serve, for my mother is dead." And he handed the Prefect the paper.

When he had read it the stern official turned to the lad.

"The detachment has not yet left for headquarters," he said, writing rapidly as he spoke. "Go straight to the station. Give this card to the officer in charge. I will bury your mother and perform the rites."

Then he laid his hand on the boy's shoulder. "Suzuki Tetsutarō," he said, "your mother was worthy of her race. Go, that her spirit may have peace."

So Suzuki Tetsutarō went straight to the front.
GLOSSARY

Aino. The aboriginal inhabitants of Japan, only found now in the North Island. A remarkably hairy, remarkably dirty race, with the flattened shin-bone only occurring in skeletons of the cave-men. They are great hunters and fishers.

Amado. Sliding wooden walls which are drawn all round a Japanese house at night, completely enclosing it.


Amida Butsu. Buddha as Amida. Originally Amida was an abstraction, the ideal of boundless light.

Benten. One of the seven Deities of Luck, frequently represented riding on a serpent. Her shrines are mostly on islands, and from her connection with the sea she has certain points of resemblance with Venus. Benten always has a white face.

Biwa. A musical instrument with four strings, something like a lute.

Boy. Term universal among foreigners in the Far East for a male servant, of whatever age.

Bot'chan. A little boy; baby; Japanese baby language. Derived from *bōsan*, a Buddhist priest (bonze), Japanese babies, like Buddhist priests, having completely shaven heads.

Bushi. Warrior.

Bushidō. Way of the warrior.

Cha-no-yu. Tea ceremony, from *cha*, tea. The people of Tokyo and the initiated call it *chanoyū*. This ceremony, religious in its inception, has in the course of the 600 or 700 years of its existence passed through a medico-religious, a luxurious, and an aesthetic stage. A little of the religious element still clings to it, tea enthusiasts usually joining the Zen sect of Buddhism, while diplomas of proficiency are obtained from the abbot of Daitokuji at Kyoto.

Cha-ya. Tea-house.

Cloisonné. A species of mosaic, its characteristic feature being a network of copper, brass, or silver wire soldered on to a
solid foundation of the same metal. The cloisons, or spaces between the network, are then filled in with enamel paste.

Daimyō, lit. Great name; a feudal lord. Before the Restoration of 1868 Japan was divided into provinces, each ruled by a daimyō. Every daimyō was the head of a clan of armed retainers, the samurai, and all samurai had to belong to some daimyō. Shortly after the Restoration the daimyō voluntarily gave up their lands, powers, and possessions to the Emperor.

Fuji. Usually translated as “The Peerless Mountain,” from the two Chinese characters with which, in poetry, it is usually written, meaning “not two,” “unrivalled.” In prose it is generally written with Chinese characters meaning “rich samurai.” It can also be written with ideographs meaning “not dying” and so “deathless.” Most probably Fuji is derived from the Aino word push, to burst forth.

Futon. A sort of eiderdown quilt made of silk wadding. The Japanese spread one of these on the matting at night to sleep on, using a second as a covering. The native pillow is a shaped and padded piece of wood or lacquer which supports the neck.

Geisha. Girls trained to the profession of dancing, singing, playing, and socially entertaining. They are the usual accompaniment to a Japanese dinner.

Gheta. A sort of wooden clogs kept on by straps passing between the big and second toes. Gheta are only worn in the street, and are left outside houses, temples, or other buildings. It would be as disrespectful to enter a house or a temple with your gheta on as for a man to walk into a church, or a drawing-room, in his hat.

Godown. A fire-proof building for storing valuables. Derived from Malay word gâdong, a warehouse.

Hakama. A divided skirt of either cotton or silk, pleated into a broad stiff band in big pleats. Worn by the samurai on official or ceremonial occasions. Always worn by both teacher and pupil in the classrooms. Also worn nowadays by the girl students.

Hibachi. A brazier in the shape of a lidless box of wood or bronze containing charcoal, the warming apparatus of Japanese houses.

