

A MODERN UTOPIA.

THE CHARM OF THE JAPANESE ISLANDS.

Pleasing Characteristics of the People—A Land of Many Holidays—Master and Servant—Japanese Art.

The distinction which Japan enjoys is, that while other countries have lovely spots, she is everywhere enchanting. The whole length of the island chain, 1,500 miles in extent, hardly presents a spot that would not be a subject for a landscape painter. The great central mountain range, with the overtowering cone-shaped Fujiama, rises almost out of the ocean below to be lost in view in the clouds above. Long transverse spurs of hills run out into the sea. Deep, warm, rich valleys have been everywhere cut through the mountains and hills, and bordering the ocean fertile plains have been formed from the weatherings and washings of the great mountain masses. Covering these plains, valleys, hillsides and mountains is a verdure that riots in luxuriance. Clear streams, from their elevated sources, dash through narrow gorges, pour in gleaming cataracts down precipitous mountain sides and whirl in crystal eddies at the feet of over-branching forest trees. It is a climatic zone where the flora of the cold north and that of the heated south meet and intermingle. The pine and palm, the maple and magnolia, the beech and bamboo, and the oak and the orange inter-lace their branches in the same grove. Around all the land are the waters of the great ocean, from which soft winds temper the heat of an almost tropic sun.

Living in such scenes of enchantment these people are as light of heart and sunny in disposition as children, and so polite and pleasure loving as to excite the admiration of even their French and Italian visitors. There is no dwelling so humble but it has a spot for trees and flowers. The rich have gardens in which are faithful reproductions in miniature of their varied landscapes, hidden in trees and flowering shrubbery. Every farmer's plot of land is beautiful and adorned. The gold of the ripened rice and wheat is contrasted against a background of green foliage. Whatever name may be given to the religion of that people, and whatever creeds and doctrines may have been engrafted upon their beliefs, the main feature of their worship is an intense love, amounting almost to an adoration, of nature. This appears in their whole life. They have built their temples on the sides of the great mountains, embowered them in overhanging groves, and surrounded them with everything of flowering shrub. The sites of these command beautiful views of the surrounding country, and usually are near fountains and waterfalls. The village shrines are located in the most charming spots of the neighborhood, and no labor is spared to adorn and beautify them. The highways are bordered by rows of trees, planted centuries ago, whose branches form an evergreen arch over the head of the traveler. The road to Nikko, where the temples and tombs of the Tycoons are situated, has a grand avenue of giant firs. For sixty miles one may ride in the shade of these wide-branching trees. From Yokohama south to Kioto, the old capital, 400 miles, the road is one continuously shaded avenue, winding along the ocean shore, around narrow bays and inlets and over high hills and mountain sides.

Unlike their neighbors, the Chinese, the Japanese take time from their toil to enjoy all this. Their government may have been despotic and arbitrary, but it never overworked its laboring population. It gave them more holidays than any people under the sun ever enjoyed. They had what were known as the "Ichi-roku" days, that is, all the days in the lunar months that were designated by one or six. Thus the 1st, 6th, 11th, 16th, 21st and 26th days of each month were legal holidays. In addition to these, the birthdays of the ruling Emperor and Empress, and also of several of the greatest of their predecessors of the ruling dynasty, which reaches back through 2,600 years, are holidays. Every village has festivals in honor of its patron saint, and the saints of the famous temples and shrines have festal days. On all these the people, in their holiday dresses, gather at the temples and shrines for thanksgiving and to admire the beauties of earth and sky. Whole neighborhoods turn out their population, leaving only enough people at home to care for the households, and go some-

times hundreds of miles, on what may appropriately be called these religious picnics. They walk along the shaded avenues, talking, laughing and singing. They rest when weary from walking in the shade of the great trees by some clear stream, or some babbling spring. All these great highways are lined with tea booths, where, tea, rice, eggs or cakes can be had for an incomparably low price.

The spring and summer bring the flower festivals, when city and village streets for miles are filled with the most beautiful floral exhibitions, and crowds of admiring people. There is no more beautiful sight than one of the long wide streets lighted at night and filled with flowers. The love of the beautiful has led the Japanese to forego the grosser pleasure of eating the fruit of the cherry tree in order that they may enjoy the beauty and fragrance of the cherry blossoms. There are large groves of the double-flowered cherry trees in all parts of the country, which grow to enormous size. The flower is as large as a rose, and when in full bloom these groves are a marvel of beauty, and are visited by thousands of people, who spend the whole day in these flowery avenues. The chrysanthemum gardens, to be found in all towns and villages, are points of great attraction. In these are to be seen every variety of that flower, every shade of color, and almost every size of blossom.

The summer sees streams of people, the poor as well as the rich going to gaze at Fujiama, the pearl of mountains. No person is so poor and no distance so great but several pilgrimages are made in a lifetime to the venerated mountain. In the autumn, when the golden rice and wheat and the brown millet have been gathered, the harvest festival is held in every part of the country. There in the groves, on soft green carpets spread by nature, under the full harvest moon, they make merry, night after night, with song and dance. At these harvest festivals all classes, from prince to peasant, rejoice together over the ample winter's store. It is not only in this intense worship of nature that the beauty of their country has molded and influenced their natural character. It is seen in their domestic intercourse. In all the conventionalities of polite life they are far in advance of any people in the Occident. This refined politeness pervades every grade of society. It is just as noticeable among the lower as in the higher classes. To be rude in word or act is to become a social outcast. The poorest workers, when they meet, greet each other as politely, and pass the compliments of the day as freely and feelingly as do those of higher stations. While the vocabulary of compliments and blessings is a long one, there are no words for a curse in their whole language. There may be hate, jealousy and envy, but they find no verbal expression. It is a constant delight to hear only pleasant words and good wishes.

The relations of masters and servants are as admirable as possible. They are mutual and confidential. While the servant studies the interest of the master, the latter makes the welfare of the servant and his family his duty. The servant is made to feel that he is a factor of some importance in his employer's business by being consulted upon many matters of importance. The master is polite and kind and the servant deferential and respectful on all occasions. The relation of parents and children shows the same refining influences. There is no assumption of the authority of the drillmaster, no exaction of blind obedience, no ruling by fear on the part of the parent. Obedience is induced by patient teaching day after day. The child is lovingly taught why he should do certain things, and why he should not do certain other things. The bond between parents and children is one of reason and regard, and the result is that the child makes his duty to the parent the foremost object of his life, and his own interests are made entirely secondary. A foreigner might live in that country for years and see less parental tyranny and violence than he would see in most families in some other countries in a month, and he can see more filial devotion there in a month than is observable elsewhere in years.

Japanese ideal art is only a reproduction of the beauties of nature. The artist puts mountains, valleys, waterfalls, lakes, trees, flowers and birds on porcelain, paper, silk, satin and lacquer, but beyond this field of decoration he has no fancy. These are some of the characteristics of the Island Empire and its people, but it must not be inferred that these finer traits of character mean effeminacy, for they do not. These peo-

ple are brave and daring, as all those who were reared among mountains have been in all ages. They have proved their title to bravery on many a bloody field. In spite of time consumed in pilgrimages and in worshiping nature, they are industrious workers. They have built up manufactures, established trade and commerce, and developed a system of agriculture that is more thorough and brings better results than that of many of their neighbors.—*San Francisco Chronicle*.

A Terrible Episode.

Hungarian papers announce the death of old Ferencz Renyi, a hero of one of the most terrible episodes of the Hungarian war of independence in 1848. For thirty-six years Renyi has been a lunatic in a Buda-Pesth asylum, and the history of his sufferings is recorded after his death by the *Petit Parisien*. Ferencz Renyi was a young school-master of twenty-seven years at the beginning of the war, proud, handsome and full of buoyant life. His pupils adored him, and he was always welcome among the villages, whether he came with his violin to play to their dances or whether his voice was heard among the patriots chanting the praise of their country. He lived with his mother and sister, and was engaged to a bright young Hungarian girl, when the government, after proclaiming the independence of the country, called all good patriots to arms. Ferencz left his school and enlisted in the ranks. One day, after having fought valiantly at the head of a detachment of soldiers, he was taken a prisoner by the Austrians. Brought before General Haynau, Renyi refused to indicate the place where the rest of his regiment lay hidden. On learning that his home was in a neighboring village the General sent for the mother and sister, and brought them into the room where the prisoner was kept. "Now give me the information I require, if the lives of these two women are dear to you," said General Haynau to him. Renyi trembled, his eyes filled with tears, but he remained silent. "Do not speak, my son," cried the old mother, "do your duty, and think not of me, for at the best I have only a few days to live." "If you betray your country," added his sister, "our name will be covered with shame, and what is life without honor? Do not speak, Ferencz. Be calm; I shall know how to die." Renyi remained silent and a few minutes later the two women were dead. Another trial was to come. General Haynau sent for Renyi's future wife, who was weaker than his mother and sister. With wild cries the girl flung herself at her lover's feet, pleading, "Speak, speak, Ferencz. See, I am young. I love you; do not let me be killed. You will save yourself and me if you speak out. When you are free we will go far away and be happy. Speak, my Ferencz, and save your future wife." She took his hands, clinging to him as a drowning man clings to his last support. The young Hungarian was choked with tears, but suddenly he pushed the girl aside and turned away. Once more she cried to him, but he did not heed her. "Be cursed," she shrieked; "be cursed, you who let me die; you who will kill me; who are my assassins." Renyi remained silent. The girl was shot, and the prisoner was taken back into his cell, but his reason had fled, and he was dismissed. Some friends found him and gave him a shelter; till after Hungary was once more suppressed and peace established, they obtained a place for him in the asylum in which he has recently died.