Holland. Considered as a tributary kingdom of Japan during the Tokugawa shōgunate, be-
cause the Dutch shut up in the island of Deshima, near Nagasaki, sent yearly presents to the shōgun.

**Ijin San.** Barbarian; foreigner; or perhaps simply "strange man," and so foreigner.

**Ieyasu.** *B.* 1542, *d.* 1616
The founder of the Tokugawa shōgunate, which lasted from 1603 to 1868. Ieyasu was one of the greatest generals and perhaps the very greatest ruler, Japan has ever produced. He went to school in the Temple of Rinzaki (p. 17), and the room where he learnt to write, his ink-slab and other belongings, are still preserved. Ieyasu founded Yedo, now Tokyo, making it his capital. He died at Shizuoka, and was first buried at Kunō-san (*Between Earth and Heaven*, p. 36), and afterwards at Nikkō.

**Izanagi and Izanami.** The Creator and the Creatress of Japan. It was during the purification of Izanagi after his descent into Hades in search of Izanami, a legend which has many points of resemblance with that of Orpheus, that Amaterasu, the Sun-Goddess, was born.

**Jinricksha or Jinriksha.** From the Chinese, *lit.* man-power-vehicle; shortened by Europeans into 'ricksha, by the

Japanese to *jinriki*, but usually called in Japan by the native word *kuruma*. A small two-wheeled carriage like a miniature hansom or an old-fashioned perambulator, drawn by a man.

**Kagura.** Sacred *shintō* dance, whose origin is supposed to be traced back to the time when Amaterasu, angry at the insult offered her by her brother Susa-no-wo, retired to a cavern, thus plunging the world into darkness. She was at last induced to look out by the sound of music and dancing, and finally enticed right out by the sight of her own face in a mirror. The dance performed in front of her cavern is supposed to be the *Kagura*. (Note the “g” here, as all medial “g’s” in Japanese have the sound of “ng” as in English “sing.” So Nang-o-ya, *not* Na-go-ya. Some dialects, as that of Satsuma, say a hard “g”.)

**Kakemono,** *lit.* the hanging-up-thing. A picture painted on either silk or paper, in either monochrome or colour. It is mounted on brocade, and has a roller each end. Roughly and quite untechnically, *kakemono* can be divided into two classes: those which seek to give only an impression, and those which are a kind of miniature painting.
Kana. Katakana and Hirakana, popularly supposed to have been invented, the first 772 A.D., the second 835 A.D. In reality they were not inventions, but simplifications of certain common Chinese ideographs. The kana represent sounds, as does our alphabet, but they stand for syllables, not letters. They both consist of forty-seven sounds, which by the addition of dots and other symbols can be considerably increased.

Kannon, written K(w)annon, Sanskrit Avalokites-vara, the Goddess of Mercy, who contemplates the world and listens to the prayers of the unhappy. In the opinion of a small minority Kannon belongs to the male sex.

Kimono. The long-sleeved robe of Japan, which has no fastening. It is merely folded across on the right-hand side (only grave-clothes are crossed to the left) and kept in place by the folds of the obi. Practically the same shaped kimono is worn by men and women, the difference consisting principally in pattern and colour. The number of kimono worn depends entirely on the temperature.

Kirin. A fabulous monster answering to our griffin. He degenerates sometimes into a sort of three-cornered dog, and is said not to trample on live insects nor to eat live grass.

Kitsune. Fox. It is the fox and the badger in Japan who are credited with supernatural powers. Foxes are able to change themselves into beautiful young women to the undoing of confiding man. The powers of the badger may be comic.

Kojiki, or "Record of Ancient Matters." The oldest literary work of Japan, dating from the year 712 A.D. It is a chronicle partly mythological, partly historical, of the doings of gods, emperors and men.

Kuruma. See Jinricksha. The Japanese term for jinricksha.

Kurumaya. The man who draws the kuruma.

Manjū. A flat round cake of rice paste filled with a brown bean-jam.

Meiji. Age of Enlightenment or Progress. The name of the years from 1868 onwards. The privilege of appointing year-names is regarded in the Far East as one of the rights of independent sovereignty, much as coining money with us. In Japan the length of the year-name period has been up to now purely arbitrary, not coinciding with the reign of an emperor as in China.

Miyajima. One of the San-kei or "Three Chief Sights" of
Japan. An exceedingly beautiful island in the Inland Sea. It contains a temple built on piles, which at high tide seems to float on the water. According to tradition, the first temple was erected about 600 A.D.

Mma. The actual pronunciation in the Tokyo district of the word usually Romanised as Uma, horse.

Mme. The actual pronunciation in the Tokyo district of the word usually Romanised as Umé.

Musmé or Musumé. Daughter; girl; and so, waiting-girl.


Nēsan. lit. elder sister miss. Used as a half-polite, half-familiar address to girls; and so, waiting-girl.

Nichiren. B. 1222, d. 1282, at Ikkegami, where some of his bones remain as relics. He entered the priesthood at the early age of twelve, when he adopted the name of Nichiren, or “Lotus of the Sun.” He miraculously learned the whole of the 100 volumes of the Buddhist canon in one night. He fiercely attacked all the already existing Buddhist sects, a thing unheard of in Japanese ecclesiastical history; was twice banished, and once condemned to death, on which occasion the executioner’s sword refused to perform its function. His crest is the orange blossom.

O and Go. Polite prefixes usually translated as “honourable” or “august.”

O Bā San, lit. honourable grandmother Mrs.

Obi. A long sash usually of wadded brocade, which is folded several times round the waist and tied behind. The obi is the most expensive part of a woman’s dress, and exceptional ones of richest brocade stiffened with gold thread can cost as much as £50 or more; such obi are handed down in families as heirlooms.

O hachi, lit. honourable pot. Tub in which cooked rice is kept.

Persimmon. A fruit the size of an apple which can be round and reddish, or orange and pear-shaped. Called in Japanese kaki.

Ricksha. See Jinricksha.

Rin. 10 rin make 1 sen, or one farthing.

Ronin, lit. wave-man. Samurai without a feudal lord. He might be described as a samurai out of work either through fault or misfortune.
Saké. An intoxicating drink obtained from fermented rice, containing 11 to 14 per cent. of alcohol. It is generally drunk warm and tastes something like sherry.

Samisen. A square threestringed lute with a long handle, played with a plectrum; the commonest and most popular of the musical instruments of Japan. Its notes are very tinny. In Tokyo usually called shamisen.

Sampan. A small flat-bottomed boat, rowed by a man standing in the stern.

Samurai. Derived from the verb samurai, to be on guard. A term used in the early Middle Ages of the soldiers of the Mikado's palace, then applied to the entire warrior class. The samurai were "the gentry" of Japan, the daimyō corresponding to the peers. In Old Japan all gentlemen were soldiers and all soldiers gentlemen. Since the Restoration, when their incomes were commuted for a lump sum, the samurai have had to earn their own livelihood. They are now the officers, professors, schoolmasters, policemen, officials, practically the whole governing class of Japan.

San. Contraction of sama. A title such as our Mr., but used for both sexes and all ages.

Semmi. Cicada. Japan grows innumerable semmi of many kinds. A favourite amusement of boys is to catch them and keep them in small cages of green net.

Sen. 1/4d. 100 sen make 1 yen.

Shappo. From the French chapeau. The modern name for the modern "foreign" hat. Old Japan knew no hats.

Shintō, lit. the way of the gods. This, the native religion of Japan, is a combination of ancestor- and nature-worship. Its priesthood is not a caste, nor even a separate profession. Up to the time of the revival of Shintōism, due to the Restoration of power to the Mikado, everybody was born with Shintō and buried with Buddhist rites. The whole Japanese nation is supposed to be descended from the lesser Shintō deities, while the Emperor is the direct descendant of Amaterasu.