Where Baths Are Unknown.

Madam Galletti, in her book of "Life in Italy, as Seen Through an English Woman's Eyes," tells of the extreme filth of the inhabitants of Ancona, on the Adriatic. "To ask for a bath," she says, "is to create the greatest alarm as to the state of your health, and I roused such a commotion by the request that I soon found out the enormity of it." During a visit to a household of the bourgeois rank, she saw old man who worked about the premises who, being asked if he had ever been washed, reflected some time, and then said he thought some one had washed him when he was a small child. "The only clean inhabitant of our village," says Madam Galletti, "is a returned convict who, on coming back to the bosom of his family after twenty years at the Pagne, immediately set his wife to scrub and scour the premises, remarking that he was accustomed to clean dwellings, and could on no account put up with dirt and untidiness, so fastidious had he become during his residence at the expense of the Government."

FACTS FOR THE CURIOUS.

There are twenty-seven peaks in Nevada exceeding ten thousand feet in height.

A Boston female lecturer claims that the revolt of the thirteen colonies was inspired by Washington's mother.

Professors Fischer and Penzoldt, of Erlangen, have established the fact that the sense of smell is by far the most delicate of the senses.

A Vienna writing master has written forty French words on a grain of wheat that are said to be easily legible for good eyes. It has been placed in a glass case and presented to the French Academy of Sciences.

A peculiar custom of the California Indians is the annual "burning." The Indians surround the graves of the dead with clothing and then set fire to it, thinking that in this way it goes to the departed spirits.

The Mediterranean Sea was the heart of the Old World; the important lands of the early history of civilization were grouped about its richly indented shores, generally decreasing in respect of culture as they receded from it.

Lighting the Parsees' sacred fire is an expensive and elaborate process on the institution of a new temple. Sixteen different kinds of wood in 1,001 pieces of fuel are required to obtain the sacred flame, which is afterward fed with sandal-wood, and the cost of the process averages \$13,500. There are still three large and thirty-three small fire-temples at Bombay.

A lager beer brewer of Louisville, Ky., has a Strasburg clock of more than ordinary excellence. The clock is like ordinary clocks, until just before the hour, when a little man jumps up from behind, with a lager beer glass in his hand. This he elevates to his head, and then says, in a wonderfully distinct and human way, "Lager beer," as many times as the clock should strike to designate the hour.

Solomon's Temple was destroyed at the command of the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 B. C. The attempt to rebuild it was not entirely successful until Cyrus ended the Babylonian exile, and not only permitted the building to proceed, but even returned the sacred utensils which had been carried off as booty, and kept in the Temple of Bel. This reconstruction, named after the ruler, Zerrubabel, was not completed until after forty-six years, when, under Darius, all the difficulties in the way of its prosecution were overcome.

An Elephant in a Parade Ground.

A menagerie was recently moving slowly along the road near Portsmouth, England, when the largest elephant of the caravan, who is known as Madam Jumbo, escaped from her keeper, and charged upon a military barrack that stood by the road. She seized with her trunk the sentinel who stood at the gate, and threw him at full length on the ground, without hurting him in the least, and then triumphantly entered the parade-ground within the barracks at a grand trot. The 300 soldiers who were drilling in the enclosure were so much astonished and alarmed at the appearance of so strange an enemy, that they broke ranks and took flight in every direction. The elephant proceeded to attack a tank filled with water, part of which she drank, and upset the rest. Then she charged upon a bin filled with potatoes for the soldiers, and ate up the potatoes. Having satisfied her hunger and thirst, and put a battalion of soldiers to route, Madam Jumbo allowed herself to be captured, and contentedly resumed her place in the caravan, to the great relief of the soldiers.

The Staked Plains.

Just across the Canadian River, at Antelope Hills, we caught our first glimpse of the Llano Estacado or Staked Plains, which is simply a billiard table of grass bounded on all sides by the sky. It stretches the entire width of the Pan Handle and southward to Red River and the tribularies of the Brazos, and I do not believe it holds in that vast sweep a dozen elevations twenty feet high. One it was the domain of millions of buffalo, whose traces are there still—the grass grown "wallow," and here and there a whitened and crumbled bone. There are a few of the wariest of the once numberless droves remaining, but soon the roving Comanche or cowboy will have laid the last low, and this monarch of the vast American Plains will have passed into history.—*New York Times*.