Shōgun, lit. generalissimo. A title first used in 813 A.D., and continued down to 1868. In the twelfth century the shōgun Yoritomo first contrived to become the effective ruler of the land; thus originating the dual control of Japan, the temporal power belonging to the shōgun, the spiritual to the Emperor. Yoritomo was succeeded by various dynasties of shōgun until Ieyasu founded the Tokugawa shōgunate in 1600.
Shoji. The sliding wall of a house, like an immense lattice window whose leadings are wood and whose panes are rice-paper, Shōji are semi-transparent, and divide the room from the outer world. The walls which divide one room from another are called karakami or fusumi, and are of opaque paper. They slide in grooves and can be entirely removed when required.

Susa-no-wo, lit. the Impetuous Male Deity, was born from the nose of the creator Izanagi. It was owing to the insult which he offered his sister Amaterasu by breaking a hole in the roof of the hall of heaven where she sat weaving with her celestial maidens, and dropping down into it “a heavenly piebald horse flayed with a backward flaying” that the Sun-Goddess retired to the cavern and left the world in darkness. Susa-no-wo was the ancestor of the rulers of Izumo, who finally gave up their throne to the descendants of the Sun-Goddess, accepting a spiritual for an earthly homage. Susa-no-wo is sometimes considered as the God of the Moon, sometimes as the God of the Sea.

Suzuki Tetsutaro. The family name in Japan always comes first, the “Christian” name after, as Smith John. Suzuki is one of the commonest of Japanese surnames of samurai rank, Hayashi running it very close. Tetsutarō, lit. own eldest son.

Tabi. Half-boots fastening up on the inner, not the outer, side, as with us. They are made of cotton, and the sole is a soft sock. There is a separate compartment for the big toe. Tabi are of either dark blue or white cotton; white is for house and street wear; dark blue for hard work or walking, and mostly worn by the lower classes.

Tenshisama. Chinese term meaning Son of Heaven, from ten, heaven. Sama is the longer and more courteous form of san. The Emperor is also called Tennō, Heavenly Emperor, or Shujō, the Supreme Master; all Chinese terms. The word Mikado is very rarely used by the Japanese except in poetry or on great occasions.

Tōfu. A white bean-curd, looking like cream cheese. A favourite food of the coolie.

Tokonoma. A raised alcove. Probably it was originally that part of a room raised above the level of the earth floor, on which people slept.

Tokugawa. The family name of Ieyasu and so of the shōgunate founded by him. The last shōgun, who abdicated in 1868, is still living.
**Tokyo.** The modern name for Yedo, meaning the Eastern Capital

**Torī.** A gateway without a gate formed of two perpendicular and two horizontal beams, which at first stood in front of every shintō temple. When the Buddhists adopted it they turned up the ends in a glorious curve, and used it for affixing tablets. Popular etymology derives it from *tori*, fowl, and *i* (*iru*), dwelling, regarding it as a perch for the sacred birds. It probably came from Northern India, where similar gateways called *turan* are found outside burial-grounds. *Cf.* Luchuan *tori*.

**Uchi,** *lit.* inside; and so, house.

**Uguisu.** A small brown bird, the *ceitria cantans*, with a simple but exquisite song.

**Urashima.** The Rip Van Winkle of Japanese folk-lore. He married the Sea King's daughter. After a short honey-moon he came back to visit his parents. But the oldest inhabitant of the village could only dimly remember the family tombstones in the graveyard. Thinking he was the victim of an illusion, Urashima rashly opened a box the Sea Princess had given him. Instantly a grey smoke went up to heaven, and Urashima changed from a stalwart youth to an old man, sank down on the seashore and died. He was a thousand years old.

**Yedo.** The original name of Tokyo, given it by its founder Iyeyasu.

**Yashiki.** The house or enclosure of a noble or honourable person.

**Yen.** The Japanese money unit, worth 2s. 3d.

**Waraji.** A straw sandal fastening securely with long twisted strings of straw. The straw turns up slightly round the back of the heel. *Waraji* are for travelling.

**Zashki.** The room; parlour; the sitting-room of a house.

For much of the information contained in these notes I am indebted to the works of Prof. B. H. Chamberlain.